Racism within the Canadian University: Indigenous Students' Experiences

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the experiences of Indigenous post-secondary students at three universities located in Ontario, Canada. Drawing on ethnographic observation, 27 in-depth interviews and demographic surveys, I investigate both the nature and levels of ongoing experiences with racism and discrimination on-campus, as well as the impacts and chosen response strategies.

The primary theoretical contribution is the demonstration of how, in order to create a comprehensive theoretical framework for the analysis of Indigenous peoples' experiences with racism in Canada, Critical Race Theory (Gillborn 2006; Solórzano & Yosso 2002: Tate 1997) and Settler Colonial Theory (Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014; Tuck & Yang 2012) must be used in combination. The second theoretical contribution is the critique and further development of 'internalized oppression' (Pyke 2010); to help understand not only the creation, internalization and maintenance processes involved in internalized racism, but also who is best positioned to eliminate it and how.

First, an analysis is completed of how, within the university context, Indigenous students are experiencing racism and discrimination: which social locations, at what levels, the nature of the racism/discrimination and contextual differences. Following that, an in-depth look is taken at the various impacts of these experiences and the students' responses: coping/management strategies, support resources, and resistance. And finally, the role of lateral violence within the Indigenous student communities is discussed, including the prevalence of the issue, the impacts, and the processes involved in students recognizing and resisting.

Overall, the data demonstrates that, regardless of differing campus contexts, Indigenous students are facing high levels of racism on a regular basis, which has significant impacts both personally and academically. The use of Critical Race Theory and Settler Colonial Theory in combination provides a useful framework for understanding how and why these circumstances persist, as well as raising questions as to the efficacy of institution-led policies and programs designed to both support Indigenous students and decrease racism on campus.

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I also extend recognition and thanks to the administrative personnel at each university that assisted me in numerous ways. Some guided me through university-specific protocols and policies, and others acted as gatekeepers - facilitating my involvement in relevant events and connecting me with the Indigenous student communities at their respective university. Without their assistance it would have been much more difficult to complete my research project.

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Note on Terminology

There is ongoing debate as to the appropriate term(s) that ought to be used when discussing the peoples who are the descendants of the original inhabitants of what we now call 'Canada'. Historically, the Canadian government consistently used the word 'Aboriginal' when referring to people(s) who identify as First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Although more recently shifting to the term Indigenous, 'Aboriginal' is interwoven into all the contemporary Canadian governmental law and policy regarding the First Peoples. However, this is not necessarily the term preferred by Indigenous peoples living in Canada. Individuals may choose to use various terms, such as Indian or Native, however there is not necessarily a firm, widespread agreement. Attempting to be both respectful and consistent, I have used the term Indigenous throughout this dissertation when referring to First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. However, when quoting an interviewee who used an alternate term for identification, I have made sure to maintain their choice of terminology. With the selection of the term 'Indigenous', I recognize that there is great diversity in community, culture and language within and between peoples across Canada.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Universities in Canada are institutions that claim to represent and support the ideals of lifelong learning, personal growth and inclusion. Based on these widely publicized principles, post-secondary campuses might appear to be open and welcoming environments. However, this perception may be misguided. The experiences of Indigenous students attending Canadian universities highlight the many areas of ongoing inequality, injustice, and embedded colonial thoughts, policies and practices. Although post-secondary campuses offer a space for learning, they are intertwined with the 'world at large' and the many political and social issues that plague Canadian society (Bailey 2016). There are longstanding struggles within Canadian society regarding identity, power and resources for Indigenous (and non-Indigenous) peoples that permeate the university environment (Battiste 2013; Cote-Meek 2014; Henry et al. 2017). Indigenous students enter into these challenges and conflicts once they choose to participate in a university community, much as they would entering any other political and social arena of Canadian society.

The research that follows explores questions of how the history, and present realities, of racism and oppression contribute to the lived experiences of Indigenous post-secondary students in Canada. Indigenous university students are still faced with racism and inequality on a regular basis (Bailey 2016; Clark et al. 2014). It has been demonstrated that students encounter barriers of discrimination and racism both interpersonally and through interaction with the university institution (Bailey 2016). Whether the issue is professors teaching incorrect and misleading subject matter

(simultaneously failing to appropriately dispel misinformation), administrative dealings that leave students feeling ignored or displaced, or institutional policies that ignore Indigenous students' needs… racism and oppression are recurring themes that play a role in constructing the current colonial environment Indigenous students must endure (Bailey 2016).

Over the past fifteen years, concern regarding the education of Indigenous peoples in Canada has increased within academia, generating an apparent growth in research focus and learning. The majority of research thus far has dealt with comparisons of achieved education levels and demonstrated large statistical disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada (Clark et al. 2014; Harper and Hurtado 2007; May and Aikman 2003; Preston 2008). However, existing literature has not sufficiently addressed the lived experiences of Indigenous students. By positioning Indigenous students as experts on their own lives, their lived experiences may provide the key insights necessary to understand what the statistical differences really 'mean' (Tuck 2017).

The available literature clearly demonstrates that issues of ethnic and racial discrimination are pervasive on post-secondary campuses, creating spaces for learning that are marred by exclusion, isolation and marginality (Bailey 2016; Harper & Hurtado 2007; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) (2015) released 94 Calls to Action that sought to improve circumstances such as the racialized and colonized nature of post-secondary environments (Absolon & Absolon-Winchester 2016; Wilkes et al. 2017). However, the impacts of these Calls to Action

remain dependent on appropriate understanding and implementation of these principles by university institutions and the wider Canadian society (Absolon & Absolon-Winchester 2016; Wilkes et al. 2017). In light of the TRC's (2015) work, many Canadian universities are beginning to take positive steps to support Indigenous students, but this is occurring at different paces, to different degrees and with varied success. It therefore remains to be seen whether substantial positive change will occur as a result (Wilkes et al. 2017).

This research project focuses on the lived experiences of Indigenous students at three universities located in Ontario, Canada. In particular, I ask: 1) What is the nature and extent of racism facing Indigenous university students in Ontario universities today, and how do these experiences vary based on intersecting social categories such as gender? 2) What role does lateral violence play within the Indigenous student communities? 3) When faced with racism and lateral violence, what support methods and strategies are Indigenous students choosing to employ? In-depth discussions with students at each university have provided tremendous insight into both the challenges and successes within their daily lives as students, and how these are linked to the interplay of different factors such as race, gender, class, and context. The three universities were carefully selected as they differ significantly in terms of how they approach Indigenous education, strategies for addressing reconciliation and the urban environment within which they are situated. These differences have provided further insights into how varied contextual features may, or may not, impact lived experience. To move through the discussions that follow, it is important to first establish an understanding of the three

university settings. This will allow for comparisons to be analyzed and discussed

coherently throughout the chapters below. The following sections outline the contexts for

the three universities included in this research.

Research Context:

To develop an understanding of the context the Indigenous students are

experiencing while navigating their way through their post-secondary careers, it is

imperative to take a deeper look at the universities themselves – their location, history,

policies and approaches. Each university will be discussed individually, to establish a

solid base for drawing out insights through contextual comparison and analysis.

<u>McMaster University</u>

Hamilton:

McMaster University is located in the city of Hamilton. Hamilton is a "port city"

located on the west end of Lake Ontario with a population of approximately 537,000.[1]

Hamilton's economy was originally centered around a thriving steel industry, but of late

has shifted its focus more to the service sector.[1] There has been a growing urban

Indigenous movement in Hamilton, where approximately 2% of the city's population now

identify as Indigenous.[2] The urban Indigenous population in Hamilton has described that

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[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamilton,_Ontario
[2] https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cma-eng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=537&TOPIC=9

they are experiencing discrimination from the city itself, as well as the settler population at large (Craggs 2018). Having recognized Indigenous peoples as the 'first peoples' and in response to their experiences, the City of Hamilton launched a new 'Urban Indigenous Strategy', which has included steps such as introducing policies for the use of Indigenous medicines and the raising of 4 Indigenous flags at city hall (Haudenosaunee Confederacy Six Nations Flag, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation Flag, the Métis Flag and the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami Flag).[3] The City of Hamilton, and McMaster University, reside upon the traditional territories of the Mississauga and Haudenosaunee nations and within the lands protected by the "Dish With One Spoon" wampum agreement.[4] It is also the traditional homeland of the Attawandaron (Neutral) nation.[5]

Six Nations of the Grand River:

The Six Nations of the Grand River reserve is located approximately 25km southwest of Hamilton. The Six Nations are comprised of Mohawk, Oneida, Cayuga, Onondaga, Seneca and Tuscarora and represent the largest population of First Nations in Canada with band membership of approximately 25,660.[6]

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[3] https://www.hamilton.ca/city-initiatives/strategies-actions/urban-indigenous-strategy
[4] https://indigservices.mcmaster.ca/about-us/
[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neutral_Nation#/media/File:Tionontati.png
[6] http://www.sixnations.ca/CommunityProfile.htm

Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation:

The Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation is located adjacent to the Six Nations of the Grand River, on Reserve 40B near Hagersville, ON. Band membership is approximately 2,330 people, with 850 listed as living on the reserve lands as of 2015.[7]

The University:

McMaster University was founded in 1887 by Senator William McMaster.[8] It is a highly ranked research institution with a student population of more than 31,000.[8] The president's office release stated that in the 2016-2017 academic year over 450 students (1.5% of the student body) were Indigenous learners.[9] In 1992, the Indigenous Studies Program (ISP) was established and was a "main focal point for McMaster's enhanced commitment to, and support of, Indigenous students".[10] Indigenous scholars Dawn Martin-Hill and Rick Monture are renowned as key leaders involved in the program's establishment. Since then the program has grown and evolved. It has been designed for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners and offers experiential learning opportunities.[10] There are multiple program pathways that students can take, including Honours Bachelor of Arts, combined Honours Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts and an ISP minor.[10] McMaster also has a long-standing relationships with Six Nations Polytechnic and has recently collaborated to create a Ogwehoweh Language Diploma.[11]

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[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mississaugas_of_the_Credit_First_Nation / http://mncfn.ca/
[8] https://www.mcmaster.ca/opr/html/opr/our_campus/main/our_campus.html
[9] https://president.mcmaster.ca/
[10] https://indigenous.mcmaster.ca/indigenous-studies-program
[11] https://indigenous.mcmaster.ca/indigenous-service-and-community/community

ISP has placed strong emphasis on community-directed course content and offers more than 25 courses in the area of Indigenous knowledge and culture.[10]

Working closely with ISP, Indigenous Student Services provides support for incoming students (such as assistance in completing applications), elders in residence available weekly, an Indigenous student academic counselor, an Indigenous student library and lounge, a student wellness website and free soup available every Tuesday.[12] There are also multiple student groups operating on campus, such as the McMaster Indigenous Student Community Alliance (MISCA) and the McMaster Indigenous Graduate Students (MIGS).

Policies and Programs:

McMaster has put several policies and programs into place which are designed to assist Indigenous students. One of these is the policy on Academic Accommodation for Religious, Indigenous and Spiritual Observances, which is intended to enable students to maintain and uphold community and spiritual practices.[13] Another is the Facilitated Indigenous Admissions Program (FIAP), which is a program initiated by McMaster's Faculty of Health Sciences. This program was created in response to the TRC's Calls to Action and in recognition of particular barriers Indigenous learners may encounter.[14] It is intended to provide equitable access to Health Science programs for Indigenous applicants.[14]

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[12] https://indigenous.mcmaster.ca/indigenous-service-and-community/student-services/
[13] https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-Observances.pdf
[14] https://ishs.mcmaster.ca/admissions/self-identification

The Faculty of Health Sciences also supports the Indigenous Health Initiative (IHI). The goal of this initiative is to "address systemic barriers in health sciences education for Indigenous learners as well as educate faculty and administrators regarding Indigenous health".[15] One of the impacts that the IHI has had is the commencement of collaboration and strategic planning within the McMaster School of Nursing for developing responsive, supportive and innovative Indigenous nursing strategies.[16]

In 2016, McMaster created the Indigenous Research Institute (MIRI), one of Canada's first "university-wide Indigenous research institutes".[9] The institute has been created to lead, inform and reform Indigenous research at McMaster and beyond.[17] Through the MIRI, McMaster also offers an Indigenous Undergraduate Summer Research program, comprised of 8 weeks of intensive research training and mentorship.[15]

McMaster has also put into place an Indigenous Education Council, with its mandate and procedures established in 2013.[18] This council is primarily responsible for community engagement, supporting/encouraging Indigenous students, staff and faculty, promoting Indigenous education and the study of Indigenous knowledge/culture.[18] This council also ensures that there are Indigenous representatives participating in the university's decision-making processes, including representation by Indigenous students, Indigenous faculty, Elders and local community members.[18]

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[15] https://fhs.mcmaster.ca/main/news/news_2018/milestones_reached_in_indigenous_health_initiative.html
[16] https://nursing.mcmaster.ca/community/indigenous-nursing
[17] http://miri.mcmaster.ca/
[18] https://indigenous.mcmaster.ca/indigenous-service-and-community/indigenous-education-council

In 2015, McMaster declared their goal of increasing the number of Indigenous graduate students and implemented the Indigenous Undergraduate Summer Research Scholars program to support Indigenous students in bridging from undergraduate to graduate programs.[19] In 2016, McMaster initiated the process of including territorial acknowledgements before meetings, ceremonies etc.[20] McMaster publicly reaffirmed its commitment to the Indigenous community and reconciliation in 2018, and ISP has instituted a new course (available to all McMaster students) called *Reconciling What? Indigenous Relations in Canada*, which was first available in Winter 2019.[21]

Spaces:

McMaster has also made some changes to its physical space/appearance that are geared toward supporting Indigenous students. One such change was moving the ISP administrative offices and student services space to a new building on campus in 2016 (Council of Ontario Universities 2017), including a student lounge and library. In 2016, McMaster also completed an outdoor learning space called the Indigenous learning circle and gathering space - Karahhakon Kateweienstha in Mohawk and Nibwaajkaawin in Ojibway (meaning 'place of wisdom').[22] This learning circle is based on a combination of the medicine wheel and the Two Row Wampum, and was designed "to affirm the

[19] https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/mcmaster-aims-to-grow-number-of-indigenous-grad-students-in-canada/article25715514/

[20] https://www.thespec.com/news-story/8050491-acknowledgment-reconciliation-and-reckoning-are-we-experiencing-an-indigenous-moment-/

[21] https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/mcmaster-reaffirms-commitment-to-supporting-indigenous-community/ , https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/reconcil-1a03-reconciling-what-indigenous-relations-in-canada/

[22] https://dailynews.mcmaster.ca/articles/mcmaster-unveils-new-indigenous-circle-teaching-and-gathering-space/

importance of Indigenous knowledge to the university community".[22] In their report

entitled 'Deepening our Relationship: Partnering with Aboriginal Communities to

Strengthen Ontario Campuses', the Council of Ontario Universities (2017) states

(Entrance to the Indigenous Studies Department, Wilson Building)

that McMaster has also altered its physical spaces by planting a memorial tree in support

of missing and murdered Indigenous women, and has 'considered' raising a Six Nations

Hiawatha or Confederacy flag on campus.

<u>Lakehead University</u>

Thunder Bay ON, Canada:

Lakehead University is located in the city of Thunder Bay. Sitting adjacent to

Lake Superior, Thunder Bay is the most populous municipality in north-western Ontario,

with approximately 107,909 residents.[23] According to the 2016 Canadian Census, Thunder Bay's urban Indigenous population is 12.7% of its residents (Statistics Canada 2016). The city began as a fur trading outpost, but grew into a transportation hub.[23] Eventually the economy became more based around forestry and manufacturing, but more recently this has been transforming into a knowledge economy.[23] The city of Thunder Bay has a long history of racism against Indigenous peoples, with individuals from First Nations dying at a disproportionate rate and leading the country in hate crimes against Indigenous peoples (as reported in 2015) (Dunk 2003; Jago 2019; Talaga 2017). The city of Thunder Bay, and Lakehead University (Thunder Bay Campus), are located on the traditional lands of the Fort William First Nation, Signatory to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850 (Lakehead University 2018).

Fort William First Nation:

Fort William First Nation (Fort William Indian Reserve 52) is an Anishinaabe community located on the western shore of Lake Superior.[24] It currently covers 5,815.1 hectares (14,369 acres) adjacent to Thunder Bay and has approximately 1798 members, with 832 living on reserve.[25]

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[23] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thunder_Bay#Demographics
[24] https://fwfn.com/
[25] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_William_First_Nation

The University:

Lakehead University began as a technical institute in 1946 and then was later formally established as a university in 1965.[26] In 1965, the Lakehead University Act was given Royal Assent and the first degrees in Arts and Science were established.[27] Currently Lakehead has approximately 8,680 students.[26] Within the student body, approximately 1,091 students self-identified as Indigenous during the 2016/17 academic year – one of the highest Indigenous student populations of any university in Canada.[28]

Lakehead University has developed six main programs specifically engaging with Indigenous peoples and culture. The Indigenous Learning program is an interdisciplinary, cross-cultural department examining societal structures and how Indigenous populations in Canada relate to the mainstream (offering a variety of degrees from BA to HBSW and BEd).[29] The university also offers a 5-year bachelors of education program (HBEd) for peoples of Indigenous descent, Indigenous Language Instructors degree programs and an Indigenous Teacher Education Program.[30] Further the university offers two programs for Indigenous students looking to bridge into university programming in a less traditional manner – the Native Access Program and the Native Nurses Entry Program.[30]

In support of the Indigenous student population, Lakehead University has a wide variety of cultural and support services in place. Among the cultural services offered are

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[26] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/overview
[27] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/overview/history
[28] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/overview/facts/aboriginal
[29] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/other-programs/aboriginal-programs/indigenous-learning/node/3787
[30] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/programs/other-programs/aboriginal-programs

an elder in residence, cultural teachings and ceremonies, monthly Miijim Noongom (student potlucks), traditional craft sessions, annual fall harvest and the LUNSA powwow.[31] There are also numerous academic, individual and financial services offered specifically for Indigenous students including, but not limited to: workshops, on and off-campus service information sessions, application assistance and employment referrals[31]. Further supporting Indigenous students at Lakehead is the Lakehead University Native Students Association that operates on campus.

Policies and Programs:

Lakehead University has endeavoured to include Indigenous students and communities into the university community and environment at each level. These efforts are exemplified within the university's official Strategic Plan 2018-2023 (Lakehead 2018). Within this strategic plan the President and Vice Chancellor described the university's goals as "continuing to prioritize high calibre research and education…by building strong local, global and Indigenous partnerships that champion equity and access" (Lakehead 2018: 6). In the creation of this strategic plan it is outlined how the university is striving to provide Indigenous students with the support they need to have success through Indigenous partnerships, collaboration, and a commitment to social justice and graduate outcomes (Lakehead 2018). Lakehead University has also declared a commitment to increasing the number of Indigenous students and faculty (Lakehead 2018).

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[31] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/tb/aboriginal-services/cultural-services

Lakehead university was the first university in Canada to introduce an Indigenous content requirement into all undergraduate programs (Lakehead 2018). The requirement was implemented in the 2016/17 academic year, and requires all undergraduates to fulfill a degree requirement of one 0.5 Full Course Equivalent course that contains 50%, or 18 hours, of Indigenous knowledge and/or content.[32] The university's Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) has also committed to the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge/elders within their program and made a public statement regarding commitment to reconciliation efforts and supporting Indigenous students.[33] Lakehead University hired the first Indigenous dean of a Canadian law school, however the dean later left the position, citing systemic racism at the university and a hostile work environment as the causes (Yang 2018).

In the mid 1990's, Lakehead University created the Ogimaawin-Aboriginal Governance Council in response to the provincial government's release of the Aboriginal Education and Training Strategy.[34] The membership is comprised of organizations from the surrounding Aboriginal community that are positioned to advise the president's office.[34] This Council has advised the university on the creation of a culturally sensitive environment, academic and support services, and working to increase the number of Indigenous faculty and staff working within the institution.[34] Lakehead University also created the Office of Aboriginal Initiatives. This office strives to administer programs that

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[32] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/ai/icr
[33] https://www.nosm.ca/our-community/indigenous-engagement/reconciliation/
[34] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/sg/ogimaawin-aboriginal-governance-council

support both the academic and personal needs for Indigenous students. Through the delivery of academic, community outreach, cultural support and recruitment programs, this office covers a vast range of program and service delivery strategies to support Indigenous students.[35] Among the many services available is an 'Aboriginal Student Counselor and Transitions Advisor' who provides a counseling service as well as housing/daycare assistance and workshops on topics such as self-care and living in the city for the first time.[36] The elders in residence program also includes the opportunity for individual and group support.[37]

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[35] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/ai-tb
[36] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/aboriginal-services-tb/individual-services/aboriginal-student-counselor
[37] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/tb/aboriginal-services/cultural-services
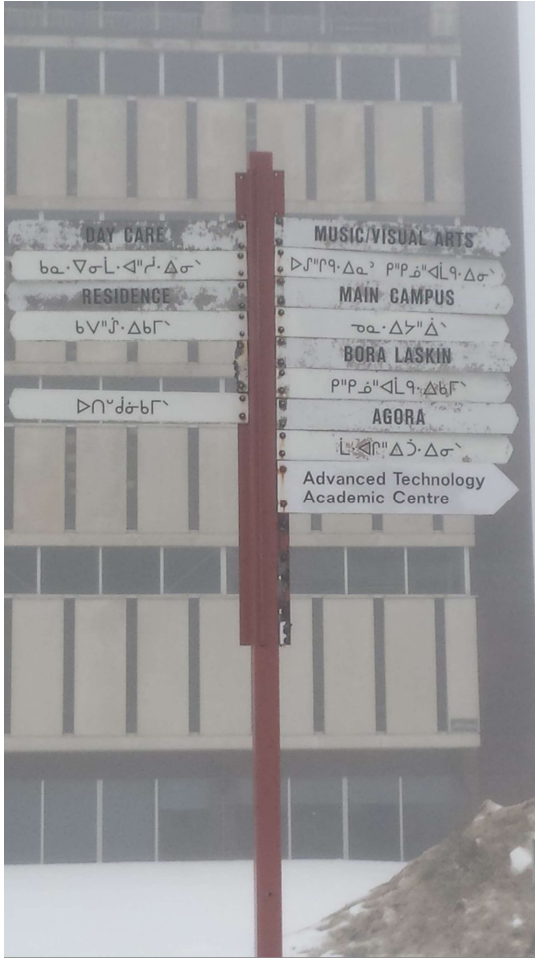
Spaces:

The Indigenous population at Lakehead university is represented on campus through multi-lingual street signs (see picture on the left), elaborate murals by Indigenous artists and numerous art displays located around campus. Specific spaces dedicated to Indigenous students include the Gakina Nindinawemaaganag Lounge, meaning 'all our relations' in Ojibwe (located in the University Center basement), a Teepee located on campus, a sweat lodge site and Gitigaan (garden).[38] Also available to students is the Aboriginal Awareness Centre, where students can seek peer support, involvement with Indigenous teachings/ceremonies and education/advocacy regarding issues that Indigenous students may be faced with.[39] Another 'space' that is created for Indigenous students is provided by the annual orientation event "Maadaadizi" (meaning 'starts a journey' in Anishinaabemowin). This is an annual student orientation day for

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[38] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/tb/aboriginal-services/cultural-services , https://www.lakeheadu.ca/about/news-and-events/news/archive/2017/node/44628
[39] https://www.lusu.ca/centres/

Indigenous students, and it is significantly supported by both the university and community.[40]

Trent University

Peterborough ON, Canada:

Trent University is located in the city of Peterborough. Peterborough is situated on the Ontonabee River in Central Ontario.[41] Starting out with an economy based in technology and manufacturing industries, Peterborough has moved toward service and tourism industries in more recent times.[41] In 2016, Peterborough's population was estimated to be 82,094 residents (Statistics Canada 2016). Statistics Canada (2016) reported that 4.6% of those residents identified as Indigenous peoples. Peterborough has been reported to have ongoing issues with racism: at cultural, systemic and structural levels (Clysdale 2018). This issue is cited as impacting the lives of residents regarding personal happiness and livelihoods, however, representatives of local Indigenous groups state that it is more subtly expressed now than it was in the past (Clysdale 2018). The city of Peterborough has joined forces with several local organizations to assist in hosting the annual Nogojiwanong Reconciliation Gathering, a community event hosted to provide

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[40] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/tb/aboriginal-services/academic-services/orientation
[41] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peterborough,_Ontario

opportunities for learning about commemorating the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.[42]

The city of Peterborough was originally referred to as 'Nogojiwanong', meaning "place at the end of the rapids" in Anishinaabemowin.[43] The city, and therefore Trent University, are located within the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg peoples.[43] The Anishinaabeg peoples are comprised of 7 distinct groups: the Ojibwa, Odawa, Potawatami, Chippewa, Mississauga, Algonquin and Delaware.[43] Over time, and the unfolding processes of treaties and land claims, four First Nation bands were located in the Peterborough area: Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Alderville First Nation and Mississaugas of Scugog First Nation.[43] This group of First Nations refer to themselves as 'Mississaugas'.[43]

The Mississaugas:

Curve Lake First Nation is located approximately 25km north-east of Peterborough.[44] Located adjacent to Buckhorn and Chemong Lake, Curve Lake is approximately 900 hectares, which includes a mainland peninsula and Fox Island (as well as co-owning some smaller islands).[44] The population is approximately 1,059 people (Statistics Canada 2016).

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[42] https://www.ptbocanada.com/upcoming-events/2019/5/31/nogojiwanong-reconciliation-gathering
[43] https://www.trentu.ca/indigenous/experience/cultural/nogojiwanong-traditional-area
[44] https://www.ptbocounty.ca/en/growing/first-nations.aspx

Hiawatha First Nation is located on the north-east shore of Rice Lake, approximately 30km south of Peterborough, encompassing approximately 2145 acres of land.[44] The population is approximately 439 people, with 201 living on reserve.[45]

Alderville First Nation encompasses approximately 3000 acres[46], the majority of which is located on the south side of Rice Lake, approximately 55km from Peterborough.[47] The population is approximately 950 members.[47]

Scugog First Nation is located on a landlocked parcel of 800 acres that sits on Scugog Island.[48] Scugog Island is approximately 70km south-west of Peterborough.[48] The population is approximately 200 people, with 47 living on reserve.[49]

The University:

Trent University was founded in 1964, and currently has approximately 9,600 students.[50] Trent began building the beginnings of its present-day leadership regarding Indigenous studies very soon after being established, with the creation of the 'Indian-Eskimo Studies' program in 1969.[51] The creation of this program made Trent the first university within North America to have a department with the sole focus of studying Indigenous peoples.[51] The department had a couple of name changes as time passed and

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[45] https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1357840942069/1360163946739
[46] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alderville_First_Nation
[47] http://alderville.ca/
[48] https://scugogfirstnation.com/Public/Home.aspx
[49] https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1357840942093/1360164248407
[50] https://www.trentu.ca/about/trent-numbers
[51] https://www.trentu.ca/indigenous/experience/cultural/nogojiwanong-traditional-area

is now referred to as 'Indigenous Studies'.[51] In 1978, Trent became the first university in Canada to create a 4-year Indigenous studies Bachelor of Arts honours program and in 1986 the university added the first Master of Arts program in Native Studies.[51] A little more than a decade later, in 1997, Trent created the first Native Studies PhD program in Canada.[51] In addition, Trent was the first to offer language courses in Anishnaabe and Mohawk, taught by elders, as part of their Indigenous Studies 4-year program.[51] With over fifty years of work in this area, the current 'Chanie-Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies' has a "long-standing reputation as a leader in Indigenous education and reconciliation".[50]

The department of Indigenous Studies offers a variety of program choices at different levels. The development of each program involved consultation with Indigenous community representatives.[52] At the undergraduate level students can pursue a BA Indigenous Studies, Indigenous Environmental Studies, Niigaaniiwin – The Art of Learning and a Diploma in Foundations of Indigenous Learning.[52] At the graduate level there are three program options: a Canadian Studies and Indigenous studies MA, a Sustainability Studies MA and an Indigenous Studies PhD.[52] The Indigenous Studies PhD program offers some unique components such as a full-year (land-based) Indigenous knowledge course, a three month field placement with either an Indigenous community or organization and the opportunity to apprentice with an Elder or Knowledge Holder in the upper years of the program.[52]

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[52] https://www.trentu.ca/indigenous/

Through the First Peoples House of Learning (FPHL) at Trent University, numerous personal, academic and cultural support services are provided. These include, but are not limited to, recruitment services, academic program services, tutoring, financial assistance and peer mentorship opportunities.[53] FPHL further provides access to traditional teachings, culturally-based workshops and culturally-based personal counseling.[53] To further support Indigenous students, the Trent University Native Association has been operating on campus since 1969.[54] This student-led organization organizes cultural, social and recreational events throughout the academic year, as well as providing opportunities for the discussion of issues faced by Indigenous students and peoples.[54]

Policies and Programs:

Trent University has been striving to create an environment that is positive and supportive for Indigenous students. In order to move toward this goal, they have implemented many different programs, policies and working groups on campus. One example of this is the Indigenous Diploma options referenced above: Indigenous Learning, Indigenous Environmental Studies and Foundations of Indigenous Learning for Future Nursing Students. These three Diploma programs are designed specifically for Indigenous students who may not meet the traditional entrance requirements for university, but are looking to access university programming through another route.[53]

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[53] https://www.trentu.ca/fphl/
[54] https://www.trentu.ca/indigenousstudies/experience

As stated by the Provost and Vice President Academic, Trent University's goal is that "reconciliation becomes fully engrained into our everyday work as a university" (First Nations Drum 2017). In response to the information released by the TRC, Trent University issued a public statement in 2015 regarding their intent to actively pursue reconciliation and subsequently published a document titled "Preparing Students for a 21st Century Canada" (Trent University 2017).[55] This document contains a detailed outline of how Trent University plans to continue moving toward reconciliation. The three main directions are outlined as: education of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students regarding Indigenous peoples and knowledges, supporting the educational achievements of Indigenous students within any chosen discipline, and the education of all non-Indigenous members of the larger Trent and Peterborough communities regarding accurate histories of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous knowledges and current social and political realities that Indigenous peoples face (Trent University 2017).

One of the tools the university is using to reach this goal is the implementation of an academic requirement for all undergraduate students to complete 0.5 credits from a list of approved 'Indigenous content courses' (the third Canadian university to take this step), and an additional requirement for all students within the Faculty of Education to take a 36 hour course on Indigenous and Environmental Sustainability (Council of Ontario Universities 2017; First Nations Drum 2017). Trent University further created a Reconciliation-Resurgence option as a 'mini-minor' that can be completed alongside an undergraduate degree. This 'mini-minor' is intended to provide students with the

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[55] https://www.trentu.ca/news/story/333

knowledge and skills necessary to engage in the nationwide ongoing discussions regarding these topics.[56] A 'Reconciliation Lecture Series' was also initiated in 2019 (First Nations Drum 2017).[57] David Newhouse, Chair of Indigenous Studies, stated that this series is intended "to provide an opportunity for the university community to learn of challenges and success" involved in the ongoing process of reconciliation.[57]

Further efforts include the establishment of the Indigenous Research Centre (intended to unite researchers across the university community), creation of the Centre for Indigenous Learning (a within-library holding of significant Indigenous documents), formation of the Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogies working group (assists faculty in design/review of Indigenous content courses), formation of a subcommittee of the Undergraduate Studies Committee (that reviews courses on the approved Indigenous content list), and the maintenance of the Indigenous Education Council (formed in 1993, has played a large role in creating/introducing of new programs, direction for FPHL and Chanie-Wenjack School for Indigenous Studies) (First Nations Drum 2017).[58]

Beyond the more formal structures, programs and committees mentioned above, Trent University has also engaged in other related efforts such as organizing the 'Great Walk' in 2018 (designed to recreate the same walk that occurred in 1968 to affirm commitment to reconciliation)[59] and hosting the annual elders gathering (where Indigenous knowledges can be learned through stories and knowledge shared by Elders

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[56] https://www.trentu.ca/futurestudents/option/indigenous-reconciliation-resurgence?target=undergraduate
[57] https://www.trentu.ca/news/story/23717
[58] https://www.trentu.ca/fphl/welcome/indigenous-education-council
[59] https://www.trentu.ca/colleges/welcome/champlain-college/events-traditions/great-walk

and Traditional People).[60] Trent University was also the first in Canada to establish a practice, going back several decades, of appointing professors (elders) to tenure track positions based on their Indigenous knowledge.[61]

Spaces:

Indigenous people at Trent University may find themselves represented in Indigenous art and historical pictures that are on display in the hallways of buildings such as Gzowski College (see picture below), which houses the FPHL.

Beyond these visual depictions there are several spaces on campus that are dedicated to Trent University's Indigenous student population such as a Tipi, Sweat lodge, Wigwam and Medicine Garden.[53] Students may also access the Ernest and Florence Benedict Gathering Space. This gathering space, located in Gzowski College, hosts a wide variety of activities, ceremonies and workshops[62]. Indigenous students may also choose to take advantage of the student lounge, which contains work areas, computers and a lending library.[62]

[60] https://www.trentu.ca/indigenousstudies/experience/elders-and-traditional-gathering
[61] https://www.trentu.ca/vpacademic/sites/trentu.ca.vpacademic/files/documents/SCIE%20Report_0.pdf
[62] https://www.trentu.ca/fphl/welcome/our-spaces

Cross-Context Comparison:

The descriptions above provide a significant amount of detail about the universities (programs, services and spaces) as well as the wider urban context. It can be seen that each of these universities has taken steps intended to begin addressing goals of reconciliation as per the TRC's Calls to Action. However, their larger urban surroundings, chosen goals/strategies and implementation methods combine to make each university context distinctive. Drawing on the information presented above, this section is designed to succinctly summarize some of the details in order to bring attention to the more major differences between the research sites.

The first difference to be addressed is the wider urban contexts that contain each of the universities. There are some major differences in terms of the number of Indigenous residents, as well as levels of racism experienced throughout the city. The percentages of Indigenous residents range from 2% of the population in Hamilton, to 12.7% of the population in Thunder Bay (with Peterborough sitting in between at 4.6%). Although racism against Indigenous residents is cited as occurring in both Hamilton and Peterborough, Thunder Bay has a long history involving racism and leads the country in terms of hate crimes directed toward Indigenous peoples.

Regarding institutional presentation, Lakehead and Trent have been much more public about creating and incorporating new policies and programs for Indigenous students. Both of these institutions have created, and made readily available to the public, highly detailed strategic plans for how they are going to address reconciliation with

Indigenous peoples in Canada, and Indigenous students on campus more specifically. These plans have been shared through their university websites as evidence of their efforts. McMaster has not made any similar strategic plan (or if it has it is not readily available to the public).

On each campus, the level of visibility of Indigenous students and the Indigenous student community are quite different. Lakehead and Trent have a much higher level of visibility than McMaster. Some examples of this visibility on the Lakehead and Trent campuses include public displays (such as Indigenous-language street signs, Indigenous community flags and murals by Indigenous artists) and overall higher average numbers of Indigenous students on campus (McMaster – 1.5% Indigenous learners versus Lakehead – 12.6% Indigenous learners). In fact, Lakehead has one of the highest Indigenous student populations of any university in Canada.[28] A further difference that impacts visibility has to do with physical spaces dedicated to Indigenous students. For example, Trent and Lakehead both have multiple ceremonial spaces available to Indigenous students, whereas McMaster only recently added its first space – which is referred to as a learning circle and gathering space (as opposed to ceremonial).

Each university provides a wide range of programs and services, but these are not without significant difference. One example is mandatory Indigenous-content courses– both Lakehead and Trent have a mandatory course component, but McMaster does not. Another point of note has to do with access programs. All three universities have special access programs where Indigenous students can gain entry to university programming through less traditional means, however, Lakehead's 'Native Access Program' is different

in its design. The 1-year program does not specifically work toward a university diploma or degree, but is preparatory for a potential university transition. Furthering differences in academic programming, Trent has a graduate-level program available in Indigenous studies, but Lakehead and McMaster do not. And in terms of services, Trent has an Indigenous wellness counselor available to students (a service that my data has shown is very important to Indigenous students), but McMaster and Lakehead do not.

This description of differences is not exhaustive, but provides further clarification into how the campus contexts vary. The analysis of student experiences in the chapters below will provide insights into how these contextual differences may impact the lived experiences of those impacted by racism in the university environment. Having established a basis for comparing the three university contexts, research methods and ethics will now be addressed.

Research Methods and Ethics

Methodology:

The methodological approach I chose for exploring questions of how the history, context, and present realities of racism and oppression contribute to the lived experiences of Indigenous post-secondary students in Canada has three elements: in-depth interviews, ethnographic observation and a demographic survey. Between 2016 and 2019 I completed interviews with Indigenous university students at the three universities outlined above: McMaster University, Lakehead University and Trent University. The

in-depth interviews are the main data source for this research. To supplement this data, I spent time exploring each campus and attending events connected to Indigenous students, such as an Indigenous student fundraiser, Indigenous student panel presentation, on-campus student-led policy meeting, an Indigenous access-program class and casual Indigenous student social gatherings. While exploring the campuses I visited many different spaces. Some of these spaces were more specific to Indigenous students (such as the Indigenous student lounges, relevant academic offices, and official gathering spaces), however I also spent considerable time navigating more 'general' spaces (such as libraries, on-campus coffee shops and student centers) to experience the environment and observe how Indigenous peoples and communities were represented there. Through this ethnographic fieldwork I was seeking to gain better understandings of the contexts that the Indigenous students were experiencing, the nature and manifestations of racism that were occurring, how this impacted the personal and academic lives of these students and how the students interpreted/reacted to these issues.

I interviewed 27 Indigenous students across the three universities: 10 at McMaster University, 8 at Trent University and 9 at Lakehead University. Ethics protocols regarding research with Indigenous peoples, as outlined by CIHR et al (2010) require gaining the informed consent of the relevant Indigenous communities before proceeding with research efforts. Due to the context for this project being university campuses, the student population did not represent/align with any particular set of Indigenous communities, but rather many different cultural and geographically varied communities. This made it impossible to meet with any single representative who might have granted

approval. I did, however, seek out meetings with high-ranking and well-respected

Indigenous members of the university administration/faculty at each university to discuss

my research proposal. Alongside this, I also obtained clearance through the research

ethics board at each university (including an additional review by the Aboriginal

Education Council at Trent University). Although from varied communities and

geographies, the Indigenous students interviewed are connected through a shared

experience of living as Indigenous peoples in Canada. They are living their lives within

this shared context where inevitably their families have historically endured the long

history of colonization and now its current manifestations in present day society. As

stated by Bombay et al. (2010:513), all Indigenous peoples in Canada "share common

experiences of colonization, discriminatory policies imposed by the government, and the

forced loss of cultural traditions".

Reactions by the Indigenous student communities to my presence on campus

varied. As I began to speak with Indigenous students it became clear that at each campus

knowledge of my presence was being shared, and discussions being had, regarding my

purpose. Some students I spoke with expressed a level of curiosity and suspicion as to

why I was there and asking questions regarding their experiences, whereas others seemed

immediately eager to discuss their personal perspectives. Completing a multi-site

interview-based project presented the challenge of establishing a positive rapport quickly

and effectively in different contexts (Small 2009). By maintaining a completely

transparent position and answering any and all questions the students had, regarding the

project, myself personally or myself as a researcher, I found that even the more

apprehensive students were quickly able to become comfortable and engage in open discussions.[63] Throughout this process, some of the students from more northern communities who potentially saw me as a 'southern outsider' were able to use their own personal lines of questioning and discussion to build a picture of how we were connected as 'people' on a more personal/individual level, and once this was established they appeared to feel at ease to discuss the difficult experiences they've had with racism, oppression, and subsequent impacts.[64]

Although the majority of students quickly became comfortable and engaged in open discussions, there were a few exceptions. One female student met with me to learn more about the interview, and in fact completed the demographic survey, but then declined the in-person interview. She expressed that there were so many draws and pressures within her schedule already that she did not have time available, and it appeared from our discussion that she was unsure how my research fit into her own goals for the Indigenous community on campus. There were also a few students who contacted me after the interviews had been completed to express concern, or apprehension, about what they had disclosed and how it might be perceived when my work was published, particularly if it was connected to them. However, after follow-up discussions with me regarding the project and my research approach, and ongoing dialogue regarding how their data is used, no students chose to withdraw from the project.

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[63] Walker (2003) argues that 'researcher transparency' regarding cultural background and worldview is critical, as the information disclosed will heavily influence the information that Indigenous participants choose to share.

[64] Dunk (2003) discusses how individuals from more northern communities may perceive persons from southern, more populated areas as 'elites' who are unlikely to have any true understanding of their position or personal experiences.

When choosing to use an in-depth interview research methodology, it is important to recognize the limitations of this approach. One limitation involves issues of representativeness and generalizability. As stated by Weiss (1995: 29), "A sample that is not chosen randomly cannot be claimed to be representative even if some of its demographic characteristics match those of the country as a whole". Therefore, the ability to generalize the findings to the wider regional or national population(s) is reduced. Furthermore, there are potential issues when your data is dependent on self-reports by the interviewees, which could potentially contain errors in terms of accuracy or skewed accounts due to personal belief systems. Despite these limitations, the in-depth research interview process can provide dense and extensive data that is particularly useful for understanding the complexities of lived experience, a main goal of this research project (Weiss 1995). This interview method was also chosen in order to ensure that the Indigenous students' voices were centered and emphasized at each phase of the research process.

As the study proceeded, I was unable to recruit as many interviewees as I had initially planned. One of the reasons for this was distance between the campus locations. There was an inherent difficulty regarding the long-distance travel requirements (therefore limited time available in-person on-campus) and the ability to build relationships. Beyond that the students each had very busy schedules involving different combinations of school work, employment commitments and family priorities, and simply did not perceive they had the opportunity to participate. Waiting for availability within the students' schedules caused large research delays and contributed to the

interview process stretching over multiple years. It is also possible that as a researcher, there was a sense of suspicion from a few students as to my goals and agendas. However, by far, the typical experience was that students became comfortable and engaged in frank discussions after I openly answered any questions they had and established a rapport. When an "open and trusting alliance" is created between the researcher and interviewee, the qualitative interview process can be very effective (Weiss 1995:249).

Despite not reaching my original goal for the number of interviews, I ceased interviewing after speaking with 27 students because a relative balance had been reached between the universities and due to the apparent strength of the data (similar experiences and perceptions of racism/oppression widely shared both within and between university settings). Due to the apparent reliability of the data, it seems likely that larger studies will support many aspects of these findings and be able to build off of this initial research base.

The interviews were conducted in private offices/meeting rooms, student gathering spaces, homes and some through electronic means such as telephone or Skype.[65] I used multiple methods simultaneously to access interviewees. At each university, with the help of key administrative personnel, some general information about the research project and myself was shared through list-serve databases for Indigenous

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[65] 24 of the interviews were conducted in a one-to-one environment. The only exception was a group of 3 students who had familial ties and requested to be interviewed together. They were of varied ages, 2 men and 1 woman and represented 2 different areas and levels of study. Although this was the only interview that I included of this group-style, it turned out to be extremely productive by allowing the participants to elaborate on specific points shared by each other and generate further lines of discussion that my questions alone may not have triggered.

students. This generated numerous contacts. In the case of Lakehead University, I was

also invited to present my information to a class from the 'Native Access Program',

further sharing with the student community regarding my presence on campus and the

details of my project.

Using these initial contacts, alongside a few others gained through either chance

in-person meetings or referrals, I used a snowball technique with multiple independent

starting points (Biernacki & Waldorf 1991). These starting points created initial

convenience samples and then connections were expanded from that point (Heckathorn

2011). When those chain referrals no longer generated further contacts, or new factors

were at play (such as the start of a new academic year – meaning additional potential

contacts entering the campus environment), new/independent starting points would be

generated by re-sending my information through the e-mail databases. Biernacki and

Waldorf (1991:141) state that using the chain referral (snowball) method is "particularly

applicable when the focus of study is on a sensitive issue, possibly concerning a relatively

private matter and thus requires the knowledge of insiders to locate people for the study".

Furthermore, it is also a helpful method when dealing with a population that has

potentially low visibility (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981; Heckathorn 2011).

In order to achieve a sample that represented a wide range of perspectives and

experiences, I interviewed both male and female students at all levels of post-secondary

education and varied ages. Although it was not possible to seek out interviewees that

represented 'all' possible areas of study, many varied disciplines are represented, as well

as Indigenous students who reside on reserve lands and those based in urban areas.[66]

There were more women interviewed than men as there is a smaller pool of male students

to draw from, with women making up the majority of the student population (Turcott

2011). Many of the interviewees reached out to me directly upon hearing about my

research (either through the mass e-mails or discussions with fellow Indigenous student).

It is possible that this created a selection bias, as respondents who have experienced

racism may have felt more drawn to participate.

The interviews themselves were semi-structured. There was a set list of questions

asked at each interview that included topics such as experiences with racism, perceptions

of why these experiences were occurring, if/how they believed gender played a role,

what they believe needs to be changed within the system, who is responsible for those

changes and how (for the list of interview questions, see Appendix I). Throughout the

interview discussions, the initial questions often generated other issues/lines of discussion

and when this occurred, I would ask follow-up questions to gain further understanding. I

also would employ additional follow-up questions when an interviewee either struggled

with forming a response to a particular question, or they generated an answer where I

needed further clarification to grasp the intended meaning. The interviews ranged in

length from 38 minutes to 111 minutes, but the majority fell into the range of 75 to 90

minutes.

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[66] The interview response rate was 96%. Only 1 student completed a questionnaire, but did not complete an interview. After several failed attempts to schedule a time, the student implied that they were too busy to complete the process.

At the beginning of most interviews a short written survey was administered (there were a small number of respondents who did complete it afterwards due to issues such as time constraints) (To review the survey questions see Appendix II).[67] This survey was given in order to obtain some basic demographic information (such as age, employment status, marital status and family history). Beyond general demographics the students were asked about the race/ethnicity of their 'five best friends' to gain further grasp of intergroup relations on campus. The survey provided further data for clarification of topics that arose and enabled the ability to compare personal contexts, however the methodological strength of this study is the rich qualitative data that was generated from the in-depth interview process. The open-ended design of the interviews allowed for a data-gathering process that provided a comprehensive understanding of context and experience by not limiting participants to a set number of responses, but rather allowing each individual to dictate what elements they chose to identify as important and elaborate on those. This data illustrates not only the substantial impacts that ongoing racism and oppression within the university environment are having on Indigenous students, but also identifies some of the social processes that evolve from these experiences.

The ethnographic observation component of my research provided some very important information regarding when, and how, Indigenous students chose to openly share their feelings about non-Indigenous students and the university structure at large. In

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[67] The response rate for the questionnaires was 89%. Only 3 of the students interviewed did not return the questionnaire. And only 1 student completed a questionnaire, but declined an interview. This brings the total number of questionnaires returned to 25. For survey results, see Appendix III.

some cases, it was also essential for building the level of trust between the students and myself that was needed in order to move forward with the more formal interview and demographic surveys. By spending time on campus and attending various events, I was able to determine particular environments where Indigenous students felt safe to publicly share their beliefs about the university and their time there. Further, as my own visibility on campus increased, students began to recognize my face and connect my presence with the research project under discussion. This opened up productive dialogues which, in turn, built trust regarding my positive intentions as a researcher and generated interview opportunities.

My methodology throughout this research was both deductive and inductive. Although the formal set of interview questions were created at the onset to address variables considered to be theoretically relevant, the open-ended design of the interviews allowed for new, and sometimes unexpected, topics and insights to emerge that were led/directed by the Indigenous students, and both built upon and challenged pre-existing theoretical models (Wilson & Chaddha 2009).[68] Generally speaking, each of the interviews were transcribed and then thematically coded in ATLAS.ti. Throughout the process of interview completion, transcription and coding, there was an ongoing negotiation between the interview data and existing literature on race, oppression, intersectionality, critical race theory, settler-colonial theory, gender and education. As per grounded theory, the processes of data collection and analysis were intertwined – the

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[68] One example of this is the discussion regarding lateral violence in chapter 5. This topic was not included in my original set of interview questions, but emerged repeatedly within the data and became a significant theme.

initial research questions became increasingly modified and refined as the interviews

progressed and questions were modified, or added, to better address and understand the

various themes that arise (Charmaz 2006; Corbin and Strauss 1990; Small 2009; Wilson

and Chaddha 2009; Rich 2012).[69] This research approach allows for those interviewed to

"present their own personal perspectives – revealing how they 'make sense' of the world,

given present and past social experiences" (Carter 2003:139). The theme of lateral

violence as a critical factor for Indigenous students is one example of how a theme arose

and became part of the experiential and theoretical investigation as the research process

evolved (see further discussion in chapter 5). More specific discussion on some of the

themes that emerged and their significance to both experience and theory will be

discussed in more detail throughout the individual dissertation chapters that follow.

By completing comparisons across the interview (and ethnographic) data,

reliability and validity were established. Both within and between universities, similar

stories were told across numerous interviews. With multiple sources confirming the

circumstances, events and environments (with experiences and perceptions of

racism/oppression being widely shared), the strength of the data is apparent.[70] The small

number of exceptions to the evident trends will be noted within each of the content

chapters below. The data gathered through this interview process is comprised of a set of

cases with particular shared characteristics. These shared characteristics, such as

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[69] Charmaz (2006:2) argues that using a grounded theory approach fosters "seeing your data in fresh ways and exploring your ideas about data through early analytic writing", therefore increasing the overall analytic power or the work while constructing theories "grounded in the data".

[70] Biernacki and Waldorf (1981) argue that the researcher can be confident that they have exhausted variations within a particular subgroup when the data becomes repetitious.

Indigeneity, experiences of racism and oppression, aid in not only understanding how

experiences can be similar across these cases despite varied contexts (comparative

analysis), but also how there is potential to extend conclusions drawn through this study

beyond these specific environments, to other contexts where the demographic

characteristics and social experiences are similar, through the exercise of 'logical

inference' (Biernacki & Waldorf 1981; Mitchell 1983; Small 2009).[71]

Ethical Considerations:

Identifying as a non-Indigenous scholar, I was taken aback by the extent to which

the Indigenous students that I interviewed chose to openly discuss serious, and sometimes

painful, experiences, such as encounters with racism and how it has impacted their lives.

From the inception of this project, I have been acutely aware of the importance of

entering into research that engages with Indigenous peoples and their experiences in a

way that is ultimately respectful. The students I interviewed shared important and

powerful stories about their lives and by transferring that knowledge to me also

transferred a great responsibility to engage with, learn from and share this information

appropriately. However, I recognize the challenges

of doing this as a non-Indigenous scholar. In order to make sure that this is done in a

sensitive and appropriate way I strive to ensure that the students' views, concerns and

beliefs are definitively put at the forefront of the work – allowing their experiences and

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[71] Mitchell (1983) states that high validity creates the potential for "extrapolability from any one case study to like situations in general" (190) based on logical inference (which he defines as "the process by which the analyst draws conclusions about the essential linkage between 2 or more characteristics in terms of some explanatory schema"(199-200).

positions to guide the conclusions being drawn, including insights as to why it occurs and what steps can (and should) be taken to help alleviate these difficult aspects of their post-secondary experiences.[72]

Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) comments that it is common for Indigenous peoples not to see themselves represented in research texts, or that the representation is so incomplete/inaccurate that they do not connect with it. This silencing/exclusion of Indigenous peoples is "an example of structural violence in that it restricts Indigenous peoples' free and full expression of their realities and ways of knowing" (Walker 2003:37). By continuously centering the voices of the Indigenous students I am acknowledging their position as experts on their own lives and striving to put forward a representation that Indigenous students will recognize and connect with (Tuck 2017). My role as a researcher is not to evaluate or question the authenticity of each students' experience, but rather to learn from their expert testimony, use comparative strategies to engage with theoretical discussions, and as a result, challenge perceptions of equity and decolonization/reconciliation within the academy.[73]

Each researcher who chooses to work with human participants becomes responsible for protecting those participants from any negative effects of participation. Within this process, great efforts are taken to avoid any identification of the individual contributors when the data becomes published. Although there were some students who

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[72] Smith (1999:210) argues that there are many sites where the fight against oppression and exploitation might take place, but "Indigenous peoples must set the agenda for change themselves, not simply react to an agenda that has been laid out for us by others".

[73] Brant Castellano (2004:102) states that "fundamental to the exercise of self-determination is the right of peoples to construct knowledge in accordance with self-determined definitions of what is real and what is valuable".

indicated a lower level of concern, there were some who were quite concerned that their contribution(s) would not be identified. To that end, throughout the dissertation chapters to follow I use demographic descriptors for any references to individuals and strive to remove any particularly identifying characteristics or place details from the information recounted so that identities are protected. Prior to commencing the interviews, I described (and it was also outlined in the letter of consent) how, despite my best efforts, I could not 100% guarantee confidentiality - that someone, who may already know pieces of their story, might be able to identify the source.

Within this research project, the focus on protecting my interviewees led to serious consideration regarding whether or not to identify the specific universities where the interviews were completed. After much reflection and evaluation, I decided that due to the serious ongoing levels of racism and oppression occurring both systemically and interpersonally at the universities in question, that I had a responsibility to name the locations. Without this 'naming' the institutions would not be held publicly accountable, therefore eliminating the potential for positive change.

The Indigenous students who completed interviews with me shared not only their time, but deeply personal stories about their lives and their visions for the future. Within this project there was no compensation built into the research design, so it was my responsibility as a researcher to determine how to give back to the Indigenous student community in return. The way that I accomplished this was determined by actively listening to what the students needed in the moment, and the end result was different for each person that I interviewed. For some it involved creating a safe-space for vocalizing

their fear, anger, frustration and sometimes the outpouring of previously restrained emotions. For others it involved allowing them to work through their own thoughts and beliefs until they achieved revelations regarding their personal understandings of various circumstances or experiences, which in turn opened doors for them moving forward. And for yet others it involved follow-ups after the interview, acting as a sounding board for future ideas or simply ongoing support through continued communication.

To further honour their contributions, I made sure that ownership of their personal data was theirs at all times and therefore they had the ultimate say regarding its use and distribution (Battiste 2007). The students interviewed came from diverse communities, locations and personal histories so giving back to a 'particular' community wasn't a possibility, therefore I focused on actively listening to the students and professionally supporting each individual as best I could based on their needs. I aim to continue sharing my research findings in the future to increase awareness of these issues and effect positive change within relevant Canadian institutions. It is my hope that administrative leaders at each of the universities being considered will read my dissertation and respond in kind with constructive policy changes.

Thus far, context and methodological approaches have been outlined and discussed. The following chapters will now enter into a discussion of the theoretical approaches being applied and analysis of interview data gathered regarding Indigenous students' experiences with racism within the post-secondary environment. The following research outline indicates how the topics will be presented.

Research Outline:

Chapter 2: This chapter will engage in a discussion of the theoretical frameworks and literature that will be utilized throughout the analyses to follow, including Critical Race Theory, Settler Colonial Theory and Internalized Oppression.

Chapter 3: Throughout this chapter Indigenous students' experiences with racism will be discussed, including types, levels and social or structural locations. This will include aspects such as context, the creation of experience and how these experiences shed light onto theories of oppression and racism.

Chapter 4: Within this chapter the impacts of racism/oppression on campus for Indigenous students will be discussed. The Indigenous students' varied responses to racism, including strategic approaches to impact management, will be analyzed. How these responses relate to, and inform, relevant theoretical approaches will also be discussed.

Chapter 5: This chapter engages in the analysis of Indigenous students' experiences with lateral violence in the university environment, including their responses, resistance and how this contributes and expands on the theory of internalized oppression.

Chapter 6: Within the concluding chapter, the aforementioned discussion of student experiences and contextual analysis are pulled together to demonstrate the importance and relevance of the students' voices and experiences being directly included within the research, and how this has allowed for valuable comparative analysis shedding light on theories of racism and oppression. Indigenous student contributions regarding vitally

necessary changes are also discussed, along with potential policy implications and future

research directions.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Frameworks and Literature Review

Theoretical Frameworks:

This research project engages with a very complex environment. Rooted within the larger socio-political Canadian context (one laden with colonial power structures and hegemonic ideologies), the university environments under question represent microcosms of the larger systems, while also presenting many social and political contextual differences. To engage with the data emerging from these contexts, a combination of critical and reflexive theories are required to comprehensively analyze and understand not only how lived experiences are formed, but also how larger social and political power structures are created and maintained within these institutions. This includes the ways in which the Indigenous students demonstrate renewed determination and a refusal to be oppressed or eliminated.

It will be outlined below how each of the following approaches contributes to understanding these contexts and their phenomena: critical race theory in education, tribal critical race theory, settler colonial theory, theories of internalized oppression, and intersectionality. Further it will be argued that when applied in combination, these theories supplement each other's weaknesses and create a much stronger theoretical perspective for analyzing the Canadian university environment and Indigenous student experiences. Before beginning a discussion of these theoretical approaches, the concepts

of discrimination, race and racism will first be considered, as they are central to the approaches and analysis that follow.

Race, Racism and Discrimination:

Despite greatly changing in form and operation throughout history, the concepts of race and racism are ever-present in contemporary society (Hirschman 2004). They are embedded in Canada's history and are now perpetuated not only by individuals, but also systemically through the systems that govern our society (Backhouse 2001). Racism is a socially constructed ideology that attributes negative characteristics and/or induces negative consequences for particular groups of people (Miles & Brown 2003). Central to this ideology is the concept of race, by its pseudo-biological definition (Miles & Brown 2003). During the Enlightenment, and the development of science, 'race' came to mean "a biological type of human being" (biological determinism) (Miles & Brown 2003:39). Despite the decline of this type of thinking, with any related discourses hanging on by only "tenuous strings", the idea of race that was created has continued on as a way to identify the Other (Miles & Brown 2003:49).

Along with the concept of race is the process of racialization. Racialization can be defined as 'a process of delineation of group boundaries and of allocation of persons within those boundaries by primary reference to (supposedly) inherent and/or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics" (Miles & Brown:100). The process of racialization operationalizes the concept of race to place human beings within particular

groupings and inherently racializes the processes, structures and institutions that they engage with (Miles & Brown 2003). Ultimately, racism (and racialization) are linked with exclusionary practices and the expression of other exclusionary ideologies (Miles & Brown 2003). The process of racialization also supports the analysis of racism from a structural perspective. The socially constructed ideologies of race and racism become operationalized through racialization, as outlined above, and then become completely enmeshed systemically, seen through comparisons of the 'life-chances' of different races (Bonilla-Silva 1996). Also linked to race and racism is the concept of discrimination. Discrimination can be defined as "actions or practices carried out by members of dominant groups, or their representatives, which have differential and negative impacts on members of subordinate groups" (Feagin & Feagin 1978:25). Feagin & Feagin (1978) also state, in contrast to direct actions carried out by group members, that discrimination can also be built in to larger scale structures and institutions.

Based on its interactions with other social phenomena and its 'journey' through different historical contexts, the ideology of racism is not static but ever changing (Miles & Brown 2003). Miles & Brown (2003:63) state that "racism as an ideological configuration has been reconstituted by the dominant class relations, and thoroughly reworked". Racist ideologies are created and recreated within contexts of inequality (inherent domination and subordination), so the ideological representations "are never equally weighted", or just (Miles & Brown 2003: 104). These ideologies (or collective patterns of thought), "organize, preserve, and perpetuate power structures" (Henry &

Tator 2010:16). Racism can take on different forms, and this is largely determined by the context that the ideology is operating within (Miles & Brown 2003; Henry & Tator 2010).

Henry and Tator (2010) divide the forms of racism into two main analytical categories: everyday racism (glances, gestures, forms of speech, physical movements) and systemic racism (laws, rules and norms that are embedded in the social system – leading to unequal distributions of resources and rewards among groups). Through its various forms and operations, racism may be subtly/indirectly implied so that those impacted are not immediately aware (Henry & Tator 2010). However, Henry and Tator (2010:17) state that in some circumstances racism "may only be visible to its victims (causing others to deny its existence altogether). Therefore, it is argued that the personal stories of those who have directly experienced racism provide imperative counter-narratives to the dominant and oppressive discourse, which in Canadian society includes denial of ongoing problems with racism and inequality (Henry & Tator 2010).

Throughout its ideological reconfigurations, one of the more general changes that has been witnessed is a shift from old-fashioned racism (overt, blatant) to more covert forms (indirect, subtle, hidden) (Dovidio & Gaertner 2004). This is often referred to as 'new' or 'modern' racism, no longer overt in nature and allowing 'conversations' to occur about race without directly mentioning it (Henry & Tator 2010). In societies, such as Canada, where 'old-fashioned' racism is viewed negatively, the use of racism in its more covert forms and operations allows individuals, and institutions, to avoid negative stigma and present a non-prejudiced image (Dovidio & Gaertner 2004).

Theorists have dedicated great effort to identifying and analyzing the different forms and operations of racism. The list of theories of racism has become quite lengthy including (but not necessarily limited to):

- The 'new' racism (norms of 'natural human nature')
- Institutional racism (expanding concept beyond beliefs to include individual and institutional actions, structural subordination)
- Symbolic racism (blended anti-black feeling with individualism)
- Laissez-Faire racism (rationalizing inequality – claims to support equality, while maintaining negative, stereotypical beliefs)
- Colour-blind racism (semantic moves to express racial ideals and ideas)
- Democratic racism (justificatory arguments/mechanisms that maintain contradictory ideologies)
- Aversive racism (a belief in White supremacy, but inactive, implicit)
- Modern racism (conservative ideologies used to justify discriminatory behaviours)
- Legitimized racism (overt, but hidden by social norms/systems)

(Bobo, Kluegel & Smith 1997; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Dovidio & Gaertner 2004; Henry & Tator 2010; Miles & Brown 2003; Quillian 2006; Robertson 2015; Sears 1988).

Although approaching the investigation of racism from different angles, there is still some overlap between the theories. For example, symbolic, modern and aversive theories of racism are all striving to explain the maintenance of denying personal prejudice while simultaneously having underlying racist feelings and beliefs (Dovidio & Gaertner 2004). However, while modern and symbolic racism approaches look at the attitudes of political conservatives, aversive is looking at the attitudes of political liberals (Dovidio & Gaertner 2004). Democratic racism is also cited as being related to new, aversive and symbolic theories of racism in terms of maintaining an underlying conflict, but it differs from them by putting forth a value conflict, "liberal principles are the very

language and conceptual framework through which intolerance and exclusion are enabled, reinforced, defined and defended" (Henry & Tator 2010:24). Symbolic and laissez-faire theories of racism both investigate the maintenance of conflicting positions, but symbolic is focused on personal racial threat, whereas laissez-faire includes a focus on group interests (Sears 1988). In a Canadian study, Denis (2015) examined Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations through the theoretical lens of laissez-faire racism and group position theory. Denis (2015) determined that the laissez-faire racism was not purely based on ignorance, but also a defensive reaction to protect perceived group interests. Legitimized racism varies somewhat from the other theories outlined above in that it discusses how, for Indigenous peoples, racism is very overt and visible but settlers don't recognize it as such and often appear blind to its presence and impacts (Robertson 2015).

As discussed above, the form and operation of racism is context specific (both temporally and spatially), which explains why so many theories of racism exist. As a socially constructed ideology that is ever-changing, variations in how racism is presented and perceived are also ever-changing. However, there are some definite overall trends between theories that are apparent. As racism theories have developed there appears to be agreement that, in contemporary society, ideologies of racism are most commonly expressed in a covert manner, contain a negative evaluation component, operate on both individual and systemic (structural) levels and are linked to exclusionary practices/unequal distribution among groups. It will be demonstrated below how the different dimensions of the university context allow for the presentation of multiple forms

of racism, on both individual and structural levels, and how some of the theories of racism outlined above can assist in explaining these social phenomena. Beyond the current racism-theories and the debates therein, this research places significant value on the perceptions of the Indigenous students themselves as to what constitutes racism and when/how they are experiencing it. As per Critical Race Theory (discussed in detail below), and echoed by Henry and Tator (2010) and Collins (2019), the lived experiences of individuals facing racism and oppression provide invaluable insight and 'on the ground' theorizing regarding racism - its forms, operations and impacts.

Critical Race Theory in Education:

Critical Race Theory's origins lie in the acknowledgment of the need for theoretical and methodological approaches that assist in understanding those who are located at the margins of society (Solórzano & Yosso 2002: Tate 1997). The main premises of Critical Race Theory (CRT) include how the concept of 'race' is socially constructed, that racism operates in ways that maintain political and economic interest of White people and that racism is embedded systemically (within laws, policies and institutions) in ways that further these interests (Curry 2016; Gillborn 2006; Ladson-Billings 1998; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tate 1997). CRT maintains a central focus on race and racism throughout all aspects of the research process, while simultaneously acknowledging how the discourses on race intersect with numerous other factors (such as class and gender) to impact lived experiences (Collins 1990; Gillborn 2006; Solórzano &

Yosso 2002). Further insight is gained through the understanding that factors, including

(but not limited to) race, class, gender and age, "operate not as unitary, mutually

exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena that in turn shape complex

social inequalities" (Collins 2015:1). Acknowledging that there is a "recursive

relationship between social structures and cultural representations", between the

formation of knowledge projects and the structures within which they are contained, can

aid in understanding both their maintenance and how they might be altered (Collins

2015:10; Omi & Winant 1994).

With 'biological' arguments about race predominantly being replaced, within the

social sciences, by the acknowledgment that concepts of race are socially created, there

are several definitions of race/racism that aid in understanding why CRT views race as a

"powerful social construct and signifier" (Battiste 2013; Ladson-Billings 1998:8;

Satzewich & Liodakis 2010). Lorde (1992:496) defined racism as "the belief in the

inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby the right to dominance". And

Marable (1992) simply outlines racism as a system designed around ignorance and

exploitation, which creates a power used for oppression of others. Memmi (1969:185)

refers to racism as "the generalized and final assigning of values to real or imaginary

differences, to the accuser's benefit and at his victim's expense, in order to justify the

former's own privilege or aggression". In summary, racism (as outlined above) occurs

when a group believes themselves to be superior and has accumulated the power to take

action in ways that negatively affect other racial/ethnic groups (Solórzano & Yosso

2002). CRT works to understand how dominant group power has been

created/maintained and to challenge the acceptance of dominant groups "experiences and judgement as the authoritative standard" (Ladson-Billings 1998; Tate 1997:196).

When applied to the area of education, CRT provides a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom" while maintaining a keen focus on the inter-connectedness of race and racism with multiple other sources of domination…a complex layering of subordination (Solórzano & Yosso 2002:25). Incorporated into the focus of how forms of domination may intersect is the importance of context and how "people in different social locations have different perspectives and understandings" (Gillborn 2006:22; Henry & Tator 2010; Ladson-Billings 1998; Nakano Glenn 2002). Within educational institutions there are standard historical claims of objectivity, meritocracy, colour-blindness and equal opportunity, however CRT challenges these claims as protective mechanisms for maintaining dominant group power and promoting White privilege (Gillborn 2006; Henry & Tator 2010; Lopez 2003; Satzewich & Liodakis 2010; Solórzano & Yosso 2002). Lopez (2003:82) states that representations, such as 'equal opportunity', maintained by institutions of education "drive racism underground, making it increasingly difficult for people of colour to name their reality". In challenging these claims CRT "exposes deficit-informed research that silences and distorts epistemologies" of oppressed groups (Dion & Dion 2018; Gillborn 2006; Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

This theoretical approach maintains an ongoing commitment to social justice by not only identifying and analyzing issues of racism and oppression within educational institutions but moving beyond that to seek transformative responses to said oppression(s) (Brayboy 2005; Gillborn 2006; Ladson-Billings 1998; Solórzano & Yosso 2002). Gillborn (2006:26) argues that scholarly work must "be engaged in the process of rejecting and deconstructing the current patterns of exclusion and oppression". CRT's inclusion of an intersectional analytic approach, and also suggestions of intersectionality as a potential form of critical praxis, supports "social justice projects aimed at remedying complex social inequalities", potentially creating important tools for political engagement (Collins 2015:15). CRT recognizes educational institutions as complex systems that concurrently have contradictory operations (Solórzano & Yosso 2002). Within their 'walls', these institutions have the potential to "oppress and marginalize", as well as to "emancipate and empower" (Solórzano & Yosso 2002:26). Due to these competing potentials, in combination with complex systems of intersecting social and structural forces, CRT acknowledges that within education the oppression and discrimination "are met with multiple forms of resistance" (Solórzano & Yosso 2002:26).

A key contribution of CRT within education research has been its focus on centering experiential knowledge as a legitimate and imperative component for understanding racial subordination (Ladson-Billings 1998; Solórzano & Yosso 2002). Historically, lived experiences have been excluded from research paradigms, texts and theoretical approaches, which has resulted in research processes and literature that either silence the voices of oppressed groups or present experiences in an inaccurate manner

that supports maintaining the position of the dominant group (Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

In challenging these exclusionary processes and texts, CRT centers 'lived experiences' as

critical forms of knowledge and frames them as sources of group-strength, as opposed to

a 'deficit-informed' approach (Satzewich & Liodakis 2010; Solórzano & Yosso 2002). It

is argued that by including those impacted by racism in the research "they become

empowered participants, hearing their own stories and the stories of others, listening to

how arguments against them are framed and learning to make the arguments to defend

themselves" – a form of "psychic preservation for marginalized groups" (Cote-Meek

2014; Ladson-Billings 1998:14; Solórzano & Yosso 2002:27). By focusing on lived

experiences and arguing against ahistoricism and uni-disciplinary research analyses, CRT

demonstrates that race and racism has played roles in creating both historical and present-

day contexts (Lopez 2003; Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

Research has shown how White privilege often operates as an invisible force,

becoming normalized as to go unseen – becoming a "structural feature of human

experience" for members of oppressed groups (DiAngelo 2011; Gillborn 2006; Ladson-

Billings 1998; McIntosh 1989; Tate 1997:219). Lnu scholar Marie Battiste (2013:125)

states that "Whiteness and privilege are less evident to those who swim in the sea of

whiteness and dominance. Confronting racism, then, is confronting racial superiority and

its legacy, not only in history but also in contemporary experience". The 'master

narratives' of the dominant race construct 'racial stories' within society which, through

hegemonic mechanisms of power, distort and silence those being described (Gramsci

1971; Tate 1997; Solórzano & Yosso 2002). Tate (1997:198) states that the 'cultural

ethos' that are created as a result "motivate culture-specific ensembles of behaviour rather than to deal with the truth". As a result of such cultural ethos, 'cultural deficit' theoretical perspectives continue to operate within education, which maintains 'majoritarian stories' (or master narratives) and promotes the creation of assimilation-based solutions (Cote-Meek 2014; Ladson-Billings 1998; Lopez 2003; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tate 1997).

A specific danger of the 'cultural deficit' perspectives is that those who are immersed in those belief systems may not see any need to search out different possibilities, or explanations, for the phenomenon they are examining (Tate 1997). To combat these narratives and bring attention to the presence and ongoing operation of White privilege, CRT utilizes storytelling as a form of resistance – the creation of counter stories that contradict and disrupt the dominant narrative by presenting the "racial reality" (Dion 2018; Gillborn 2006; Ladson-Billings 1998; Lopez 2003:85; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tate 1997). Ladson-Billings (1998:13,14) refers to this as members of oppressed groups "naming their reality" and "linking form and substance", which "can catalyze the necessary cognitive conflict to jar dyconscious racism" (Dion & Dion 2018). In education, CRT focuses on the experiences and responses of students belonging to oppressed groups and uses the creation of stories (based on compiled data), in combination with critical analysis of the social and political context, to counter the master narratives that maintain the status quo (Solórzano & Yosso 2002). The inclusion of previously silenced voices into analyses informs not only on experience, but on how best to educate members of both dominant and oppressed groups (Ladson-Billings 1998).

The origin and focus of CRT has been largely on the United States and the experiences of black people within that context (Solórzano & Yosso 2002). CRT has typically not been focused on the experiences of Indigenous peoples. That said, CRT can make a major contribution to the critical and reflexive theoretical and research approaches regarding the experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada - while also maintaining a focus on not just analysis, but transforming systems to move toward the elimination of racism and other intersecting axes of domination. There have been multiple critiques of CRT, including that it implies White scholars have less place/or standing when discussing race issues versus scholars belonging to an oppressed/racialized group (who are automatically given increased authority) (Subotnik 1998; Tate 1997). Further critiques include that arguments indicating that 'minority scholars' current positions have been impacted by prejudiced systems are false and that there is no placing of responsibility for the oppressed group's social condition on the group themselves (Subotnik 1998; Tate 1997).

Proponents of CRT have countered these critiques by citing them as simply reflecting an ingrained belief in the 'dominant discourse' (Tate 1997). DiAngelo (2011) states that 'racial stress', such as the depiction of one's social position as a member of the dominant group and receiving the benefits therein, can trigger defensive responses that are intended to create a return to 'racial equilibrium' (Hardes 2006). Questioning of the dominant discourse can create intense discomfort for those who benefit from the current system, but DiAngelo (2011:66) states that denying "authentic racial engagement" only holds racism and oppression in place. One of the originators of CRT, Kimberle

Crenshaw, states that "a belief in colour blindness and equal process is illogical in a society in which specific groups have been treated differently historically and in which the outcomes of this differential treatment continue into the present" (Tate 1997:231). Reframing racism as both a historical and contemporary social process, while simultaneously centering race/racism throughout all steps of research/analysis, creates analyses grounded in reality (Tate 1997).

CRT presents a strong framework for analyzing the experiences of Indigenous students within the Canadian university system. By centering race/racism within the analysis, while maintaining an awareness of the intersectional nature of oppression and power, CRT creates the potential for challenging societal 'norms' and recognizing/supporting ongoing resistance and transformation. In terms of Indigenous peoples living in Canada, the CRT commitment to 'social justice' is important and yet too vague. The term 'social justice' implies a balancing of wrongs done to individuals and groups by society, however it lumps social groups together without distinction (Tuck & Yang 2012). The use of this term, combined with a lack of specific discussion regarding colonization (and more specifically settler-colonization) within the CRT framework, represents a hole within the approach when applied to the Canadian context. Indigenous peoples in Canada must be distinguished from a diverse collection of oppressed minority groups by recognizing their special status as 'First Peoples' and the particular settler-colonial circumstance they have endured for generations. This is not to say that the concept of social justice does not apply, but that it needs refinement and direction when speaking to the lives of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Indigenous peoples have been systematically silenced in many areas of Canadian society. The CRT focus on the inclusion of voices that have been previously ignored is imperative for research regarding Indigenous university students in Canada. However, a critical evaluation of the CRT use of counter-stories to challenge the hegemonic dialogue creates a dilemma for the researcher. In the case of Canadian Indigenous students, the stories do not need to be generated. To compile data and generate counter-narratives runs the risk of speaking 'for' or 'on-behalf' of the students, when in fact the stories are already there. Solorzano and Yosso (2002:37) state that "if methodologies have been used to silence and marginalize…then methodologies can also give voice and turn the margins into places of transformative resistance". There is both theoretical and methodological strength to this statement, however extreme caution must be applied to avoid 'creating' stories of experience, resistance and empowerment when the Indigenous voices are present and prepared to dictate their own counter-stories.

Tribal Critical Race Theory:

Indigenous scholars have begun to implement CRT within Indigenous communities to analyze race, racism and power - employing the approach as a method of truth-telling regarding circumstances of colonization and oppression (Haynes Writer 2008). Lumbee scholar Bryan Brayboy (2005) has elaborated on CRT with the development of Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit). The primary focus of TribalCrit is to identify not only race/racism, but also colonization, as an endemic structure of

society that influences structures and processes (Brayboy 2005; Haynes Writer 2008). In an effort to better the situation for Indigenous students, TribalCrit strives to identify inconsistencies in the structural systems/institutions and critically examine how the issues of Indigenous peoples relate to the laws and policies in the United States (Brayboy 2005; Haynes Writer 2008). Haynes Writer (2008:3) states that in combination CRT and TribalCrit "generate truths about colonization in larger social and structural context, facilitating change".

Emphasizing the importance of working through an Indigenous lens, TribalCrit identifies how US policies toward American Indians result in White dominance and that although American Indians are legal/political beings that they are often only recognized as 'racialized beings' by most of American society (Brayboy 2005). By exposing structural inconsistencies within institutions of education and focusing on the importance of including Indigenous Knowledge(s) in education, TribalCrit is aimed at creating change that make institutions more understandable to Indigenous students and vice versa – creating environments where schooling and a 'sense of Indigenous self' won't conflict (Brayboy 2005). TribalCrit has a specific focus on the United States context and creating 'culturally responsive' education within that context (Brayboy 2005).

The TribalCrit theoretical framework includes some important elements of analysis that are absent from a more generalized CRT approach. The adaptation of TribalCrit from CRT, to include issues of colonization as a main and powerful construct within contemporary society and the role Indigenous Knowledge(s) play in evaluating current circumstances and future possibilities, certainly strengthens the approach when

addressing the context of Indigenous peoples. However, the discussion thus far has been

solely focused on the context of the United States and maintained without a distinction

between colonialism and settler-colonialism. This distinction is crucial for accurate

analysis of context and intersecting powers of domination and oppression. Further, we

see a continued discussion of seeking social justice, albeit more specifically within

educational frameworks. The goals of changing how colonization is enacted within

society, while also altering education systems so that Indigenous students can study while

maintaining their sense of self are of critical importance.

TribalCrit moves the framework several steps closer by centering colonialism and

Indigenous Knowledge(s), however I question whether these discussions are refined

enough to sufficiently evaluate the Canadian context. I further question whether

education programs can be created that will function as social justice mechanisms on their

own to alter the operation of colonization and domination as suggested by Haynes

Writer's (2008) application of CRT/TribalCrit. TribalCrit represents a valuable

contribution to/expansion of CRT, but the analytic component of 'colonization' needs

further theoretical refinement. Within education specifically, the inclusion of Indigenous

Knowledges and the altering of curricula for social justice goals may need to be applied

along with other approaches that combine analysis of ongoing systemic oppression with

multiple forms of resistance/avenues for change.

In the current project I will be employing a Critical Race Theory approach to my

project by maintaining race/racism as a central point of analysis throughout and including

Indigenous student voices as forms of both data and strength/resistance[74]. In addition, the endemic nature of colonization (settler-colonization) and the role it plays in creating both the larger social context and the experience of racialized students will be analyzed throughout. Employing this theoretical and research perspective may shed light on the nature of the students' experiences and why and how changes are (or are not) occurring. The focus on incorporating Indigenous voices (stories) will emphasize the existence of realities that do not align with the dominant discourse and highlight the resilience and resistance of Indigenous students to the 'master narratives' of society and the environments they create.

Settler Colonial Theory:

Since its emergence, Settler Colonial Theory (SCT) has played an important role for researchers and theorists in this area by both refining definitions of settler colonialism and emphasizing the importance of reflexivity when examining research, conclusions and even theories themselves. One of the significant contributions of SCT has been to alter the way that theorists view, and use the term, 'colonialism'. SCT pulls colonialism out of a 'historical space', making it clear that it is a functioning element of present-day society, as well as drawing out the connections that exist between "settler emotions, knowledges, institutions and policies" (Macoun & Strakosch 2013:426).   Previous critical anti-racism theorizing has failed to adequately account for the ongoing nature of the colonial project

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[74] See Chapter 2 'Race, Racism and Discrimination' for discussion and definitions of race and racism.

and integrate that into analytic frameworks (Lawrence & Dua 2005). SCT emphasizes

that colonialism is a 'structure' as opposed to a singular event that has been left in the

past and that 'settler colonialism' is a "specific political formation" requiring more

particular consideration (Macoun & Strakosch 2013:426). Settler colonialism must be

analyzed as a "multi-dimensional coloniality" with many intersecting forces in constant

tension with each other (such as racism, gender, class, capitalism and many others)

(Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014:2; Tuck & Yang 2012).

With a focus on the specifics of 'settler colonialism' and its operations, SCT

places the ethical demand onto the settlers to examine our own positions within the

colonial relationship, be critical of our own frames of reference and to ensure that our

voices don't marginalize Indigenous voices and resistance (Macoun & Strakosch 2013;

Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014; Tuck & Yang 2012). The "real and symbolic

violence of settler colonialism" must not be overlooked (Tuck & Yang 2012:2).

Lawrence and Dua (2005:131) argue that "ongoing colonization and decolonization

struggles must be foundational in our understandings of racism, racial subjectivities and

antiracism". The goal within this work is to disturb colonial hierarchies by disrupting the

"intersecting forces of power" (such as colonialism, heteropatriarchy and capitalism) and

reveal "possibilities and political visions" that lie outside of our own particular frames of

reference (Macoun & Strakosch 2013:427; Simpson 2011; Snelgrove, Dhamoon &

Corntassel 2014:2).

SCT strengthens and supplements other critical approaches to race by using

careful analysis to integrate the structural and personal elements of settler colonialism and

its inherent domination (Macoun & Strakosch 2013). By emphasizing how settler colonialism is a structure versus an event, this highlights how the common "settler colonial narrative" of gradual decolonization is a strategic one that conceals ongoing policies and actions that ultimately serve the colonial interest (Macoun & Strakosch 2013:428; Veracini 2011). Settler colonial narratives are pervasive throughout society, maintained and invigorated through public education systems, media and government policy (Battiste 2013; Davis et al 2016). The school system presents a powerful example of a space where history is erased, "counter-narratives are denied space and countless stories are silenced" (Davis et al 2016:4). The end goal of settler colonialism is not in fact decolonization, but rather "eliminating, absorbing or containing Indigenous challenges to the settler sovereign order" and, whether through inclusionary or exclusionary tactics, "dissolving the persistent political independence of Aboriginal societies" (Lawrence & Dua 2005; Macoun & Strakosch 2013:428; Veracini 2011). The settler-colonial motive of acquiring land means 'they' have "come to stay" and in doing so intend to exercise rights and privileges that are denied to the Indigenous peoples on whose land settlers reside while eliminating further contest (Lawrence & Dua 2005; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014; Wolfe 2006:388). Veracini (2011:6) argues that the battle against elimination is actually a battle to keep the settler-Indigenous relationships ongoing – ending with "Indigenous ultimate permanence".

While demonstrating how within the settler state there no levels (state, society or individual) that are neutral, SCT also highlights how the state is incomplete and experiencing ongoing challenges by Indigenous political existence and resistance to the

goal of elimination (Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck & Yang 2012; Veracini 2011). The settler-colonial project is analyzed as a complex social project requiring connections between "political structures, broader social contexts, and lived experiences of individuals" (Macoun & Strakosch 2013:430). The social nature of this project creates a 'settler identity' that infiltrates and informs all the different spaces of our society, from politics, institutions, individuals and even our perception of collective needs (Macoun & Strakosch 2013).

Due to the nature of SCT and how it highlights individual complicity and involvement in the larger settler-colonial project, it creates a sense of discomfort – knowing that all who hold a settler position are playing a role in the larger 'political hegemony' (Macoun & Strakosch 2013). As stated by Macoun & Strakosch (2013:429), it is an important and powerful realization that, except for Indigenous peoples, "we are all still settlers in a colonial space and it can serve no interests but our own to erase this". Although 'uncomfortable', SCT stresses the importance of critically analyzing our own position within the colonial relationship and engaging in a more community centered approach, as this may have implications for how academic knowledge is produced (Battiste 2013; Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014; Tuck & Yang 2012). The academic arena has been infiltrated by the same "political narratives and forces" as mainstream society and academics must intensively critique their work to avoid claiming any objective authority over Indigenous selves or knowledges (Macoun & Strakosch 2013:432).

SCT is not without critiques and challenges. There has been concern expressed from Indigenous scholars that this is largely a settler framework (Macoun & Strakosch 2013). As described by Macoun & Strakosch (2013:426), SCT "remains a largely White attempt to think through contemporary colonial relationships". Further, by delineating how colonialism is not an event, but rather a continuing structure, there is a risk of implying that it is "structurally inevitable" - a perception of "colonial fatalism" (Macoun & Strakosch 2013:433; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014). However, Macoun & Strakosch (2013) counter this challenge by describing how the very act of analyzing settler colonialism as constructed through the culmination of 'settler desires' can begin to bring forth different possibilities and political visions that are outside of our current frames of reference and therefore can remove the implication of no alternatives. In order to avoid any "racial ventriloquism" settler colonial theorists must engage with Indigenous peoples regarding their lived experiences within the continuing colonial system and "foreground Indigenous resistance, survival and agency" (Indigenous resurgence), while simultaneously deconstructing any theoretical position that presumes colonial inevitability (Davis et al 2016; Macoun & Strakosch 2013: 435-6; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014).

Many current socio-political shifts target 'managing' and 'neutralizing' Indigenous differences, which Veracini (2011:7) calls "conciliatory rhetoric" – actions and policies that extend "innocence to the settler" and "entertain a settler future" (Tuck & Yang 2012:3). Such 'moves to innocence' benefit only the settler and divert attention

away from any 'real' decolonization (Tuck & Yang 2012). As aptly stated by Snelgrove,

Dhamoon & Corntassel (2014:1),

> Without centering Indigenous people's articulations, without deploying a relational approach to settler colonial power, and without paying attention to the conditions and contingency of settler colonialism, studies of settler colonialism and practices of solidarity run the risk of reifying (and possibly replicating) settler colonial as well as other modes of domination.

Based in critical reflexivity and a detailed analysis of the settler-colonial project,

SCT provides an improved framework for self-understanding (explaining settlers to

settlers) and demonstrating that settler-colonialism is only one way of perceiving the

colonial project (Davis 2010; Macoun & Strakosch 2013). Snelgrove, Dhamoon and

Corntassel (2014:9-10) discuss how settler colonialism becomes naturalized/pervasive

and we must ask "for whom is settler colonialism in the background and invisible…for

Indigenous peoples, settler colonialism may not be the primary lens of living or

theorizing, but it is neither in the background or invisible". However, the inclusion of

Indigenous perspectives must be carefully navigated to maintain the utmost respect and

avoid placing a burden on Indigenous peoples (Davis et al 2016). SCT improves the

potential analysis through a critical and reflexive approach, but it does not account for

Indigenous lived experience, nor for identifying moves toward

decolonizing/reconciliation that truly push past seeking critical consciousness or moves to

innocence (Davis et al 2016; Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck & Yang 2012). SCT can

be further strengthened by engaging with other approaches and by looking outside settler

frameworks for further possibilities.

I propose the SCT and CRT can complement and strengthen each other when used in combination. SCT brings to CRT the rigorous reflexivity required to critically analyze our own positions and the frameworks we are engaged with, while also stressing the necessity of applying the concept of setter-colonialism within analysis of structural systems of power for both individual and group experiences. CRT brings to SCT the focus on intersectional oppressive powers and the centering of racism within analysis – while combining that with the inclusion of lived experience. In combination these two theoretical and methodological approaches create a much more comprehensive framework of analysis.

Within this current project, I will be applying SCT and CRT to the work of analyzing the Canadian university context and Indigenous students' experiences. Combining critical analysis with the knowledge, experience and direction of Indigenous student voices will remove the risk of 'racial ventriloquism' while simultaneously incorporating work and strategies from outside my own frames of reference – generating a critical perspective that is not wholly contained within a settler paradigm. Prioritizing and centering Indigenous voices will assist in identifying ongoing colonial perspectives, programs and institutions, as well as avenues of resistance. Furthermore, the high level of engagement with Indigenous peoples will bring forward not only the strength and persistence of the Indigenous presence (proving a lack of elimination), but also incorporate Indigenous perceptions of possible change and future alternatives (frames that argue against colonialism as structurally inevitable). Combining CRT and SCT approaches to analyze the university environment in combination with the inclusion of

Indigenous voices will strengthen both approaches and may begin to address the questions of what role settler-colonial narratives are playing in the daily lived experiences of Indigenous university students, how the students perceive the various programs and policies designed to alter these narratives (performative vs positive action), what challenges and changes Indigenous students would propose to the university system for continued improvement and how to create contexts of engagement and action versus denial within the university system.

Internalized Racism:

Another area of critical race research is that of Internalized Racism (or Internalized Oppression). This is a component, or effect, of ongoing systemic and interpersonal racism that has been both neglected as an area of study and often misunderstood (Pyke 2010). Although it has often been pushed aside, or deemed inappropriate as an area for analysis, internalized racism is not a 'new' topic. In *The Souls of Black Folk*, W.E.B DuBois (1989 [1903]:3) speaks to how the ongoing White domination and oppression has created a "double consciousness". DuBois (1989 [1903]:3) describes this as "always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity". Frantz Fanon (1952, 1961) also contributed to this line of investigation with discussions of internalized colonial mentalities amongst colonized peoples in his texts *Black Skin, White Masks* and *Wretched of the Earth*.

Despite these early allusions to what we now refer to as internalized racism, the topic is under-represented in race literature (Pyke 2010). Pyke (2010:556) defines internalized racism/oppression as "the moment that the oppressed accept the identities imposed on them by oppressors…internalizing their subjugated status in their definition of self". Those who steer analysis away from this topic have stated that the research ought to be on topics of resistance by those who are oppressed, as a focus on the internalization of oppression might be misconstrued as blaming oppressed groups for their circumstances (Pyke 2010). However, Pyke (2010:553) argues that in order to truly understand how to build powerful and effective resistance we have to "understand how oppression is internalized and reproduced".

The importance of understanding the mechanisms of internalized racism lies not only in learning 'how' internalized racism works, but also 'what' it does to the oppressed as the resulting impacts on individuals and groups can be very detrimental (Pyke 2010; Steele 1999). By focusing only on resistance, questions regarding the mechanisms of power would be left unanswered - potentially serving to protect and maintain White racism and leave severe social inequalities unaddressed (Pyke 2010). Consistent with Pyke's position, postcolonial theorist Edward Said (1993:310) states that when the study of internalized racial oppression is pushed aside "we are left with an 'impoverished politics of knowledge'". Moreover, Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2007:456) asserts that resistance by oppressed groups must involve "critical individual and collective self-recognition" – 'empowerment' from a "self-affirmative and self-transformative process of desubjectification". Without understanding the mechanisms and impacts of internalized

oppression, the creation of empowered resistance, as outlined by Coulthard, might be hindered.

Using a critical race approach to address how intersecting sources of power and authority connect to create and maintain inequality, theorists can examine how the oppression becomes internalized, with the clear understanding that there is no biological or cultural weakness involved (Pyke 2010). Pyke (2010) argues that to avoid blaming oppressed groups/individuals for internalized racism, we must not put the onus on those at the margins to solve the problem. As with CRT more generally, context is a key research consideration. The internalized oppression may manifest in very different ways depending on the "intersections of multiple systems of domination" and may manifest not only at the individual level, but also in "collective social practices" (Feagin & Cobas 2008; Nakano Glenn 2002; Pyke & Dang 2003; Pyke 2010:553/556; Satzewich & Liodakis 2010; Stasiulis 1990,1999). Some potential examples are skin tone bias, choice of life partners, and defensive othering (Pyke & Dang 2003; Pyke 2010).[75]

Pyke (2010:556) further argues that there is need for further analysis of internalized oppression through a "critical approach that highlights the social structural and cultural mechanisms that maintain and reproduce systemic processes of domination". The Gramscian (1971) concept of hegemony, described as "winning consent of the oppressed", informs on how the ruling group or race constructs social norms and

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[75] Pyke and Dang (2003:152) define defensive othering as "a type of identity work employed by subordinates who seek membership in the dominant group or attempt to distance themselves from the stigma linked to their status"

organizational practices through ideologies in society (Feagin & Cobas 2008; Pyke 2010:556). It is possible for an individual who has not experienced overt racism or discrimination to internalize racial oppression as it is so ingrained within the societal myths and ideologies (Feagin & Cobas 2008: Pyke 2010). hooks (2003) refers to this as 'mental colonization'. Speaking to Canada specifically, Coulthard (2007:439/442) describes how the reproduction and maintenance of the colonial structure of dominance/oppression "rests on its ability to entice Indigenous peoples to come to 'identify', either implicitly or explicitly" with the forms of (non or mis)recognition imposed on them by the state – "imprisoning someone in a distorted relation-to-self". Much like White privilege these myths and ideologies, such as meritocracy, can conceal oppression by presenting a belief that there are "'objective' standards applied equally to all" (Feagin & Cobas 2008; Pyke 2010:556)

Pyke (2010) argues that not only can the study of internalized racism inform on the reproduction of inequality, but also how resistance and complicity may exist simultaneously within the complex systems of intersecting oppressions. It is possible that in resisting one form of oppression, a group or individual might reproduce a different dimension (Collins 1990; Pyke 2010). Pyke (2010:566) stressed that when examining internalized racism, analyses must focus on how "every instance of internalized racism among the racially subordinated contributes to the psychic, material and cultural power and privilege of White folks". This focus will maintain an analytic lens that places blame for the creation and maintenance of inequality on social structures of inequality and those who receive the benefits (Pyke 2010). Referencing the work of Fanon, Coulthard (2007)

supports Pyke's assertion that social structures of inequality must receive analytical attention by stating that constant movement back and forth between the structural and social/psychological aspects of colonialism is what maintains the hegemonic power over time.

Pyke (2010) strongly critiques sociology's avoidance of studying internalized racism based on fears of misrepresentation. An awareness within the discipline of how this line of study does not have to place blame on the oppressed can open up many important lines of analysis in terms of how, when and why internalized racism is manifesting and being reproduced. In terms of the current study, analyses of internalized racism/oppression (supported by CRT and SCT) may shed light on the ways in which the creation of internalized racism, within the Canadian colonial context, is impacting the lived experience of Indigenous university students – their awareness of it and responses to it. It is mentioned above that to place responsibility for solving the problem of internalized racism on the shoulders of the oppressed would be the same as placing the blame for its existence. In light of the acknowledgment of the complex matrices of power (including settler colonial powers), and the need to critically analyze how our theoretical research positions may contribute to the maintenance of structures of domination that construct the oppression of Indigenous peoples in Canada, I question whether deciding to remove that 'responsibility' from Indigenous communities might be a colonial action, even a 'move to innocence', that further embeds the power(s) of the dominant group.

Intersectionality:

Initially arising from feminist scholarship, and a recognition of differences both among and between women and men, intersectionality has been increasingly influencing scholarship since the 1990's (Baca Zinn & Dill 1996; Castiello Jones et al 2013; Collins 2019). When Kimberle Crenshaw began designing intersectionality it was in response to her belief that in order to be successful, social movements required a new angle of inquiry (Collins 2019). From there, two core constructs within intersectionality were developed: relationality (a focus on the relationships among different entities - mutually constructed systems) and social justice (Baca Zinn & Dill 1996; Crenshaw 1990; Collins & Gonzalez 2019; Collins 2019; Nakano Glenn 1999; Pascale 2006; Yuval-Davis 2006). Analyzing how race, class and gender interacted was the traditional starting point for intersectionality, but that has now been expanded to include the examination of any social status (Castiello Jones et al 2013). In its earliest stages, intersectionality was utilized as a metaphor, shifting how people understood and participated in social relations (Collins 2019). This metaphor contained possibilities for social transformation by providing "new angles of vision on each system of power, how they cross and diverge from one another, as well as political possibilities that were suggested by this new analysis" (Collins 2019:28). It provided a way to process how systems of power interact and that experiences are shaped by the ways these systems constitute each other in particular contexts (Castiello Jones et al 2013; Yuval-Davis 2006).

Intersectionality as a concept then began to grow and evolve. Based on the metaphoric thinking that it evoked (visions of a physical space where different factors

could meet), it created some heuristic tools – basic sets of assumptions that could be used for addressing social problems or engaging in social action (Collins 2019). Collins (2019:37) states that intersectionality has been extremely valuable for rethinking existing social constructs and bringing "systems of power into view" (Collins & Gonzalez 2019). Although often taken for granted within contemporary research, Collins (2019:37) argues that "the now common-sense idea that individual identity is shaped by multiple factors whose saliency changes from one social context to the next owes much to intersectionality's ease of use as a heuristic".

Intersectionality has contributed to paradigm shifts in several fields/disciplines. Within an in-depth and critical discussion of intersectionality as a social theory (albeit still under construction), Collins (2019) questions whether intersectionality itself is beginning to take form as a paradigm. It is proposed that the core paradigmatic ideas contained within intersectionality are: relationality, power, social inequality, social context, complexity and social justice (Collins 2019). Each of these core ideas combine to create the four guiding premises encapsulated by an intersectional approach.

1) Race, class and gender, as systems of power, are interdependent.
2) Intersecting power relations produce complex inequalities.
3) Intersecting power relations shape individual and group experiences.
4) Solving social problems requires intersectional analysis.

(Collins 2019:49)

Looking at its most rudimentary parts, intersectionality is a "set of ideas that is critical of the established social world" (Collins 2019:49). Pulling from Omi and Winant's racial formation theory (and discussion of 'projects' therein), Collins (2019:96)

describes intersectionality as "a resistant knowledge project" that aspires "to resist social inequalities within intersecting systems of power".

The critical analysis of social inequality and creation of resistant knowledge projects are not tasks reserved solely for academics. Incorporated within intersectionality is the idea that subordinated groups are already undertaking critical theorizing about systems of power by first experiencing these oppressions and then taking action – "social action in response to power relations" (Baca Zinn & Dill 1996; Collins 2019:12). Choo & Ferree (2010:132) state that "only by inclusion of the perspectives of these groups could the political issues emerging from their experiences be addressed by movements, law, or policy relevant scholarship". This is particularly relevant to the current investigation of Indigenous students' experiences within the university system. The experiences shared by the students, in combination with their responsive social actions, will help inform on how social statuses are intersecting within that context to create lived experience (Castiello Jones et al 2013; Choo & Ferree 2010; Yuval-Davis 2006). Intersectionality will be given ongoing attention throughout this research, in terms of both approach and analysis. By centering the students' experiences and 'on the ground' theorizing, as well as "putting resistant knowledge projects in dialogue" (through the incorporation of both CRT and SCT), critical social inquiry will be maintained (Collins 2019:120).

Literature Review

Previous Research on Indigenous University Student Experiences:

To start addressing questions regarding Indigenous university student experiences with racism (Nature of the experiences? Impacts? Reactions? Resistance? Intersections?), this study examines the experiences of Indigenous students at three Ontario Universities. As outlined in the introduction, although all located in Ontario, these universities have many contextual differences that, throughout the analysis to follow, will bring forth significant insights into how the social, political and structural environments ultimately contribute to the creation of individual and group experiences of oppression and domination.

Within academic research, the main focus regarding education and Indigenous peoples living in Canada has been statistical analyses of how levels of achievement compare to the general population (Bailey 2016; Shankar et al. 2013). Despite overall Canadian trends showing increased completion rates for post-secondary education, these statistical analyses demonstrate that there are significant differences between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian population at large in terms of engagement with, and success within, Canada's formal education system (NIEDB 2019b). For example, in 2006, 13.6% of Indigenous peoples living in Canada attained post-secondary degrees, compared to 32.4% of non-Indigenous Canadians (Bailey 2016; Clark et al. 2014; Hardes 2006; NIEDBa,b 2019; Pidgeon, Archibald & Hawkey 2014; Oloo 2007; Preston 2008; White & Beavon 2009). There have been signs of progress in terms of closing education gaps,

but these gains have not been equally distributed across Indigenous identity groups (NIEDB 2019b). Métis populations have seen the largest gains (with Métis women having the highest university completion rate of any Indigenous identity group) (NIEDB 2019b). First Nations living on reserve and the Inuit population show the least gains and worsening outcomes (NIEDB 2019b).

Within the Indigenous population living in Canada, the data shows there is more gender parity than within the non-Indigenous population (NIEDB 2019b). Where Indigenous women would benefit from certain kinds of economic support, Indigenous men appear to be in need of educational supports (NIEDB 2019b). Studies indicate that Indigenous women have higher education outcomes than men in all Indigenous identity groups, yet men have consistently higher economic outcomes (NIEDB 2019b). It is well-documented that a positive correlation ought to exist between higher education levels and economic well-being (NIEDB 2019a). The fact that, on average, Indigenous men living in Canada have lower education completion rates, but fare better in terms of economic outcomes indicates that "Indigenous women continue to experience barriers to achieving economic equality" (NIEDB 2019b:23).

Oloo (2007:88) states that "Although the proportion of Aboriginal population with university degrees has increased over time, the gap between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals with university education is still widening" (White & Beavon 2009). The National Indigenous Economic Development Board (NIEDB) (2019:58) supports this in their finding that "a persistent gap remains and is widening between Indigenous and non-Indigenous university completion rates", increasing 1.7 percentage points to 18.8 in 2006.

The completion of higher education levels has been linked to improved standards of living and health/well-being, essential to Indigenous economic development and an official provision under treaty (NIEDB 2019a). Therefore, it is extremely important to investigate why the differences in education levels are so severe and to create improved learning environments and support systems for Indigenous students (Bailey 2016; Pidgeon, Archibald & Hawkey 2014; Preston 2008; Shankar et al. 2013; White and Beavon 2009).

Pre-existing literature regarding the racial climate that students experience in university has mainly investigated American contexts and outcomes pertaining to Black, Latina/o and Asian students (Bailey 2016; Wilkes & Jacobs 2006). This data has shown that ethnic and racial discrimination is a pervasive problem that continues to result in the exclusions and isolation of oppressed groups – moving them to the margins (Bailey 2016; Cech, Smith & Metz 2019; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003; Harper and Hurtado 2007). Data has also demonstrated ongoing issues with what Harper and Hurtado (2007:21) refer to as "institutional rhetoric rather than action" – a lack of genuine systematic attempts to address and eliminate the ongoing racism (Law 2003). Looking more specifically at the Canadian context, Henry and Tator (1994, 2009) argue that some universities move to deny the ongoing role of racism within Canadian society and present outright resistance to making relevant changes. Alongside outright resistance, the declarations and actions of universities in terms of reconciliation efforts may, in fact, be "moves to innocence" (Tuck & Yang 2012). For Indigenous students and scholars, this impacts elements of inclusion, equity, academic success, and personal well-being (Bailey 2016; Cote-Meek 2014;

Hardes 2006; Henry & Tator 2010; Oloo 2007). Through a critical review of the literature, it also becomes readily apparent that the majority of researchers have severely neglected the experiences of Indigenous students within their research methodologies and analysis (Bailey 2016, 2019).

Researchers have identified ways in which ideological frameworks are used to create hegemonic ideals that negate the importance of race and racism and dismiss questions of structural inequality – systematically reinforcing dominant racial belief systems and protecting collective group privileges (Bailey 2016; Battiste 2013; Bonilla-Silva 2003; Byrd 2011, Gramsci 1971). Contemporary racism (in its various forms) must be carefully included in the analysis of Indigenous student experiences, acknowledging how micro-interactions can interact with ideological and structural mechanisms of racism, and vice versa (Bailey 2016; Banks 1994; Essed 1991; Collins 1992; Nakano Glenn 2002). Effective investigation of racism must include the perspectives of those experiencing it, as they alone have the expert knowledge required to speak from a position of authority (Bailey 2016, 2019; Banks 1994; Collins 1990,1992; Tuck 2017).

Incorporating this approach, Clark et al. (2014) applied the concept of microaggressions to an analysis of the racial climate of a Canadian research-based university. Sue et al (2007:271) define microaggressions as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioural or environmental indignities…hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights". Microaggressions can create a 'cumulative burden' which generates self-doubt, segregation and mental exhaustion (Bailey 2016; Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000; Sue et al. 2008; Sue et al. 2009) Clark et al. (2014) centered the perspectives of

those experiencing racism within their analysis by speaking with six Indigenous

undergraduate university students to determine how daily microaggressions effect their

educational experience and how those experiences/understandings compared to

experiences of other racialized communities in the USA (Clark et al. 2014). Clark et al.'s

(2014) study began to fill a void in North American research regarding microaggressions,

as previous research only included the experiences of black, Latina/o and Asian

Americans (Yosso et al. 2009) However, there is still a large lacuna in research regarding

the effects of racism/microaggressions on Indigenous peoples within Canada and abroad.

Bailey (2016) began to fill this void by investigating how racism and oppression

contributes to the construction of lived experiences for post-secondary Indigenous

students in Canada. Through this study it was determined that students must navigate

barriers of discrimination and racism both interpersonally and through interaction with

the university institution (Bailey 2016). Every student spoken with during this study

shared experiences with racism, in one or more of its various forms, that left them feeling

ignored, displaced and unsupported (Bailey 2016).

Although focused on the American context, Cech, Smith & Metz (2019)

prioritized student experience in their study of ethnoracial disadvantage of Indigenous

students in the United States attending predominantly White colleges. Through in-depth

interviews with 50 Indigenous students, four 'cultural processes of disadvantage were

identified as forces continuing to negatively impact Indigenous students: derogatory

stereotyping, delegitimation (framing of Indigenous histories and beliefs as "illegitimate,

outdated or "dead"), assimilation pressures from cultural hegemony, and a 'cultural

permissibility of ignorance' (Cech, Smith & Metz 2019:366). Despite this study's focus on the United States context, the in-depth study of student experience may still provide some valuable insights for the experiences of Indigenous students in Canada.

The three universities in question within the current study may have more developed Indigenous Studies programs and potentially larger Indigenous student populations, but they still exist within a wider settler colonial context that is similar to that of the United States. Using survey data, Currie et al. (2012) completed a study to determine if Indigenous university students living in Edmonton, Alberta were experiencing racism (both presently and earlier in life) and how it impacted them. After surveying 60 students, it was determined (using the 'Experiences of Discrimination (EOD) instrument') that the students were experiencing racism at a relatively high level of frequency (80% reported experiencing racial discrimination, with 2/3 at high measurement levels) and in coping with these events the students reported what some scholars have referred to as "battle fatigue" (Currie et al 2012:623). The literature available thus far strongly indicates that ethnic and racial discrimination is intricately interwoven into the environment of post-secondary campuses in both Canada and the U.S., which creates learning environments based on exclusion and marginality (Bailey 2016, 2019; Harper & Hurtado 2007; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003).

Gender Inequality in Higher Education:

In terms of gaining access to university-level education women fare well, but less so regarding experiences during their schooling and the eventual outcomes (Andres & Adamuti-Trache 2007; Jacobs 1996).[76] Women's enrolment and completion of post-secondary degrees has been rising, and sometimes surpassing the averages for males, but there are still some large disparities between men and women (Andres & Adamuti-Trache 2007; Bradley 2000; Jacobs 1996). Although 'access' levels have become more equal, this does not necessarily indicate that men and women are having the same types of experiences. Studies have shown that women and men are still (on average) entering into different fields of study, that men represent the great majority of faculty, that women are more likely to face a hostile climate (such as harassment on campus) and that post-education large earning differences continue (Andres & Adamuti-Trache 2007; Dua 2007; Jacobs 1996).

Researchers have credited the increased enrollment for women as mainly due to increases in entrance into social science programs and this trend does not appear to be dissipating (Andres & Adamuti-Trache 2007). Based on factors, such as extreme sex-segregation, Andres & Adamuti-Trache (2007:113) argue that there are "different structures of opportunities within higher education" for men and women. Davies & Guppy (1997:1419) further this line of argument stating that higher education is organized by discipline, and these disciplines are unequal with respect to power, prestige,

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[76] Much of the data discussed in this section does not distinguish amongst "women" as a group, but it can still inform as to wider trends appearing within analyses.

and economic payoffs". Bradley (2000) argues that what we are seeing within the university system is a reproduction of the gender-differentiated patterns that exist within society. Educational systems and structures "mirror and reproduce the contested relations and values that shape society at large, including those concerning gender" (Bradley 2000:3),

Despite the increased enrollment for women, female students face a paradox: they may have met or even surpassed (in some cases) the enrollment of males, and yet there are few female professors to teach and mentor them (Bradley 2000; Dua 2007). Dua (2007:595) states that female students may experience isolation, discrimination, harassment, lack of access to power and networks, and be "disadvantaged as a racial minority lacking faculty representation". Further, female students engaging in multiple roles (such as motherhood), that potentially conflict, may be affected by "role-strain" in different ways than male students - causing discouragement (Dua 2007:596). The experience of women within the university context may be very different from that of men. Despite varying educational systems and structures, Bradley (2000:12) argues that "cultural ideas on gender relations and the roles of women and men in society influence the formation of educational options and choices", and this in turn impacts both experience and outcomes.

Despite the ongoing inequalities, many women see education as one possible way they can transform their own perspectives, strengthen their communities and dismantle/transform social and political barriers (Wane 2009). Collins (1990) suggests that women's scholarship can empower them by providing frameworks through which

they can learn about power relations and build tools for resistance. This presents another paradox, as higher education may be a necessary tool for women's empowerment, and yet to access this tool they must enter a system obviously based on inequality. Jacobs (1996) states that when investigating inequality within post-secondary education, facets of 'college experience' must be included in the analysis to gain a more complete picture that goes beyond enrollment statistics. Post secondary institutions sit "at the nexus of status-competition and status-equality efforts", which provides an informative lens for examining intersecting systems of power and various efforts targeting the transformation of gender relations (and other sources of inequality) in society (Bradley 2000:10).

Historical and Contemporary Context:

Research involving Indigenous peoples in Canada cannot look at the contemporary context alone. It is imperative that the historical context is analyzed as well, and an acknowledgment included that there is continuity between the two – aspects of 'history' continuing to impact present day lived experiences (Nakano Glenn 2002). Canada's history has been a complicated one that has involved colonization and misappropriation of not only Indigenous land, but also rights, knowledge(s) and self-determination (Henry & Tator 2010; TRC 2015). As a result, Canadian society at large is riddled with racial tensions and politics/policies/institutions that uphold projects of assimilation, misinformation and displacement – including institutions of education (Bailey 2019; Clark et al. 2014; Cote-Meek 2014; Denis 2020; Neeganagwedgin E 2013;

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) Volume 3 1996; Simpson 2012 Sydell & Nelson 2000).

Throughout history, and continuing today, Canadians have often denied the country's colonial history (despite ample evidence) and therefore any responsibility for the welfare and lower socio-economic status of Indigenous communities, tending to place blame on the shoulders of the Indigenous peoples themselves (Bailey 2019; Denis 2015; Satzewich 2011). This has been part of the legacy created by systems of colonization and domination imposed upon the Indigenous peoples living in Canada. Sociological research has not been immune to these shared ideological stories and their hegemonic power (Gramsci 1971). Theory-based examples representing these 'deficit-based' ideals can be seen within sociological research – such as the 'welfare Indian' stereotype (Flanagan 2000; Satzewich 2011). In creating the 'Canadian story', Canada has worked hard to build a reputation of inclusion and multiculturalism, however this story is, at least in part, an attempt to conceal, or erase, the extensive history of colonialism, exclusion and assimilation (Bailey 2016; Battiste 2013; Mackey 2002; Henry and Tator 2010; Thobani 2007). Although the current Canadian environment does contain many different groups, the situation for Indigenous peoples must be distinguished from that of other racialized groups. What separates Indigenous peoples from other groups, such as racialized immigrants and their descendants, is their ongoing struggles for sovereignty and decolonization (Clark et al. 2014; Denis 2020; Tuck & Yang 2012).

Contemporary Canadian society is 'beset with subtle racial tensions' and this has serious implications for Indigenous university students as higher education policies that

still presume assimilation may cause significant challenges for Indigenous students' academic and personal success (Bailey 2016; Sydell and Nelson 2000:627; Clark et al. 2014). Although racism is endemic within Canadian society, research has shown how the predominant forms of racism have shifted and changed 'shape'. Traditional racism (openly expressed prejudice and discrimination) has been largely replaced by 'modern racism', which is more subtle, indirect and difficult to detect – often in fact going unrecognized (Bailey 2016; Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997; McConahay, Hardee, and Batts 1981; Mcintosh 1989; Sydell and Nelson 2000; Quillian 2006; Clair and Denis 2015). The more 'hidden' (covert) nature of contemporary racism brings further attention to the necessity of centering racism/discrimination within the analysis of Indigenous student experiences.[77]

Post-secondary education has been cited as key for the improvement of circumstances for Indigenous peoples and their communities (Mendelson 2008; Ottmann 2017; Preston 2008; White & Beavon 2009). However, Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson (2002:14) states that:

> There are very few post-secondary educational programs in Canada that root their curriculum in Aboriginal languages, content, processes, perspectives, philosophies, knowledge, and Indigenous methods of teaching and learning…Further, few programs are designed to enable students to address the issues of colonization and colonialism in their communities, effect healing and decolonization at the individual, community and national levels, facilitate resistance strategies in response to current injustice, and promote the building of healthy, sustainable Aboriginal communities and Nations based on traditional cultural values and processes.

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[77] See Chapter 2 for discussion and definition regarding the covert nature of contemporary racism.

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission completed its lengthy investigation of the Indian Residential School System and related injustices against Indigenous peoples living in Canada and released 94 Calls to Action (TRC 2015). These Calls to Action are intended to improve overall circumstances for Indigenous peoples in Canada, including (but not limited to) the racialized and colonized post-secondary learning environments (Absolon & Absolon-Winchester 2016; Bailey 2019; Wilkes et al. 2017; TRC 2015).

Universities hold a portion of responsibility for the residential school system, as they often trained the teachers and policy makers who implemented the system. Therefore, universities have a particular responsibility to assist in improving the post-secondary learning environment, and circumstances for Indigenous peoples in Canada more broadly. However, the release of these Calls to Action is only the first step. Each university must appropriately understand and adopt these principles into their current structure/policies in order to positively alter Indigenous student experiences (Absolon & Absolon-Winchester 2016; Bailey 2019; Wilkes et al. 2017). Some Canadian post-secondary institutions have begun to implement changes, but these changes are happening in different ways and at different paces across the country (Bailey 2019; Wilkes et al. 2017). This is exemplified by the three universities included in this research, as all three institutions are moving forward with changes, but with varied strategies and timelines (and within different urban contexts). Further investigation and evaluation will be required to determine if substantial positive changes are occurring as new programs and policies continue to be implemented (Bailey 2019; Wilkes et al. 2017).

In the three substantive chapters to follow, the theories outlined above will be applied analytically to the qualitative interview data gathered regarding Indigenous university experiences. In each chapter it will be demonstrated how these approaches can be used in combination to move toward explanations and understandings of the particular contexts and the lived experiences therein.

Chapter 3: Indigenous Student Experiences with Racism

"*I was literally sitting there shaking and sweating and just being so angry...it was just like the fact that she would say that... you don't know who's sitting in your class...you don't know how people are affected.... it's not really your place. And it's very damaging...*"

(Female Indigenous Post-Secondary Student – speaking to experiences with racism within the university classroom)

Introduction:

To begin the discussion of Indigenous students' experiences with racism within the Canadian university context, it is helpful to start by presenting some data. This data is from the current research project and speaks to both the frequency of Indigenous students encountering racism and discrimination, and the immense complexity of these lived experiences. Of the 27 students interviewed (across the three universities), 25 students (93%) shared that they had experienced racism within the university context. This is, arguably, an extremely high percentage, however, it is consistent with what researchers have found in some other Ontario contexts (Denis 2015; Haluza-Delay 2003).[78] When dividing the students into groups based on the university they attended, the number of Indigenous students reporting experiences with racism becomes: McMaster – 10, Lakehead – 7 and Trent – 8.[79] These numbers raise many important questions for

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[78] The reported frequency of encounters with racism within the university environments involved in this study are higher than those reported in the Aboriginal Peoples Survey (2017) and the First Nations Regional Health Survey (2018).

[79] Lakehead University: 2 of the Indigenous students interviewed were participating in the Native Access Program – specifically designed for/including only Indigenous students. These two students also shared that

investigation. As outlined in the introductory chapter, each of the university contexts

varies in several significant ways, such as available programs and services, priorities and

initiatives in place for supporting Indigenous students and even the greater urban context

of where they are located. And yet, there is such a high level of consistency in

experiences of racism within and across the university environments. In this chapter,

questions will be asked regarding what types of racism Indigenous university students are

experiencing, how is context playing a role in creating/defining these experiences, and

how do these experiences vary based on gender and other intersecting social categories?

Table 1 - Experiences with Racism Reported within the University Context

	McMaster	Lakehead	Trent
Students Experiencing Racism	10	7	8
1 - In-Class Racism	8	7	6
2 - Social Racism	3	6	5
3 - When Engaging with Professors	9	3	6
4 - When Engaging with the Institution	9	5	8
Students with experiences in all 4 categories	2	3	4

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they stayed very close socially to those in their program, and rarely spent time with any non-Indigenous students. If considered anomalous to those regularly integrated with non-Indigenous students (both socially and in-class) and removed from the calculation, then the number of students reporting experiences with racism at would increase to 9 (and therefore 100% of students interviewed in total experiencing racism). This fact potentially opens up further avenues of investigation regarding inter-group boundaries, integration and the intentional selection of social groups.

Within the Canadian university context, Indigenous students have been battling

for decades to maintain their identity, sources of power, and access to appropriate

programs and support systems. Research thus far, although lacking in sufficient attention

to Indigenous students' lived experiences, has established that there are significant

discrepancies in achieved education outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous

populations in Canada (Bailey 2016,2019; NIEDB 2019b). There is no longer a question

that Indigenous students are still faced with racism on both interpersonal and structural

levels (Bailey 2016). This chapter will investigate these experiences more thoroughly

through careful attention to the voices of the Indigenous students themselves combined

with comparative and intersectional analysis throughout.

Empirical context:

Canada's history is a complicated legacy of colonization, oppression and

misappropriation (Henry & Tator 2010; Privy Council Office 2019; TRC 2015). The

society that has developed as a result is troubled by racial tensions and an ongoing

colonial present, including institutions for higher education that continue to promote

assimilation and displace Indigenous peoples and their knowledges (Battiste 2013; Cech

et al 2019; Clark et al. 2014; Cote-Meek 2014; Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Nakano Glenn

2002; Neeganagwedgin E 2013; Sydell & Nelson 2000). In the late 19th century,

numerous treaties were established including education as a right, simultaneously the

Dominion of Canada implemented the Indian Act, placing itself in a role of guardianship

and externally defining membership, rights and needs for Indigenous peoples living in

Canada (Ottmann 2017). This declaration of guardianship provided a framework within

which the government could re-define the right to education (as included in the treaties)

in ways that maintained colonial power – providing limited access and curriculums

designed to erase Indigenous culture and heritage (Ottman 2017; TRC 2015). The

implementation of the residential and day schools that followed, and their oppressive

colonial policies, devastated Indigenous communities across the country (TRC 2015).

The creation of the Indian Act and the enactment of the subsequent policies and

programs, set the stage for how Indigenous peoples experiences with formal education

systems have unfolded to this day, including the nature and limits of participation,

misrepresentation, exclusion and ongoing funding discrepancies, relative to non-

Indigenous students in Canada (Bailey 2016; Ottmann 2017; TRC 2015).

Much of the relevant literature has focused on the racial climates and contexts of

universities in the United States, however the conclusions drawn from this literature

demonstrate significant ongoing issues with ethnic and racial discrimination, combined

with a lack of necessary adjustments by the relevant institutions to enact positive changes

(Cech et al 2019; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003; Harper and Hurtado 2007). Historically in

Canada, universities have attempted to deny the ongoing role racism plays in Canadian

society, as it contradicts the 'Canadian myth' of inclusion and multiculturalism, and

therefore have been slow to implement change, negatively impacting Indigenous students

and faculty (Henry & Tator 2010). Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission's final report in 2015, there has been more movement within Canadian

universities in terms of creating increasingly positive environments and support systems

for Indigenous students, but it has yet to be seen whether truly tangible positive outcomes

will be the result of these changes (Bailey 2019; Wilkes et al 2017).

In 2014, Clark et al. published a study that used the concept of microaggressions

to investigate the racial climate at one Canadian research-based university. They applied

the concept of microaggressions as outlined by Sue et al (2007:271), "brief and

commonplace daily verbal, behavioural or environmental indignities…hostile, derogatory

or negative racial slights". This concept overlaps with Henry and Tator's (2010)

description of 'everyday racism' as a form comprised of glances, gestures and forms of

speech and physical movement. Clark et al. (2014) spoke with six undergraduate

Indigenous university students to determine how experiencing microaggressions on a

daily basis might affect their educational experience, and how this might compare to

similar literature focused on racialized communities in the United States (Bailey 2016;

Clark et al 2014). Enduring microaggressions consistently over a long period of time has

been shown to create a negative "cumulative burden' creating self-doubt,

segregation/isolation, mental exhaustion and attacks on personal integrity (Bailey 2016;

Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso 2000). This study was the first to apply the concept of everyday

racism/microaggressions to the experiences of Indigenous university students in Canada,

but still left a major gap in available research in terms of both literature on the lived

experiences themselves and their effects (Clark et al. 2014; Essed 1991; Bailey 2016).

The current project is an expansion of a smaller project that was initiated in 2012.

This original study supported the research done by Clark et al. (2014), but extended it in

terms of the scope of the investigation and furthering understandings of the impacts that

everyday racism/microaggressions can have on the experiences of Indigenous post-

secondary students. I completed in-depth, one-to-one interviews with seventeen students

at McMaster University during the 2012/2013 academic year. The students interviewed

were a combination of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (11 and 6

respectively). The goal of the project was to gain a more comprehensive understanding

of how Indigenous students perceived and experienced racism in the university

environment, including the levels, impacts and coping mechanisms. By increasing the

total number of students consulted and speaking to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous

students, experiential themes beyond those identified by Clark et al. (2014) were

discovered. The data provided support for the original themes found by Clark et al

(2014), (unconstrained voyeurism, jealous accusations, cultural

elimination/misrepresentation, expectations of primitiveness and isolation). However,

further themes highlighted included: interaction levels, perceptions of the university

environment and the forms of racism therein, audience effects, in-class and social

experiences, the university 'system' and the persistence of racism (Bailey 2016). The data

gathered through this project indicated that racism was creating several different forms of

ongoing barriers for Indigenous university students (Bailey 2016). Some key highlights to

note from this study include the very low levels of interaction reported between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, a consistent focus on seeking 'safe spaces' for

Indigenous students/creation of a community, students (both Indigenous and non-

Indigenous) adjusting their behaviour(s) depending on the audience, high levels of

interpersonal and systemic racism experienced, extreme isolation perceived by Indigenous students and a strong belief that the ignorance of the non-Indigenous student and staff population was a main contributor to the issue of ongoing racism toward Indigenous peoples at McMaster University (Bailey 2016).

The project outlined above was a strong step forward in both investigating experiences of racism for Indigenous students as well as centering the student's voices as expert data, but still more work needed to be done. The current study takes the next necessary steps. By increasing the number of Indigenous students interviewed and including multiple university contexts, a more comprehensive understanding is generated regarding the nature of the students' experiences with racism/discrimination and the impacts - both academic and personal (see chapter 4 – Impacts and Responses). With the data generated, a deeper look can be taken into the intersecting forces that are combining to generate, support and/or disable the ongoing interpersonal and systemic elements of racism, as well as centering an understanding of Indigenous student reactions, resistance, and resilience within these complex social and institutional contexts.

Theoretical Approach:

The theoretical approach used within the analysis and discussion of Indigenous student post-secondary experiences with racism/discrimination will be a combination of Settler Colonial Theory and Critical Race Theory (for an in-depth outline of these theories see Chapter 2). Throughout the discussion that follows, I will argue that SCT

and CRT complement and strengthen each other when used in combination. SCT contributes a high-level of critical reflexivity that is necessary to ensure we don't become trapped within our own positions and frameworks (inadvertently furthering settler-colonial goals). SCT also stresses the importance of incorporating the concept of settler-colonialism into the analysis of systems of power and the experiences of oppressed peoples (supported more recently by TribalCrit). CRT brings a focus on the intersectional nature of dominant powers while centering racism (and colonialism) within the analysis. Further CRT demands the inclusion of the lived experiences of those impacted by oppression. By combining these two approaches, a much more comprehensive framework for analysis is created.

Speaking specifically to this research project regarding the Canadian university context, combining critical reflexive analysis with the knowledge, experience and direction of Indigenous student voices will center lived experience while incorporating perspectives outside my own frames of reference – generating a critical perspective that is not wholly contained within a settler paradigm. Centering the Indigenous students' voices will assist in identifying ongoing colonial perspectives, programs and institutions, as well as ongoing processes of resistance. Combining CRT and SCT approaches to analyze the university environment will strengthen both approaches and begin to address the questions of what role settler-colonial narratives are playing in the daily lived experiences of Indigenous university students, and what role intersecting forces of domination may play in determining how those experiences are created.

Findings:

The data gathered regarding Indigenous post-secondary student experiences with racism and discrimination within the university context has been divided into four analytical themes: in-class experiences, social experiences, engagement with professors and engagement with the institution. Each of these themes will be discussed independently while also comparing experiences within the differing university contexts. Following this thematic discussion, the students' experiences will be considered in terms of differences between male and female experience, as well as Indigenous and non-Indigenous experience (from the perspective of the Indigenous students interviewed). The data gathered throughout the interview process is incredibly rich and therefore it was difficult to select which voices to directly convey in each section. I have attempted to present selections that demonstrate the depth of insight and experience possessed by the Indigenous students.

In-Class Experiences:

To begin the discussion of in-class experiences, it first bares noting that there are strong similarities with these types of experiences between the three universities. The breakdown of students reporting incidences of experiencing racism within the classroom is as follows: McMaster – 8, Lakehead – 7 and Trent – 6.

The Indigenous students interviewed reported a strong belief that the racism that they experienced in-class was the result of ignorance, or mis-information, on behalf of

their non-Indigenous peers. As racism becomes enmeshed within the systems and

institutions that govern daily life, individuals themselves may be unaware of the

ideologies they are operating within (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Henry & Tator 2010). However,

these structural elements of racism perpetuate pre-existing inequalities through

manifestations such as invisibility of the Other, stereotypical portrayals or

misrepresentations (Bonilla-Silva 2003,1996; Henry & Tator 2010; Miles & Brown

2003). The Indigenous students' identification of ignorance, or misinformation, as the

source of the racism may indicate that the non-Indigenous students (in some cases) may

not have been motivated to cause harm (Feagin & Feagin 1978).

These in-class experiences were very emotionally challenging for the students, as

well as building an increasingly high level of frustration. A female student from

McMaster stated that when taking a course about Indigenous medicines she found herself

to be the minority (as a lot of non-Indigenous nursing/midwifery students had decided to

take the course as an elective). She described how a group of non-Indigenous students

made a presentation to the class regarding the accessibility to medicinal Indigenous

knowledge(s) and how they believed that Indigenous peoples ought to be willing and

happy to share their knowledge to help non-Indigenous peoples. She stated that her

response to the presentation was to say "well…that's like saying cultural appropriation is

cool just because you want it…" and that she faces racism similar to this almost every

time she enters the classroom environment. A male student from McMaster shared how

upset he became when sitting in a tutorial and listening to non-Indigenous students

debating "free tuition for Natives". He described how misinformed the students were

with beliefs that tuition is simply handed out to Indigenous students without any limits or

conditions when, in fact, there are many Indigenous students who are not able to receive

financial support as there simply aren't enough funds.[80] While describing the incident,

this student inserted some comments of support for the students - indicating that the

responsibility for this high level of ignorance was not to be placed on the individuals, but

in fact on the systemic influence of colonialism and how it spreads high levels of

misinformation throughout Canadian society. Henry and Tator (2010:217) state that

studies show that the "profound impact of systemic racism and everyday racism continues

to mark life in Canadian academic institutions.

SCT helps to further explain this type of experience by centering ongoing

structures of settler-colonialism in Canada within analyses and viewing these types of

belief systems (such as the Canadian government 'taking care of' the Indigenous peoples

and 'gifting' education) as mechanisms that perpetuate the colonial powers and continue

to oppress Indigenous peoples (Gramsci 1971; Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tate 1997;

Solórzano & Yosso 2002). The perception that the ignorance level of non-Indigenous

students is somehow out of their control was expressed by multiple students. A female

Lakehead student expressed that despite her absolute shock at how little is known by non-

Indigenous students in Canada that "you can't blame them". And a male Lakehead

student shared his belief that since non-Indigenous students are not impacted by the same

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[80] For a detailed discussion of education rights and policies for Indigenous post-secondary education in Canada, including inadequate funding levels and waiting lists, please see the work of Jacqueline Ottmann (2017), titled "Canada's Indigenous Peoples' Access to Post-Secondary Education: The Spirit of the 'New Buffalo'".

issues as Indigenous peoples in Canada that they simply don't have any need or desire to learn about it, that "it doesn't come up in conversation with them". The Indigenous students interviewed demonstrated how their own perceptions, their frames of reference, are not wholly contained by the settler-colonial structure and therefore they can perceive and engage with it in different ways. As per CRT, the centering of the students' experiential knowledge opens up space for challenging perceptions and presenting a "racial reality" (Dion & Dion 2018; Gillborn 2006; Ladson-Billings 1998; Lopez 2003; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tate 1997). Those who experience oppression based on their constructed social status can provide great insight as to how the systems of power are intersecting to form their experience within their particular historical and contemporary context, as well as theorizing resistance and social change (Henry & Tator 2010; Collins 2019; Yuval-Davis 2006)

Not all students interviewed, however, believed that non-Indigenous students are without responsibility in terms of their levels of ignorance regarding Indigenous peoples in Canada and their subsequent actions/choices. A male student from Trent described his experience, in multiple courses, of non-Indigenous students using inappropriate language or 'ways' of talking about Indigenous peoples. As an example, he described a situation where a professor had spent two weeks at the beginning of the course teaching about proper terminology and how to discuss Indigenous issues respectfully, but at the end of the course during presentations a non-Indigenous student chose to use inappropriate language throughout their entire presentation. He shared that the Indigenous students in the class were severely offended and questioned the student as to why he would choose

those types of descriptors. Completely unsatisfied with what he felt was only excuses in answer, this student said "I mean you're in a university setting so maybe you should probably learn something and take away from this that it's not proper to use that type of terminology". This case clearly identifies a situation where the Indigenous student is holding the non-Indigenous student accountable for their racist behaviour.

Beyond high levels of ignorance regarding Indigenous peoples, a male student at McMaster shared his experience with high levels of overt (traditional) racism. It is widely acknowledged that experiencing overt racism is much less common in contemporary society than it has been in the past, however as evidenced by the lived experiences of Indigenous students that this aspect of racism certainly does still exist (Henry & Tator 2010; Miles & Brown 2003; Robertson 2015; Satzewich & Liodakis 2010; Sears 1988). As an example, this student shared his experience in a traditional ecological course being taught by an Elder, and how two non-Indigenous students taking the course blatantly disrespected the elder as both a teacher and a respected Indigenous authority. He stated, "the class was traditional medicine, these people don't know what traditional medicine is…one girl literally started shouting in the class 'this is all redundant, we've been talking about the same thing over and over again for the past 3 weeks, when are we going to get to the herbs???'". He further reported that the students in the class were visibly upset, that it took up to an hour for the group to regain calm and that "the dynamics in this class made it unsafe for everyone else learning in the room".

In a report of racism that sits in a 'grey-area' between overt and covert, a female student from Lakehead shared how a non-Indigenous student who mistakenly thought she

was sitting beside another non-Indigenous student in a constitutional politics class, chose to write "enough with the Indigenous topics" on her course evaluation. This same student was also witnessed "smirking" at Indigenous students when they would contribute comments during class discussions. One can argue that the act of smirking is certainly a microaggression (everyday racism) that the Indigenous students had to endure, yet a smirk is hard to "prove" if one was making a case regarding racist behaviours (Clark et al. 2014; Henry & Tator 2010; Sue et al. 2007). This places it into the aforementioned grey-area. This student's act of writing a discriminatory comment on her course evaluation also sits within the same area. Analytically these examples raise further questions about the perception of 'audience', and how the composition of certain audiences can either silence, or open the door to, overt racist remarks and/or actions (similar to the findings from Bailey's (2016) study). The non-Indigenous student apparently believed she was in a 'safe' place to write such a comment, since she thought she was surrounded by other non-Indigenous students. Although quite 'overt' in content, writing her comment, as opposed to speaking directly to the professor, gave her a buffer or 'quiet' way to express her belief - again blurring the distinction between overt and covert. The potential impact of 'audience-composition', and vocalizations of feelings/beliefs, was not reserved for only non-Indigenous students. During time spent sitting in on a Native Access Program class at Lakehead, I noticed that with the class being comprised of only Indigenous students, there were significantly more open discussions about negative-relations with non-Indigenous and the source of these issues (Field Notes, January 20th 2017).

A female student from McMaster shared her own in-class experience that demonstrated the more commonly reported covert nature of contemporary/modern racism (Bailey 2016; Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997; McConahay, Hardee, and Batts 1981; Mcintosh 1989; Sydell and Nelson 2000; Quillian 2006; Clair and Denis 2015). In sharing her experiences, this student also shared her personal understanding, gained through lived experience, of how multiple forms of domination can create oppressive experiences (Collins 2019; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014:2; Tuck & Yang 2012). This student outlined how when she is in-class she often has the experience of people deliberately talking over top of her and attempting to exclude her from group dialogue. However, she questions if it is racism or sexism that has created this environment for her within the classroom. CRT and SCT both suggest that it is not one or the other, but rather both (and potentially more/additional oppressive powers and structures) that are combining to create this lived experience of discrimination (Collins 1990,2019; Gillborn 2006; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014:2; Tuck & Yang 2012).

A female student from Lakehead describes another experience of covert racism in class. She described how when she comes near, non-Indigenous female students guard or move their valuable items (like purses), while also attempting to avoid talking with her whenever possible. And yet she stated she has never had someone make a racist comment directly to her while on campus. A female McMaster student described another in-class experience of racism that demonstrates its potential covert nature. As opposed to hearing a specific comment or an 'obvious' example of racism, she stated "It's not like

outward racism – it's more like leaving out that perspective completely in classes…the content won't have anything. We'll be doing a course on communities for example…and there won't be anything about an Indigenous community in the course". Henry and Tator (2010:205) refer to this as an example of a "hidden curriculum". A hidden curriculum is created through a tacit teaching of "social and economic norms and expectations to students" (which could entail complete exclusion of a particular population), the group in question becomes marginalized – experiencing the "hegemony of racism". (Henry & Tator 2010:205). This describes the way that racism can operate in a manner that silences and erases Indigenous peoples while often going unnoticed. This erasure of Indigenous peoples and topics from the university classroom supports the goal of settler-colonialism, as outlined by SCT, as the elimination of Indigenous peoples and therefore the completion of the state as 'settled' (Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck & Yang 2012; Veracini 2011).

Not all of the experiences shared by Indigenous students were limited to just one of the four analytical themes outlined above. When an experience shared by a student overflowed into more than one of the four categories, it appeared that the different forms, or levels, of racism and discrimination, combined in a way that amplified an already negative situation – causing further distress to the student in terms of both emotional toll and academic success. One example of this was shared by a female student from McMaster university regarding her experience within a course designed to teach students how to engage in community participatory action and research. The situation, as she described it, was one where a non-Indigenous student in the class was saying and doing

discriminatory things that upset the Indigenous students. For example, during community engagement activities, the non-Indigenous student was observed repeatedly approaching only individuals who fit the phenotypical stereotype of an Indigenous person and ignoring all other Indigenous people present at the event.

The Indigenous students within the class chose to informally nominate this interviewee as their representative in speaking to the professor (potentially demonstrating they did not feel they had a safe-space where they could approach him directly). However, when she brought forward their concerns the professor either refused to listen and heed her advice or follow-through in a way that eliminated the issue. Toward the end of the course she submitted a reflection to the professor regarding her experience within the course and how she had felt a great weight in terms of trying to do the work to educate a non-Indigenous peer and that she had learned more about mis-steps in research as opposed to direction on positive research and learning. The response she received from the professor was perceived as offensive to the point that she was motivated to share the information with another professor and administrator at the university. She stated, "it's kind of my own fault if I felt like I was the Indigenous voice cuz he never asked me to be and it was his class so he could decide what he wanted to do in regards to following up with this student and didn't appreciate that I was the one that was trying to get other people to do other things". In this circumstance, racism and discrimination had to be managed by one student at two levels, one of which meant facing down someone within an authority position. In the end she chose not to engage the professor any further as she

didn't believe she would make any headway or improvement and felt she needed to move forward.

A female Lakehead student shared another very serious example of how multiple levels of racism/discrimination can amplify the experience.[81] Within her program she described how there were misunderstandings due to cultural difference. In essence, she described how her communication style as an Indigenous person was not deemed appropriate and resulted in her being failed within a section of her program, despite evidence of her skills and abilities. Communicating with superiors and the general public is a part of her program requirements, and in order to continue with her studies, she was instructed to participate in additional training, the expense of which she was required to cover, to alter her communication style. Within this training, she was actually told she was being taught "how to be White". She engaged in a process of raising her concerns about these experiences to those who run her program and beyond, including the Human Rights Office at Lakehead. While moving through these steps of protest, she stated that one of the individuals responsible for managing/administering her academic program admitted that the people who fail the most are from "non-White backgrounds". Not only did this student endure discrimination within her program but, as with the previous student mentioned above, she has had to challenge multiple authority figures/groups within the institution to resist and fight back against the racism and discrimination that was forced upon her. This recounting of her experiences, actions and ultimate persistence

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[81] Due to the specific nature and content, some of the details shared by this interviewee have been deliberately withheld in an attempt to protect the student's identity.

demonstrates a refusal to be eliminated (though not without a heavy emotional toll) (Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck & Yang 2012; Veracini 2011).

Within discussions of in-class experiences of racism and discrimination, not only did students stress the frequency of these occurrences, but also their perceived basis in ignorance and misinformation, the negotiations between overt and covert displays and how levels of oppression could combine to amplify the negative situation and its impacts. The consistently high levels reported raise serious concerns about the university classroom being a safe and productive learning space for Indigenous students. Furthermore, the question of how the experiences could be so similar across three very different university contexts leads to questions of how the in-class experience for Indigenous students is being created and maintained in its current form. For example, Trent University has a long and long and admirable history of promoting Indigenous students' needs and has been hailed as a leader in both educating and supporting Indigenous students, and yet the reported in-class experiences with racism are of a similar nature and scale as those reported at other universities. McMaster University has taken many recent steps in terms of increasing program opportunities and support/services for Indigenous students, but it is arguably in a 'catch-up' position to Trent University in this regard.

What forces are at play then that maintain this high level of experience with in-class racism for Indigenous students? SCT would argue that the key to understanding this lack of variation across context lies in the understanding of settler-colonialism being a contemporary force that influences both institutional structure and individual belief

systems so strongly that thus far institutional changes that have been put in place are not significantly impacting the daily experiences of Indigenous students at those universities (Macoun & Strakosch 2013). CRT supports the centering of racism/colonialism within this analysis and the inclusion of lived-experience data provides support for challenging some of the institutional rhetoric of change as "moves to innocence" (Tuck and Yang 2012).

Social Experiences:

When reviewing the four analytic themes of experiences, social (interpersonal) experiences are the least reported category. The number of students who reported experiencing social racism at each university are McMaster - 3, Lakehead – 6 and Trent – 5. It is noted that the reported levels of experiences with social racism are lowest at McMaster.

One example of social, or inter-personal, racism shared by a female student at McMaster was so discreet that the student was hesitant at first to label it as such, and yet still felt compelled to include it within this category. She described the reaction she gets when she shares her Indigenous background with other students as being treated differently and feeling exoticized/romanticized, "I remember telling someone once and he sat there and he's looking at me as if I was a mermaid or something like that. He was like 'oh my God'. And I was like 'it's just a thing…it's not that big of a deal'". This type of racism within the Canadian University environment aligns with the findings of Cech et al. (2019) who examined the United States context. Cech et al. (2019:364) discuss a

phenomenon of 'exoticized othering' where Indigenous traditions and artifacts are

marked as exotic "while simultaneously othering the individuals associated with such

traditions and artifacts" and "most often involves a feigned curiosity about tribal cultures"

but may also extend to appropriation. This student described how, because of these types

of reactions (which she has experienced on a number of occasions), she deliberately picks

and chooses when she discloses her Indigenous background – sometimes as a tool to

make a point or take a stand if she feels she is in a space where it is safe to do so.[82]

A female McMaster student described an instance of extremely overt social

racism. McMaster university had built a new outdoor learning/classroom space for the

Indigenous Studies Program and when it officially 'opened' there were people present to

celebrate. Several male non-Indigenous students were walking by and, as they passed,

they said "oh…some more stupid fucking Indian shit". She was extremely offended and

reacted immediately saying "are you kidding me? You're in university… you should

know better". Her instant reaction elicited an apology from the male students, but she

persisted, telling them that their behaviour was "ridiculous" and they needed to "educate

themselves". Here we see another line drawn connecting racist behaviour and ignorance

on the part of non-Indigenous students within another zone of the campus environment.

Another female McMaster student shared an instance of social racism that was

perhaps not as blatant, but also demonstrates a high level of ignorance. She stated that in

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[82] The students interviewed mention how the ability to 'pass' as White impacts their experience and also their decisions about disclosure widely throughout the interviews. This particular aspect of experience will be discussed more directly in the following chapter regarding impacts and responses to racism.

her first week of school somebody approached her from her cohort to introduce themselves and ask about where she was from. When she responded that she had grown up on a reserve, their response was "oh what's that… oh you grew up in poverty then". She stated that in shock she simply stared at them and then removed herself from the conversation, while dreading the thought that all of her classmates were potentially going to be on the same level and holding similar assumptions.

A female Lakehead student recalled being on campus on her way to attend a performance by A Tribe Called Red at the on-campus bar when she passed a "group of White guys". As they passed, she noticed them laughing…uttering "powwow" and then beginning to openly laugh and make fun of the event. She states that she was very upset and had to remove herself to go to the bathroom, to take a moment and regain her composure. Another female Lakehead student recounted a similar incident where she was walking through campus and passed a group of non-Indigenous students making inappropriate comments. She stated that there were some Indigenous students doing smudging for a positive start to the new year in the Indigenous student's lounge and a girl walking with this group down the hall was heard clearly saying "Oh my God, it smells like shit down here!".[83] This student said, "I didn't know what to do. I was like should I say something?... So, I turned around and I went back…I waited until she passed and I stopped her. I said 'hi…that's actually called smudging and we're doing it in a traditional way. So please don't say things like that'". The girl apologized before walking away and

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[83] Smudging is a purification ceremony. A sacred medicine is lit and the smoke purifies the mind, body and spirit. https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/2014-NWAC-DSIA-Handbook.pdf

the student said "I felt like what I said to her was necessary…because she had to really re-think how she was gonna act next time anyone was smudging at Lakehead".

A particularly poignant display of combining stereotypes and ignorance was shared by a female student at Trent. This student shared how her participation with the university lacrosse team resulted in multiple overtly racist incidents. The first of which was during the first year she participated and at practice the team started playing the 'teepee game', where part of what's involved is holding your sticks up together in a teepee position. She described herself as being very quiet during that first year so she didn't say anything in the moment. Further into her years of participation they were getting ready for a game and her coach turned to her and said "do your savage call!" in front of the entire team and then the coach proceeded to laugh. She described how no one (athlete or coaching staff) intervened and she was left standing alone, "everyone's looking at me and they're laughing at me and I'm pissed off and I'm just like…I don't know. I was just sort of kinda like…stunned". She expressed regret about not taking action in the moment, but later requested that 'no discrimination or racism' be added to the team's code of conduct. However, the following year there had been no changes to the code of conduct and it was at this point that she chose to remove herself from the team, "It was just not a welcoming atmosphere at all".

Although there are some differences regarding the number of social racism incidents reported across the universities, there is a commonality that persists in terms of the nature of the experiences. The social experiences of racism experienced by students in the on-campus environments were much more direct (overt) and eliciting distinct, and

often immediate, responses by the Indigenous students in return. It is also noted that within the interviewees, the majority of students who experienced instances of overt racism within the social environment were women.[84] The number of students reporting social racism at McMaster is lower than at Lakehead and Trent. Lakehead and Trent have been more public about creating/incorporating new policies and programs for Indigenous students. Further, the on-campus level of visibility at both Lakehead and Trent is high, both in terms of public displays (such street signs in Indigenous languages, murals/artwork and dedicated spaces) but also average number of Indigenous students on campus.

An initial evaluation might suggest that this increased visibility would decrease instances of social racism by creating a consistent 'presence' and increasing acceptance. However, in comparison to the lower Indigenous student population and significantly lower amount of public displays containing Indigenous content across the campus at McMaster, it might be argued that increasing the presence and visibility of Indigenous students at Trent and Lakehead has inadvertently led to increased instances of social racism. This argument is supported by the perspectives of group threat/group position theory, which discuss how when a dominant group feels threatened it is likely to lash out with more overt racism (Denis 2020). The evidence through lived experience of such unrestrained demonstrations of overt racism within the on-campus environment indicates high-levels of 'un-checked' White privilege that are present despite a general belief and

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[84] Future research ought to specifically investigate whether female Indigenous students are targets for overt social racism and why. The data within this study was not designed to adequately answer this question.

perception of universities (and Canada more widely) as accepting and supportive environments. As per CRT, exploring this environment through the "racial realities" presented in the interview data calls into question the performative nature of claims such as objectivity, meritocracy and perhaps also claims of the 'progressive' position of post-secondary institutions (Dion & Dion 2018; Gillborn 2006; Ladson-Billings 1998; Lopez 2003:85; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tate 1997).

Engagement with Professors:

In terms of experiences with racism that are directly connected to engagement with professors there is wider variation: McMaster – 9, Lakehead – 3 and Trent 6. This raises comparative questions regarding the contexts of the different campus. Both on-campus and the larger urban environment, what intersecting structures and forces are combining to create these differences?

In speaking to the experience of engaging with professors, a female student at McMaster discussed her experience of how the faculty the professor is teaching in can make a drastic difference with issues such as cultural sensitivity or willingness/ability to deal with racially inappropriate situations that occur. This student compared the in-class environments of sociology classes and classes from the Indigenous Studies Program, "I find when non-Indigenous students say something inappropriate in Indigenous studies classes it gets fixed right away and it's addressed right away, but in my sociology classes

it's not even mentioned that that's not ok to say things like that or maybe that point was incorrect, so it's just like a completely different atmosphere."

Beyond issues of cultural sensitivity and dealing with racially charged in-class situations, a female student from Lakehead discussed how she feels a constant weight to be completely prepared each time she enters the classroom, as she knows in advance that she will be routinely singled out by the professor to answer questions – a feeling of being required to constantly speak up to make sure the content is accurate and to 'represent', "if you're an Indigenous student and they know that they will single you out. They'll look at you. Even if they don't say anything they'll come and just look at you, make eye contact…all that kind of stuff.". She described this experience as tiring. A female student from Trent shared similar concerns regarding professors looking to Indigenous students to teach the class, as opposed to being in a learning position. She stated "they look at you to see 'oh are they saying the right thing', or did you want to add anything… or if they're missing things when you have to teach the class". Similar to the student from Lakehead, she found this straining and stressful. She stated "You shouldn't put your job onto somebody else who are there to be a student and there to learn"

For some students there have been issues with how a professor has/has not dealt with racist comments that have occurred in class, but others have referenced instances where the comment of concern has come from the professor themselves. A female McMaster student described sitting in class as the professor announced "one thing we all have in common is that we're all proud Canadians". This is another example of a 'hidden curriculum' as discussed by Henry and Tator (2010). She stated that she was in shock

because Indigenous people are not Canadian, but are their own people and was so upset

that she followed up with the professor,

> I did email her and let her know that to hear someone calling me, and possibly
> other Indigenous students, Canadian means we have to accept the responsibility of
> sending our parents and grandparents to residential schools and the continued
> murder and exploitation of our people and our lands. And I was like I'm not
> claiming responsibility for that so please never call me Canadian again.

The professor did respond, however simply saying she didn't realize there was an issue

with what she had said. A further example of a professor making a statement in class that

was incorrect/potentially harmful was shared by another female student at McMaster who

said that the professor of a second year Anthropology class called 'Contemporary

Indigenous Knowledge and Societies' perpetuated stereotypes and myths within the

lecture material, failed to include any Indigenous resources and did not allow for

discussion. This student stated that she avoids these kinds of courses because she feels

these manifestations of racism are harmful and stressful for her. In this case, several

students brought their concerns about the course content, selected resources and teaching

approach to the chair of the department.

A male student from Trent described a different kind of discrimination that he has

faced in terms of engaging with professors, and the university at large. He stated that he

has faced discrimination when he has tried to bring his Indigenous knowledge into his

assignments, "I have difficulties bringing in Elders or even just life lessons… like I can't

directly quote myself in an assignments, the structure of academia has to sort of strip my

own personal bias and my…identity, for any such assignment…that to me is

discrimination in that it's not attacking my ideas, it's more attacking me as a person". This student found it very upsetting that he could only incorporate his Indigenous knowledge into his course work as a 'commentary' or 'personal opinion', as opposed to a source of data. Although this has been placed under the theme of experiences when engaging with professors, this student believes that this isn't just at the level of professor, but more of an institution-wide systemic issue: "Even though Trent is a big proprietor in championing the Indigenous voice, they don't really show that through actions, I find". The arguments within SCT for the ongoing, contemporary nature of settler-colonialism and its powerful influence as a system of domination support this student's perception of systemic issues (Macoun & Strakosch 2013). A similar experience, but in a different form, was shared by a female student from Trent who expressed how her own Indigenous knowledge came into question. In an Indigenous Studies class, with a non-Indigenous professor, she tried to share her own personal point of view regarding the connections between Indigenous knowledge(s) and the land and the professor's reaction turned defensive and hostile, lacking acknowledgement of her position of expertise. She described how this incident left her feeling angry, stated that she became closed off and even considered quitting her program.

The difference in observed levels of racism and discrimination when engaging with professors between McMaster and Lakehead is not necessarily illogical. Despite Lakehead arguably having the 'bleakest' urban context of the three universities (high rates of racism against Indigenous peoples city-wide), it also has had some of the most significant institutional movement to improve support and increase Indigenous student

success. It could be postulated that widely acknowledged negativity against Indigenous peoples in the larger city context has created a strong motivation within the university to uphold a high level of cultural safety for Indigenous students. Professors may be aware of publicized institutional pressure to counter the negative perceptions of Thunder Bay at large and therefore tread very carefully in any interaction with students that might be perceived as racist. Whereas at McMaster thus far, there has been less large-scale and visible institutional change regarding programs/policies to support Indigenous students and the city of Hamilton is not viewed as having the same issues with racism as the city of Thunder Bay.

With the larger urban context of Trent also being more positive/welcoming to Indigenous peoples (in comparison to Thunder Bay), and Trent's ongoing pursuit of excellence in programming and support for Indigenous students, it must be questioned why the occurrences of issues with professors is so high. This may be answered in looking at the nature of the incidences shared at Trent. The majority of students at Trent who brought forward concerns in this area spoke to the professors' abilities to lead the courses they were assigned, be that core knowledge, confidence in the material, or appropriate teaching strategies/approaches. Although beyond the scope of the current study, this suggests that research needs to continue to determine whether Trent's forward movement, in terms of policy/curriculum changes, has traveled beyond the current abilities/capacities of (some of) its educators and perhaps new training strategies may need to be applied.

Engagement with the Institution:

Addressing issues of racism and discrimination when engaging with the university institutions, once again the data suggests some interesting cross-university comparisons. Students reporting experiences with racism when engaging with the institution directly are: McMaster – 9, Lakehead – 5 and Trent – 8. The concerns raised by students within this area of engagement varied greatly in both the nature of the racism and the source within the institution.

One example of discrimination when engaging with the university was provided by a female student at McMaster who stated that to support the Indigenous student community she works on many committees and groups and this often requires seeking out funding for various projects or events. Through this work she has come to understand that there is a drastic difference in the effort required, and the treatment she receives, when the funding she is searching for needs to come from the Indigenous Studies Program versus the wider university. When speaking with parts of the institution outside of the Indigenous Studies Program she describes ongoing difficulties and a general lack of support – constantly having to prove the need and often being told that they won't have the 'numbers' to justify the expense or that it's simply 'not worth it'.

A male graduate student at McMaster shared a very different example of racism/discrimination involving issues with the finance department. Every pay cycle he ran into issues with the accounts payable department properly invoicing his band for tuition payments, to the point where his band would reach out to him asking what they

should do. He described how he would communicate with the finance department over and over, but with no success, "They actually let it pile up one time for like 4 semesters, 2 years…so it looked like on my account that I owed the university over 20,000 dollars and it was collecting all this interest. So, when they did send it to the band, they were trying to collect the interest as well…" He felt as though the university was trying to "make money off of us Natives" by letting interest pile up and then trying to collect. He warned his band of what was going on and they subsequently told the university they refused to pay the interest. Additionally, he described how it only got worse as years passed, including large delays in his scholarship payments. He stated that although he can't know for sure he wonders if it was racism because he knew a lot of other non-Indigenous students who always received their payments on time, "Racism and discrimination for First Nations people is just part of life…you get used to stuff like this and you can't prove it right…so there's nothing you can really do about it…something we learn to live with".

Another form of discrimination from the institution was noted by a female student at Lakehead. She shared that at Lakehead, the university places a lot of emphasis on the promotion of what they want to teach or what they've advertised (in terms of Indigenous courses/content), but they don't have the instructors that are necessary. For her, this has resulted in disappointment when the course she was hoping for becomes no longer available, or has been changed to a different form to accommodate a shortage (in either staff or knowledge base). She feels the quality of her learning has been affected by the institution not supplying the necessary infrastructure to meet the needs.

A similar issue was addressed by a female student at McMaster who shared her belief that there is a lack of an 'Indigenous brain-trust' within the university. She describes how, for Indigenous professors, there is an apparent high turnover with no tenure positions available at McMaster.[85] She perceives that this is disruptive for both the professors and the students. Not only are the professors often shifting, but she mentioned that the Indigenous student counselor was a different person every year of her undergrad and she felt this resulted in a lack of continuity and sometimes potential conflicts of interest. Her belief is that the institution is not "buying-in" on any real level, "I mean, without tenure positions…without real financial support from the university, I think this problem of discontinuity will only keep going". The analysis within SCT of 'settler moves to innocence' leads to a questioning of how universities may create new programs or initiatives regarding Indigenous faculty and students, but a lack of follow-through and support can simultaneously be witnessed - moves to innocence as opposed to genuine systemic changes (Davis et al 2016; Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck & Yang 2012).

A female and male student at Lakehead both spoke to another kind of discrimination/racism experienced as a result of actions taken by the institution. When Lakehead was initially pursuing the implementation of a mandatory requirement for Indigenous content, it became known that the non-Indigenous student population was, on average, taking great issue with the potential curriculum changes. This student describes how, after some political and administrative 'side-stepping' the university pushed the

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[85] Despite her perception of no tenured Indigenous professors, there are at least two Indigenous professors holding tenured positions at McMaster, and several others that are currently holding tenure-track posts.

mandate through, without properly informing or explaining the situation to either the

faculty or general student population. Despite understanding the reasoning and need for

the mandatory course (and often agreeing on the basic premise), these students perceived

that the manner in which the university proceeded caused a negative racial backlash from

the non-Indigenous student population that the institution did not take into account when

making their decisions, and that could have been avoided with more careful

planning/execution. Furthermore, aligning with the students above who fear a lack of an

'Indigenous brain-trust' at the institution, this female student from Lakehead fears that,

even though she supports the overall concept, there isn't enough administrative support

and available Indigenous faculty to create the necessary courses/content in an adequate

way that will promote success and positive change.

In the example from Lakehead described above, one might argue that in

implementing the mandatory course, the university administration was trying to bring

about important and positive changes. However, the students had concerns in terms of

the method of implementation as well as the administrative backing for successful

execution. A Trent student shared a similar example regarding the institution striving to

make improvements but without the necessary follow through – creating hardship. He

stated that when the Trent mandatory Indigenous learning course was initiated that the

enrollment for the first-year Indigenous learning course increased dramatically, but no

additional support was provided to the teaching assistants or to the professor. This

student, again in a similar position to the student from Lakehead, believes that, in theory,

the mandatory course is a positive step, but that there was no follow-up on the part of the

institution, "They're trying, but they're not trying at the same time". This leads to questions of whether the institutional changes being made are on a more symbolic level, as opposed to truly addressing built-in, systemic, racial issues (Backhouse 2001). Further he expressed how with the surge of enrollment by non-Indigenous students, the Indigenous students actually became minorities within the classroom and that he feared the classroom environment could become very "toxic" for those students.

Another male student from Trent described a situation where he perceived the institution acted in a discriminatory manner in terms of making and executing a plan without true consideration of the Indigenous students and faculty. This student described how the university unilaterally decided to remove a large number of cedar trees that were located close to the on-campus teepee site. He stated that it seemed as though the removal did not have 'purpose', "I feel that it was just a waste…like just the abruptness of it to clear that much space and just feel like I was never consulted or not even necessarily me specifically…just not made known". It was his perception that the input the university had received prior to the removal, in terms of arguments for maintaining the trees, was simply "vetoed" by the administration and that there was a lot of surprise and outrage.

Addressing concerns of how 'institutional conflict of interest' may occur, a male student from Trent shared his observation of how the goals and directions of post-secondary institutions can clash, creating circumstances that don't serve either Indigenous or non-Indigenous students. In order to support this position, he discussed Trent being an educational institution while also being geared to successful within a competitive

marketplace. The specific example shared involved the way that Trent cross-posts Indigenous learning courses with other faculties in order to increase enrollment, but without considering important logistics of how the course operates and the necessity of pre-requisites. Specifically, he discussed an Indigenous Creative Literature course,

> There was non-Indigenous people and Indigenous people within the course, but some of the non-Indigenous students had never taken an Indigenous course before…if you're understanding Indigenous people and their creative literature or their art or those kinds of things, you have to understand the history of Indigenous people right…so I feel like that's the kind of a thing where Trent doesn't quite understand…those students that are using it as an English course don't fully understand the history…so they're not gonna fully grasp the whole understanding of the course.

In this case, the Trent student had concerns for all the students involved. For Indigenous students in terms of safe learning spaces and opportunities, and for non-Indigenous students that they would be able to walk away from the course with a true understanding of the literature and therefore increased understanding of Indigenous peoples. Following CRT in centering race and racism within analysis, while maintaining an awareness of how intersections can impact lived experiences, this examples demonstrates how a large market-focused institution, based in a settler-colonial socio-political context – two very powerful forces – can inadvertently make choices and changes that negatively impact oppressed groups within the campus environment (Feagin & Feagin 1978; Ladson-Billings 1998; Tate 1997).

Thus far the experiences of Indigenous students within the university environment have been discussed in terms of encountering racism/discrimination within four analytic

themes, or 'zones', of the university environment. There is ample data to support that the frequency and severity of these experiences has serious implications for the well-being of Indigenous students and creation of positive academic experiences. The discussion of experiences would be incomplete without understanding how Indigenous students' experiences vary based on gender, as well as a comparison to the experiences of non-Indigenous students.

Female versus Male experiences for Indigenous students within the university:

The discussion of how experiences vary within the Indigenous student community based on gender brought forward some important insights. Some of the observations are positive, but others quite negative and part of this speaks to intersections of different life-positions and how this may play a role in constructing life experience.

One female student from McMaster spoke to how the high number of female Indigenous leaders and student representatives has had a positive impact on her. The high number of Indigenous professors that are female, as well as leaders within the Indigenous student community, has provided her with a sense of support that has empowered her as she moves through her university career, "I feel like women are very – we like to help each other and we like to support each other – so I feel like it's been almost beneficial to me…like I feel as an Indigenous woman with an Indigenous organization, I've had lots of support". Another female student shared that there is more available 'socially' within the university environment for Indigenous women than there is for men, simply based on the

high number of female Indigenous students: "We do beading workshops and we do like cooking classes and men are more than welcome to come, but I feel like they don't because they feel like it's just gonna be a bunch of women". She described how it's difficult to create events that are interesting to all of the Indigenous students, but with the lower number of male Indigenous students enrolled, the events don't tend to address their needs or interests. A male student supported this view of how there is a strong Indigenous female community, but also a lack of community for men. He perceives this is a benefit that Indigenous female students have in comparison to males. In contrast to holding a view of an 'empowering environment for Indigenous women', one male student described his belief that male Indigenous students are discriminated against because "all of the supports and campaigns are in place for women". A female student at McMaster cautioned that in the university environment, where there is a high number of Indigenous female students and faculty (comparatively), it is important not unintentionally oppress Indigenous men: "Our Indigenous men aren't equated to the same social standing as a White man…so good on him for getting 'this' position right? Like…we should be more supportive…".

However, other students did not necessarily share the positive perspective on how their female status impacts their university experience. Another female student from McMaster spoke to her perspective that Indigenous women can get overlooked within the university system:

> I understand they're looking to have every voice represented, but when it's like I know so many women who are doing so much for the university, but then men are

being picked over them to speak…so it's like women are doing all the action, but men are doing all the speaking and getting all the credit.

A male student from Trent supported this perspective, stating that there is still a "very heavily leaning male influence" within the university environment. Multiple students (both male and female) also shared that female Indigenous university students have to maintain an ongoing level of increased awareness and worry about their physical safety on campus – an aspect of campus life that they see as being much more a part of the female experience.[86] One male student stated that when intersecting Indigenous status with female status and placing that within a context where there is a lack of institutional support, that Indigenous women on campus live in a "heightened state of fear". A female student at Lakehead stated "As you progress through university, like an Indigenous woman in Canada…ya you're the lowest person on the totem pole and that's what you're being taught…It is especially difficult as an Indigenous person to get recognized in anything but when you're an Indigenous woman it's twice as difficult, if not 5 times more difficult…" This student has demonstrated how experiencing oppression has led her to theorize about the intersectional nature of her lived experience, with social statuses such as women and Indigenous intersecting within a colonial context (Castiello Jones et al 2013; Collins 2019; Yuval-Davis 2006. The examples recounted above reinforce the theoretical position of CRT that differences in context and social locations of individuals

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[86] Across Canada there has been increased concern and attention regarding a persistent context of widespread violence against Indigenous women. For detailed information please see the National Inquiry report (2019) - https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/

can create large differences in experiences, perspectives and understandings (Gillborn 2006; Henry & Tator 2009; Ladson-Billings 1998; Nakano Glenn 2002).

Several students addressed not simply the difference between male and female Indigenous students, but more specifically female students who are mothers. This further degree of specificity is described as adding many additional complexities and burdens within the university experience, including a perceived severe lack of support by the university institutions. Speaking to the difference in approach to education, a female McMaster student describes how mothers don't have the luxury of being indecisive in the way they execute their education: "they need to have some sort of direction, so whether it's going on to graduate school, whether it's starting to apply for jobs…they've gotta think ahead because they have little ones to support".   The status of motherhood intersects not only with being female, but also with mature student status. Non-Indigenous students of course can also be mature students and mothers, but as the proportion of Indigenous students that are mature students and have familial obligations is much higher (supported through both statistics and interview data), then any discrimination in this area will affect the Indigenous student population disproportionately. Another female McMaster student addressed how the lack of institutional support for mothers has led to her being labeled as causing trouble, and become a significant barrier to her success, "If you look at the stats it tells you that the average Indigenous student is mature, she is female, she does have a family to come home to. And the policies and the structure of the university does not accommodate that at all". This student cited numerous incidents where her status as mature student and

mother clashed with her ability to succeed with her education. Some examples she

provided were compulsory courses only offered in the evening (when child care is not

available), professors refusing to accommodate/support her additional responsibilities as a

single mother (such as providing alternatives for meeting requirements when child illness

removed her from class), educational events (such as field-engagement courses) that are

not designed to have flexibility for anyone with responsibilities outside of school. She

has had to raise complaints to many faculty members, department heads and even Human

Rights at the university and states that it is a heavy burden:

> Every time one of these big blow ups happens I contemplate quitting and leaving
> cuz it's stressful, it's unpleasant, I feel like I've been outed as the trouble maker
> within my program…it's one thing, it's two things, it's three things that keep
> building and building and building and trying to force me to be something…shirk
> my parental responsibilities…primary to me as a Haudenosaunee mother…that's
> first and foremost on my path.

Although she recounts how her status as a mother also precludes her from participating in

a lot of social engagements and leaves her on the 'outside' of her program, she is most

concerned about being able to maintain her priorities as a mother while achieving her

personal-best within her studies. A female student at Trent described how her student life

changed once she became a mother – she had to pull away from the Indigenous student

group and various extra-curricular activities because she simply didn't have the time or

energy. She further mentioned, however, that she wished the university would provide

some supports for student-mothers. One example she provided was how she has to miss

events at the university, such as guest lectures, because she has to care for her child,

> If there was an event going on at the university…and there was a classroom where you could drop your kids off and there's people watching your children for the duration of the lecture or whatever…it would be easier for me to like oh! Cools! I wanna go to that guest lecture!

Another female student from Trent also spoke to how she feels the workload is intensely increased: "As a mother…as a female…and as a PhD student… like five times harder than say my cohort that's the 2 males… because I feel they already instantly got respect, whereas I feel like I have to work for it". The large amount of work required for an Indigenous female student and mother to be successful is exacerbated by the lack of institutional support. A male student from Trent spoke to his perception of the experience of parenthood being one that far more heavily impacts female Indigenous students as opposed to males, as he is unaware of any male Indigenous student-parents who are impacted the same way: "I have a friend who has a kid but he essentially just walked away from the relationships…was just like 'ya I'm not gonna deal with that'", leaving the mother with all the additional responsibilities. The intersection of multiple sources of oppression (Indigenous identity and gender) and complex social positioning (single mother) creates contexts where there is significant additional burden, which potentially impacts student well-being and academic success (Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

Despite a clear perception amongst the students interviewed that the university systems are not designed to support students who are mothers, the same was not said for the Indigenous student community's support of student mothers. A female student at Trent described how the Indigenous community at Trent has been incredibly supportive of her as a mother, from allowing her to bring her baby to class if needed, to supporting

her kid's various activities, such as fundraisers: "They all wanted to hold him and help me out… I feel very supported and loved by my Indigenous community and my cohort". And to reciprocate this support and show her gratitude, this student stated that she tries to show the same kindness and consideration to other Indigenous mothers.

Indigenous versus non-Indigenous student experiences:

When the Indigenous students interviewed shared their perception of how their experiences compared with those of non-Indigenous students there was a wide variety of responses. Some of the students spoke to their belief that non-Indigenous students have a much "easier" time in university. This was based on observations that Indigenous students are constantly involved in additional activities, such as activist work to support themselves and others and/or increased "life" responsibilities outside of the university, whereas non-Indigenous students have more time to "relax" and increased opportunities easily available to them. Other students spoke to the particular burden of constantly being stereotyped, exoticized and perceived as different – leading to an ongoing expectation for them to repeatedly discuss and explain their identity, whereas the invisible position of 'Whiteness' requires no such explanations (Bailey 2016; Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith 1997; McConahay, Hardee, and Batts 1981; Mcintosh 1989; Sydell and Nelson 2000; Quillian 2006; Clair and Denis 2015). Another comparison and concern often mentioned was the weight that Indigenous students have of trying to educate themselves while also educating

others, an occurrence that Onondaga scholar David Newhouse (2012) has called 'the red

person's burden'. A McMaster student stated:

> I feel like a lot of my non-Indigenous classmates or friends didn't have to know
> their entire people's history…didn't have to constantly think about educating
> other people…they didn't have that extra burden. A lot of them were worried
> about whether a guy liked them, where they're gonna go party that weekend,
> whereas like I feel a lot of my experience was dealing with a lot of death, dealing
> with a lot of things happening in the community where it made everything else
> seem so trivial.

Several students also mentioned the Indigenous students (particularly female) dealt with

significantly increased fears for physical safety while on campus compared to non-

Indigenous students. When more specifically comparing the experiences of male

Indigenous students to non-Indigenous males, a student from Trent shared his belief that

part of the difference in experience had to do with confidence in what their education

would bring upon completion: "They can walk away with the confidence knowing that

they're eventually going to get a job…I have to carve out my own definition of what

success is and I have to make my own job…it's not going to be the same thing, the same

journey for them".

One student shared his perception of a drastic difference in experience between

Indigenous and non-Indigenous students that involves not only extra work, but a very

personal and sometimes difficult form of work. This male student shared that when

Indigenous students attend university they also engage in a search for identity, an

experience not applicable to non-Indigenous students whose identities are rooted in

Canada. He stated, "As an Indigenous person we search for who we are…we're

constantly trying to pick up the pieces and figure out who am I – where am I from – what

does it mean to be from this place…whereas non-Indigenous students – they come to the university setting, they learn, and then they leave".[87] Beyond the more straightforward learning within the classroom, Indigenous students engage in ongoing personal learning about themselves, their communities and their perception of identity and place.

Although the comparisons of Indigenous and non-Indigenous experiences often conveyed the belief that Indigenous students had to work harder and experienced increased levels of burden, both within the university and beyond, there were a few observations that pointed to positive aspects of the university experience not available to non-Indigenous students. A male student from McMaster spoke about how he had the blessing of community amongst his Indigenous peers: "I may connect with people more intimately…I've discovered my identity more than other people might have at this point". His perception was that the larger non-Indigenous student community was so immense that it would prevent connections from being formed on the same level, and therefore a lack of positive benefit for non-Indigenous students. In addition to the benefit of having access to the Indigenous student community, a student from Lakehead shared his perception that the university in fact provides more support to Indigenous students than non-Indigenous students: "Definitely feel like there's more support…definitely just being Indigenous in general I feel like I have more people to go to, more resources around the

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[87] Discovery of identity within the university context was frequently discussed by those being interviewed, but simultaneously there was an understanding that the identity-work and self-discovery was very different for Indigenous students than non-Indigenous students, sometimes involving high stress and tension levels and requiring careful classroom management (Crey 2009) -
https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/aboriginal_identity__the_classroom/

university…just I have more". This student was one of only two that expressed this position and certainly there were others who held very contradictory positions.[88]

Discussion and Conclusions:

Despite a small number of students that spoke to advantages within the university specific to Indigenous students, by far the majority shared the perception that in comparison to non-Indigenous students their university experiences were more difficult, with increased levels of burden both socially and within their education. The data gathered through the in-depth interview process strongly suggests that Indigenous students attending McMaster University, Lakehead University and Trent University are facing consistently high levels of racism and discrimination. The severity of experiences and consistency across different institutional environments, combined with the larger Canadian colonial context, supports concerns of similar experiences occurring at other Canadian universities. This ought to be investigated further in future research.

The in-class experiences of racism shared by Indigenous students provided further support of the themes identified in Bailey's (2016) study. However, two additional themes were identified that supply further information regarding context and student experiences: the fluid nature of racist events (sliding between overt and covert depending on variables such as class composition, professor identification and course

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[88] The second student who expressed a similar position appeared much less certain of the belief. In some ways she very much felt the university institution needed to increase its support and assistance to Indigenous students, but also simultaneously wondered if she had truly 'earned' her degree, or had been catered to because of her identity. It can be questioned whether her partial perception of the university giving 'more' to Indigenous students was rooted in an underlying questioning, or doubt, of her own ability to succeed as an Indigenous student.

content/faculty) and the way in which the negative experience of racism can be amplified when the experiences overflow simultaneously into multiple zones of the university. The way in which students across the three universities frequently encountered racist experiences, of a similar nature, within the classroom – despite very different university and urban contexts – supports the argument that the settler-colonial narratives are having substantial impact on experience at the individual level. This data supports the argument made by SCT that these master narratives are active at all levels and often operating invisibly – striving to eliminate challenges by Indigenous peoples so that the settler-colonial project may be completed (Lawrence & Dua 2005; Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014; Veracini 2011; Wolfe 2006). This creates environments where the changes made by universities (small and large) to support Indigenous students hang in a precarious balance between deliberate, positive change and performative "moves to innocence".

Many of the experiences Indigenous students reported in the social environment were extremely 'overt' in nature. This is surprising considering that these types of overt behaviours are typically considered socially 'taboo' as they directly contradict the 'story of Canada' as 'multicultural and accepting', which often triggers a retreat to covert behaviours (Dovidio & Gaertner 2004). Although not the sole focus of this study, it seems crucial that future research investigates what triggers the non-Indigenous students to feel empowered/invincible enough to make such bold, overt and harmful statements within the university social context that they would (presumably) otherwise refrain from when in a public space. When analyzing this finding from a comparative standpoint, the

data shows that although largely overt in nature, the frequency of experiences differs across the university contexts, with the curious result of McMaster having the lowest level. With McMaster, thus far, having made less major policy, process and content changes in terms of supporting Indigenous students, the data suggests that the decreased 'visibility' of Indigenous students is preventing a certain level of negative attention/reaction from non-Indigenous students. In contrast, and as suggested in multiple ways by the students interviewed, perhaps the grander changes implemented at Lakehead and Trent have created a racial backlash that is causing harm to Indigenous students. This is not to say that the changes themselves are wholly negative and, in fact, most of the students interviewed support their universities' intentions and directions. However, the increased visibility and attention, without direct mediation, may be creating potentially harmful environments for Indigenous students.

In terms of experiences reported by students when engaging with their professors, again we see variation in reported levels across the university contexts. The number of incidents reported by students at Lakehead is relatively low. Within that context there is a larger percentage of Indigenous students on campus, as well as significant Indigenous presence in the surrounding city. However, the city is also well-known for having large issues in terms of Indigenous relations (Dunk, 2003; Jago 2019; Talaga 2017). With a goal of maintaining positive public opinion and successful operations as an institution, perhaps it is a top-down pressure from the university administration that maintains a mindfulness amongst professors to perform their jobs in a very careful manner – as further racist incidents reported on campus would only hamper the university's potential

reputation and growth. This argument is supported by the fact that at McMaster the number of reported experiences with racism perpetuated by professors is higher. The urban area surrounding the university directly has not gained the same level of public attention regarding negative treatment of Indigenous peoples, and within the university itself the Indigenous student body is smaller proportionately than at Lakehead with less obvious visibility. This, in turn, may create an environment where the professors do not feel bound by, or pressured into, a particular manner of performing their duties that supports Indigenous student success, and therefore the university at large.

The number of students who reported encountering racism when engaging with the professors at Trent appears significant, however the data provided by the Indigenous students seems to indicate that the main source for these incidents is coming from a larger institutional issue. Several students referenced that the more recent changes that the university has implemented, regarding Indigenous students and learning – such as the mandatory course requirement and increasing availability of courses with Indigenous content – may have pushed past the current capacities of the faculty in terms of Indigenous knowledges and availability. The students interviewed at Trent stated they could see the positive potential in many of the new programs and policies, however they would question that the university has provided enough administrative, faculty, and financial support to ensure that implementation does not create an increased burden on Indigenous students and faculty, as well as potentially un-safe learning environments.

In terms of engagement with the institution, the experiences shared by the students fell into several general categories: blatant discrimination (such as the student who shared

that when seeking financial support for Indigenous programming she would be told it 'wasn't worth it'), a lack of support, or follow-through, regarding new policies that caused distress and burden, and a lack of consideration of Indigenous student needs and experiences more generally (such as the impact of cross-posting courses with Indigenous content to multiple departments). Regarding the data for experiences with the professors and engagement with the larger institutions, the question is raised as to 'why' the universities are not following through with the necessary financial support and infrastructure requirements – is it the growing pains of advancement, or further examples of "conciliatory rhetoric" and "moves to innocence" guided by the underlying structure of settler colonialism (Tuck & Yang 2012:3; Veracini 2011:8)?

The discussion of how experiences within the university varied between male and female Indigenous students brought forward several significant insights – perceptions of physical safety, available opportunities, student-community participation and motherhood. The discussion of motherhood exemplified how intersections of multiple layers of context, positionality and oppression can distinctly impact lived experience (Snelgrove, Dhamoon & Corntassel 2014; Tuck & Yang 2012). Indigenous students who are mothers are facing oppression based on 'race' and gender, as well as discrimination from the university structure – creating burdens and hardship at increasingly significant levels.

Throughout the above analysis, SCT and CRT have been used in combination in order to implement a reflexive approach that centers both race/racism and settler-colonialism, while simultaneously presenting the lived experiences of Indigenous post-

secondary students as legitimate data and evidence of ongoing impacts of racism, and also

resistance. This approach has created a space where the experiences shared by the

Indigenous students have described the nature and severity of racism that they face, as

well as insights into the contexts creating these experiences. The Indigenous students

have identified ongoing colonial perspectives, practices, programs and institutions, as

well as demonstrating how intersecting forces of domination can determine experiences.

Chapter 4: Impacts and Responses

"I struggle with feeling like I'm good enough to be here…am I as smart as those kids…
I'm older and I'm first generation university student so…I do struggle with that.
But…I'm making it so it's all good."

(Female Indigenous Post-Secondary Student)

Introduction:

The discussion of the impacts of racism, and the Indigenous students' responses within the Canadian university context, covers a wide range of emotions, experiences and reactions. Experiencing ongoing everyday racism can undermine the health and welfare of Indigenous peoples in numerous ways (Essed 1991; Henry & Tator 2010; Krieger 2000; Paradies 2006). Being unique individuals, no two students are impacted and/or respond in identical ways, however, there are strong themes running throughout the data that connect the interviewees. Within the analysis of impacts, some of the themes that arose include decreased academic motivation and success, as well as emotional strain. The themes regarding 'responses' contained more variation in terms of positivity and negativity. Some of the positive aspects included empowerment, self-determination and creation of strong individual and group resistance. In analyzing the reported impacts and responses, the data will be discussed based on the relevant themes. However, in many cases there may be overlap between the thematic groups, as particular experiences could relate to more than one area.

Throughout the analysis that follows, discussion will continue regarding the role of 'context' - what similarities/differences are contained within the impacts of racism and the students' responses across the university environments. Once again, the data demonstrates that despite some variation there is a high-level of consistency in the more overarching themes across the university environments. This, once again, centers the questions of 'why' and 'how' the experiences could maintain such consistency across contexts that vary significantly in policies and social environment.

Empirical context:

As outlined in the previous chapter, Canada's complicated legacy, including the deliberate oppression of Indigenous peoples, has led to a society that has ongoing racism and settler colonial ideals built directly into its contemporary social fabric (Battiste 2013; Cech et al 2019; Clark et al. 2014; Cote-Meek 2014; Henry and Tator 2010; Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Nakano Glenn 2002; Neeganagwedgin E 2013; Privy Council Office 2019; Sydell and Nelson 2000; TRC 2015). For those who have (consciously or unconsciously) used this hegemonic platform as their sole frame of reference, stepping outside of these ideologies can be difficult and uncomfortable (Gramsci 1971; McIntosh 1989; Tuck and Yang 2012; Macoun & Strakosch 2013). Settler-colonial objectives are so enmeshed in Canadian society that, despite nation-wide movements such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Inquiry, the effects are deceptively pervasive, impacting all levels and

institutions in society – including those for higher education (Battiste 2013; Cech et al 2019; Clark et al. 2014; Cote-Meek 2014; Henry and Tator 2010; Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Nakano Glenn 2002; Neeganagwedgin E 2013; Privy Council Office 2019; Sydell and Nelson 2000; TRC 2015).

Existing literature, although largely focused on the United States context, has demonstrated that there are significant, and ongoing, issues with ethnic and racial discrimination within university environments - perpetuated by a lack of significant and impactful change by the institutions (Cech et al 2019; Harper and Hurtado 2007; Suarez-Balcazar et al. 2003). The release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions final report in 2015 generated a large increase in popular discussion regarding reconciliation within Canadian universities and the early stages of transformation – but there is the possibility that some of these changes are only serving a performative function (Bailey 2019; TRC 2015; Wilkes et al 2017).

Expanding and further developing the initial analyses by Clark et al. (2014) and Bailey (2016), the current project has significantly contributed to the investigation/understanding of how and when Indigenous university students are experiencing racism, as well as maintaining the student's voices as expert testimony.[89] The number of Indigenous students interviewed has been greatly increased, while including multiple research sites. This has facilitated a much more comprehensive understanding of 'when' and 'how' the Indigenous students are facing racism, as well as

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[89] For a detailed outline of the research projects completed by Clark et al. (2014) and Bailey (2016) see Chapter 3 within the 'Empirical Context' section.

the impacts and their responses. The data has also supplied insight into the intersecting nature of the social and political forces that combine to create these experiences. The resilient and powerful nature of Indigenous students' responses to racism is also evident within the data.

Although not necessarily investigating Canada or the university context specifically, there is a small base of literature that examines how Indigenous peoples more generally may choose to respond to racism.[90] Within this area, several researchers have attempted to identify specific response categories through which they can analyze responses to racism. Over time these categories have become more complex and context specific. To assist in understanding Indigenous students' responses to racism within the Canadian university context, a brief review of this literature is provided below.[91]

In a study intended to investigate health consequences involved in experiencing ongoing/prolonged discrimination, Krieger (1999) identifies two contrasting categories: protective responses (including active resistance efforts) and harmful responses (including internalization of oppression or denial). Since that time, others have endeavoured to elaborate on, and refine, these categories. Through an investigation of response types for Indigenous peoples located in both Australia and Chile (Mapuche population), Mellor (2004) took a functional approach in his creation of a three-category

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[90] There is also a body of more general literature regarding ways that stigmatized or oppressed groups respond to racism/stigmatizations (outside of the Indigenous context). For further information please see *Getting Respect: Responding to stigma and discrimination in the United States, Brazil and Israel* (Lamont et al. 2016) and *Race & well-being: The lives, hopes and activism of African Canadians* (James et al. 2010)

[91] The literature review in this section draws on Denis and Traore (2019) – an unpublished manuscript. Further reference details are included within the bibliography.

response framework. The three categories Mellor (2004) identified include: emotion-focused responses (protecting the self – passing, reinterpretation of events), problem-focused responses (direct confrontation – teaching, verbally contesting, formal complaints) and self-control responses (no acceptance of racism, but choosing to ignore and suppress responses). In the Chilean context, Mellor et al. (2009) identified that the main coping response selected was defensive/self-protective, however self-control and confrontation strategies were also employed.

Expanding the categories once again, Paradies (2006) creates a two-tier system. Within this system, Paradies (2006) outlined that responses and reactions to racism fall into three main groups: cognitive responses, affective responses and behavioural responses. Within those three categories, Paradies (2006) indicates the nature of the responses may be either active or passive and either adaptive or maladaptive. When reviewing data regarding Indigenous peoples within the Australian context, Paradies and Cunningham (2009) note that Indigenous peoples are choosing to use roughly equal levels of active/expressive and passive/internalizing response methods. Amongst the least commonly selected responses was the choice to try and change oneself or one's behaviour (Paradies & Cunningham 2009). It was also determined that the majority of study participants were impacted by internalized racism (Paradies & Cunningham 2009). Two of the key findings within this study include that the selection of responses to racism varied very little based on differences in socio-demographic characteristics and that the selection of "active responses to racism" can reduce the cumulative effects of harm caused by racism by "armouring people against it" (Paradies & Cunningham 2009:567).

Through their research regarding impacts and responses to racism by Indigenous peoples in the Canadian context, Bombay et al. (2010) determined that another potential source of protection, or armour, from the negative impacts of racism is provided by individuals having, or creating, a stronger group-based identity. However, it was also determined that the effects of having a strong group-based identity were not uniform and in cases where the centrality of this identity became particularly prominent, negative effects might actually be exacerbated (Bombay et al. 2010). Due to the complex nature of ethnic identification, Bombay et al. (2010:514) state that "a greater understanding of how the different aspects of identity operate within specific ethnic populations is needed in order to implement culturally appropriate interventions that will serve to promote resilience".

Based on further research regarding Indigenous peoples within the Australian context, Ziersch et al. (2011) determined some similar response patterns to those outlined above, including the prevalence of choices to seek out social support resources (such as discussing and sharing concerns with other Indigenous people) and to confront the person/situation (to stand their ground and exercise agency). These response types were viewed by those impacted by racism as important for both themselves and others (attempting to impact change) (Ziersch et al. 2011). Ziersch et al. (2011) makes an additional contribution to this research area by beginning the discussion of how institutional or structural constraints can impact response selection. In one example, Ziersch et al. (2011:1049) discusses how the choice of a response may be changed from active to passive based overarching constraints,

a lens of institutional racism shaped responses where, for example, there was a concern about confrontation leading to interaction with the police. Participants gave examples of negative interactions with the police relating to being stopped and questioned for no reason, unfair detention, and threatened or actual assault.

These kind of experiences with systemic/institutional racism altered the individual responses to choices such as ignoring, avoiding (attempting to maintain invisibility) and minimization (cognitively reinterpreting the experiences to question as to whether it 'really' was racism) (Ziersch et al. 2011). The consideration of how systemic structures of racism can alter individual responses is an important addition to this area of analysis.

Based on the lacuna of research examining how Indigenous individuals in Canada cope with, and respond, to everyday racism (particularly at the individual level), Denis and Traore (2019) critically review previous work in the area and expand available knowledge through new empirical data. Their analysis is based on data gathered as part of a larger study investigating Indigenous-settler relations in Northwestern Ontario, Canada. Within this study, 60 Indigenous residents were interviewed regarding their responses and general strategies for dealing with racism (Denis & Traore 2019). Denis and Traore (2019:2) state that Mellor's categories of response fail to analyze how particular responses might serve multiple functions simultaneously, as well as how wider structural conditions may impact what responses are chosen, arguing that responses to racism are "systematically shaped by both personal and contextual factors". Through careful data analysis, they found a broad pattern of response strategies and ranked them based on frequency of use (Denis & Traore 2019). Starting with the most predominant category, the strategies include: locating strength in spirituality, maintaining a sense of humour, seeking education (both traditional and mainstream), educating others, creative

self-expressions, asserting Indigenous identity, political activism, seeking social support,

reconciliation/forgiveness, downplaying Indigenous identity, numbing the pain with

alcohol/drugs or minimizing significance. One of the key findings from this research is

that Indigenous individuals appear far more likely to choose an active response, such as

trying to make change or talking to others, than to simply accept the racism and stay

silent (Denis & Traore 2019). Further, a strong theme regarding the importance of

context emerged – indicating that the interviewees did a lot of contextual analysis in

terms of deciding 'why' the racism occurred and what response strategy they would select

in each specific instance (Denis & Traore 2019).

The studies discussed above provide insight into previous research regarding

responses to racism by Indigenous peoples. They highlight the complex way in which

context and personal experience combine in individual selection of responses to racism.

Theoretical Approach:

The theoretical approach applied within this chapter is a combination of Settler

Colonial Theory and Critical Race Theory. As stated within Chapter 2, these two

theoretical approaches strengthen each other when used together. When using these

theories to analyze the impacts of, and responses to, racism, several elements of CRT in

particular become highlighted. CRT's insistence on the centering of lived experience as

valid data, and the telling of 'racialized realities' as a form of counter story, or resistance,

play a key role in understanding the impacts of racism and what responses the students

select. These counter-stories also provide valuable insight into various resistance efforts by Indigenous students – how and why they begin. For an in-depth theoretical review, please see Chapter 2.

Findings

Impacts:

The data on the impacts of racism/discrimination within the Canadian university environment fell into three main categories: academic, emotional toll and isolation and belonging. The Indigenous students interviewed put forward that these impacts had serious implications for them in terms of well-being and personal success, and in some cases influenced larger decisions they were making for their academic and personal futures.

Academic Impacts:

Fifteen students (55% of those interviewed) addressed how racism and discrimination on campus played a role in determining their academic success. Some of the students spoke very specifically to racism/discrimination occurring within the classroom. A female student from McMaster described how when she is taking a class where the professor is saying discriminatory things, or is allowing her fellow students to do so, that she finds it very difficult to maintain motivation for doing the work and has

tried to drop classes because of it in the past. Feelings and reactions similar to this were shared by several students, and across all 3 universities. A male student from McMaster shared that these situations are very stressful and make him question why he is attending the institution. A female student from Trent stated that after a particular confrontation with a professor in class where she perceived her Indigenous knowledge was being questioned/unheeded, she abruptly and angrily left the class, "I said I don't know why I'm in a PhD program…to this day I am shut down in that class". She further shared that the incident had created doubts for her that perhaps she should quit and return home, but ultimately, she decided to stay. She indicated that persistently encountering instances such as these has led her to repeatedly question her place at the university, but by accessing support resources, such as the Indigenous counselor, she has found ways to proceed with her academic career.

A female McMaster student also expressed that the many times she has encountered racism at the university have made her consider quitting her program, as it is so stressful and unpleasant and she feels it limits not only her motivation, but also closes doors to her within her program and therefore limits her larger academic experience/success as well. A male student from Trent stated that dealing with racism within the classroom causes him to withdraw, "Mentally I just check out. I can't engage with that material…At the end of the day I get home exhausted and sometimes I'm overwhelmed with the amount of things that I could have said but couldn't at the jeopardy of other peoples education, other peoples opinions".

A male student from Trent described another way that in-class racism impacts his

education beyond losing motivation and mentally withdrawing. He referred to how his personal learning time and efforts are required to 'shift' toward managing and educating non-Indigenous students who are in class with him, taking his time/energy and placing an additional responsibility on him. He described a situation where they were doing group work, but a particular group member demanded the group's focus because of his personal position. Rather than furthering his own education, he described how the whole time was spent attempting to work with/understand this person, "trying to be I guess like a voice of reason to try and understand why they are thinking the way that they're thinking" and doing the work of "getting non-Indigenous peoples to understand". A female student from Lakehead described a similar way that additional in-class weight is placed on her. She stated that she experiences an extra weight placed on her as she feels she must be constantly 'over-prepared', "you have to be on top of your readings and everything because you don't know what someone's gonna say…when I go to school it's like 'ok' we don't know what discussion it will bring". She feels she must arrive at class prepared to 'represent' and it creates a strong sense of uncertainty. She has noticed that the uncertainty and pressure, combined with direct encounters with racism in class, has led some of her Indigenous peers to be visually upset and yelling in class and even switching out of her program to an Indigenous Studies major.

Beyond the specific impacts that in-class racism can have, some students mentioned how racism within the larger university environment can also influence academic success. A female student at McMaster described how the racism Indigenous students face within the university context makes them feel as though they are required to

dedicate much time and energy toward various efforts of activism intended to better the situations: "if students don't do stuff change will never happen. They're gonna push the change, right, and they're the ones who are gonna make those positive things happen. But at the same time, it kinda puts an unfair burden on them…" She further described how the time and energy that is required to perform this activism (through involvement in events, committees etc.) does not necessarily leave enough time for schoolwork and can have a negative impact on academic success.

Continuing with the theme of how racism throughout the institution (not solely within the classroom) can impact academic success, a female student from Trent described how the university's failure to create proper supports for Indigenous students who are parents impacts her opportunities for learning. A female student from Lakehead addressed how the additional stress, and necessity, of dealing with culture shock and racism gets in the way of her learning goals, "You're busy trying to get along with the people instead of trying to learn what you're coming here to learn". Speaking to the pressure experienced as an Indigenous student entering into a context where racism is present throughout the various facets of the institution, a female student from Lakehead stated,

> I do think that there is an underlying racism issue at Lakehead and I think that makes it harder for Indigenous students and females to succeed. And because it puts them in a doubtful place…it really effects their confidence, self-esteem and that will really affect their grades.

Be it the cumulative effect of specific in-class incidences or awareness of the levels of racism within/across the institution as whole, the students interviewed described the large potential for negative impacts on their education. Both male and female students expressed similar negative impacts on their academic success. The additional 'weight' of experiencing racism on campus, combined with increased workload (through either activism or teaching non-Indigenous students) were shared across the universities. The focus on the lived experiences of these students highlights these impacts of racism, which might otherwise be missed by institutions that are actively promoting themselves as moving toward reconciliation and decolonization (Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tuck & Yang 2012; Veracini 2011).

Emotional Toll:

The emotional toll that comes from consistently being faced with racism in the university context was a significant theme throughout the interview data. Of the students interviewed, nineteen (70%) expressed the emotional toll of these experiences as a major concern. Depending on the student, and the nature of the experiences, different facets of emotional impact were mentioned. Some of the variants included exhaustion, stress, frustration, burden, self-doubt and anger. For some students the exhaustion and burden of being required to always 'stand up' to racism, and the subsequent exhaustion, causes them to question pursuing further education. A female student from McMaster stated, "Before reading week I was like so done…I want to do an MA, but I'm exhausted". Another female student from McMaster who also referenced exhaustion stated that the only thing that keeps her going was education, and how she could apply what she was

learning to help her make sense of her own life, community, and Indigenous peoples in Canada more generally. However, she also stated that she's not sure she'll pursue further education because the pervasive racism "takes the wind out of your sails…I don't know if I could sustain this for a long time". Several students mentioned how sitting through a course that is 'not done properly' in terms of content, courseware and discussion, can be extremely stressful and how they would try to spot these courses in advance in order to avoid them. A female McMaster student described how, in one of her courses, she experienced a lot of anxiety having someone teach her about herself and the surreal nature of constantly having to correct the professor. According to this student, another Indigenous student in the course simply stopped attending.

A male student at McMaster described how he struggled for several years in dealing with the finance department as an Indigenous student, constantly faced with delays in receiving his funding/scholarship monies and a lack of adequate communication to his band. The ongoing nature of this discrimination caused such a high level of frustration that he could no longer contain his emotions: "Last time it happened I was so upset I almost started swearing to that lady and telling her off… [I] experienced that every semester of my program there". Having to constantly face, and digest, the historical and contemporary issues with racism on campus can be "depressing and hard," he added, and "sometimes you just want to put your hands up in the air and say screw it all cuz it's heavy, right!" A female student from Trent described how encounters with racism have made her feel frustrated, angry and singled out – as though her knowledge is not valid. She spoke to how things can "get heavy" for Indigenous students, "we need

extra support because sometimes people are still very ignorant and sometimes they just

don't wanna learn and they want to hold onto those stereotypes…they're stuck in their

ways already. So, it does become difficult…"

Several students spoke to the emotional strain of being expected to 'represent'

Indigenous peoples without support. A male student from Trent addressed how he's often

called upon in class to become the educator,

> It's a lot of mental and a lot of emotional labour that you're putting forth just to try and get through a class that you're basically like…being the educator in. It is a lot. Because, as an Indigenous person, you've experienced a lot of things and a lot of things we get taught are triggering…and so if we're talking about something that's very very triggering and very personal you can get triggered yourself while also trying to be the education and trying to be that voice of reason…

For some students, when they didn't feel that they adequately represented and defended

Indigenous peoples in class or in social situations, it became another form of weight on

their shoulders in the form of regrets. A female student from Trent described a time when

a professor was presenting incorrect information about both the historical and

contemporary situations for Indigenous peoples and although she tried to speak up she

felt she had not 'done' enough, "I was first year though so I was very shy…I left the class

feeling very heavy…I should have said more…".

Speaking to the nature of the university context, as opposed to one specific

incident, a male student from Trent addressed how constantly having to talk about

Indigenous policies and issues, while feeling his identity and position are being called

into question, wears on him, "It's something that comes up over and over

again…knowing that it's an every day conversation for me that I'm kind of tired of

having". After facing several instances of both interpersonal and institutional racism at

McMaster, a female student recounted how at times the racism seemed insurmountable,

> I remember going to my mom and I was just like…all this shit going on, people being racist…people saying things and I'm just like if people are doubting me doing this I don't even know if I can do this right…the 'imposter syndrome' and stuff…it was like more barriers and more obstacles.

Echoing the sentiments of these students regarding how the ongoing racism 'wears down'

Indigenous students, a female student from Lakehead said she considers the campus to be

an unhealthy environment and encourages Indigenous students to go elsewhere if they

can. She stated how the pressure of the environment creates a situation where some

Indigenous students on campus don't acknowledge that they're Indigenous, or participate

in anything connected to their culture: "I think they're just really assimilated and also

ashamed of themselves…".

The emotional strain caused by navigating racism on campus, in its various forms,

was evident throughout the interview process. Male and female students described

similar experiences of emotional strain and the personal and academic impacts therein. As

students described the cumulative toll, voices were raised, anger and frustration at times

took over, and tears were shed. The experiences shared by each student regarding the

emotional toll of racism and discrimination on campus underlines the importance of

including these stories within analyses of racism and settler colonialism, as excluding

them might mistakenly support colonial 'moves to innocence' by the institutions under

review (Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck and Yang 2012; Veracini 2011).

Isolation and Belonging:

Further supporting the work done by Bailey (2016), isolation was a major theme throughout the interview data, with fifteen students (56%) students discussing this issue. There were different types of isolation described, such as academic and social, and also instances where students were experiencing multiple types simultaneously – compounding the effects.

Academic isolation appeared to arise in multiple ways. A female student from McMaster described how if there was a lack of knowledge and support from a professor, when corrections to her fellow students' racist behaviour/comments were necessary, it would make her feel very alone. It would become as though the issue would remain unaddressed unless she spoke to it without support. Again addressing academic isolation, a female student from Lakehead stated how she can feel alone/excluded in class due to the racist actions of fellow students and how it is hard for her to deal with, "when I've been partnered with certain people…with non-Indigenous students…the way they talk to me or my friends…I know I get stereotyped….like some people just don't want to talk to me because I'm Native…they're closed."

In a discussion that was particular to Lakehead University, several students discussed how part of the institutional programming that is designed support Indigenous students academically also contributes to a different form of academic isolation. The Native Access Program (NAP) at Lakehead is a one-year bridging program only for Indigenous students. This program provides an environment where Indigenous students

can gain skills and knowledge required for transferring to a university degree program upon completion. It is not illogical that the members of this program spend a lot of time together. However, members interviewed for this project also said it creates an isolated environment. One member of the program described how they are very closed off, "just a little group in school" and in terms of interaction (academically or socially) with non-Indigenous students, he stated, "I have yet to actually speak to anyone else". A male Lakehead student, who is pursuing a degree program, stated that he does not witness any interaction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students on campus. From his perspective, the NAP program contributes to instances of racism on campus by further increasing the lack of interaction, isolating Indigenous students from the rest of the population.

Social isolation due to racism within the university environment can also have significant impacts on the Indigenous student experiences. A female student from Trent described how a particularly distressing experience of overt social (interpersonal) racism, within the context of her on-campus sports team, left her feeling completely alone and outside the group. This extreme isolation led to her deciding to no longer be involved with the team, which had previously been a source of happiness and stress-relief for her. Speaking again to how racism contributes to her social isolation, a female student at Lakehead described how despite her efforts to make connections with White students that they were not sustainable, and the failure to establish positive relationships left her feeling "unwanted". She further described how, whether socially or in class, she feels she cannot be herself or she risks further exclusion, "you can't be yourself right. You can't be what

your culture is and stuff…I notice that…". In some cases, Indigenous students who have reached out beyond the Indigenous student community described being met with blatant racism. A female student from Lakehead described her experience of trying to join the equestrian team. She stated that while sending emails to the club representatives and trying to connect, she went online to research the group and inadvertently discovered that one of the group members had made overtly racist comments on her Twitter account, "I was like ok well maybe these girls aren't the crowd for me…how one of the members is gonna take pictures of an Aboriginal, a homeless Aboriginal person on the street, and then write rude things about him." Based on her experiences and perceptions, this student is not hopeful about the Lakehead environment and movement toward reconciliation, "It's the non-Indigenous community, I feel like…no one really cares to. Like it doesn't matter here".

The Indigenous student community on campus provided a reprieve from isolation for many of the students interviewed, but this was not true for all. Many students mentioned how the feeling of isolation due to racism, often accompanied by the perception of no support, was persistent unless they were within the Indigenous Studies Program and with other Indigenous students. A female Lakehead student referenced feeling a sense of comfort or safety when she is with other Indigenous students: "I think because we don't know who is racist or not and it's just like it's easier to just be around people who you know accept you and who you know understand you". However, an Indigenous student at McMaster described how his position as an Indigenous male isolated him from the predominantly female Indigenous-student demographic and that he

struggled to find connection to the Indigenous community. An Indigenous male student at Lakehead also expressed how he was isolated from the Indigenous student community on campus, but in his case, it was not because he was male. He stated that he has realized the Indigenous group is very centered on peoples of First Nations origins, and he is from a northern Inuit community. Although he 'understood', saying it would not make sense (based on demographics) for the Indigenous student community to host a traditional Inuit event, not seeing his culture represented created a barrier for him in joining the community: "I'd be an outsider just like if any Caucasian student attending those events". His position of not seeing his culture/community represented and how he felt somewhat dislocated because of it was shared by Indigenous students at both McMaster and Trent as well. A female student at Trent, who felt it was important for her community to be visible, purchased a community flag with her own funds to be hung in the Indigenous gathering space.

Within the Indigenous student community, the experience of isolation was pervasive, but the individual position of each Indigenous student created different levels of isolation. For some students, intersections of particular variables (social positions) resulted in more severe perceptions of the isolation experienced. One example is from a student at McMaster who is Indigenous, female, a mature student and a mother. The combination of these positionalities created distinct elements of social and academic isolation. She felt that her position was not a 'supported' one – that the policies and actions of the institution, as well as the lack of opportunity to create strong bonds with other students, left her extremely isolated. This student had chosen to stand up to the

university in terms of the institutional racism that is affecting her education and perceives

that because of this she has been ostracized and labeled, which only furthers her isolation.

Another example comes from a female student at Trent who is also a mother. She spoke

to how she sought out social connection and a safe space within the Indigenous student

community, but when she became a mother in her second year of university, she lost that

sense of community and became isolated, as she was no longer able to attend the

meetings and extra-curricular activities. It is her belief that if the university chose to

provide support to student mothers that some of her academic and social isolation could

be relieved. In terms of experiencing isolation, the data indicates that female students

tended to experience increased levels of personal distress due to being isolated, in

comparison to male students. It further appears that female students who are also mothers

perceive the most extreme levels of isolation. The experiences shared by these students

demonstrate the importance, as stressed within CRT, of maintaining an analytical focus

on how race/racism can intersect with other sources of domination, exacerbating the

effects (Baca Zinn & Thornton Dill 1996; Collins 2019; Solórzano & Yosso 2002).

Corresponding to more obvious representations of isolation versus inclusion, is

the creation of a sense of belonging for Indigenous students. Although not addressed by

all of those interviewed, for some of the students not achieving a sense of belonging

within the university environment was described as a potential barrier for their academic

success and overall well-being. For example, a Lakehead student shared that she is the

only Indigenous student within her program. Being alone in her program and sensing that

she is facing the barriers that arise on her own was seen as daunting. A female student

from McMaster described her perception that if you are not from the local area then you will have trouble connecting because the university programming provides the most support for local communities. A male McMaster student said that he does not see himself (his culture) reflected at the institution and that this lack of visibility and related resources limits his ability to discover more about himself.

A similar feeling was shared by a male student at Lakehead who also lacked a sense of belonging at the university, as he also felt his culture was not represented/supported. A female student expressed how the Indigenous professors at Trent are largely of Haudenosaunee background, even though it is Anishinaabe territory, and this can create a feeling of alienation with a majority of course content being "Haudenosaunee-based". Although not expressed by all students as directly, a decreased sense of belonging due to social and cultural exclusions within the university context was discussed as a potentially significant barrier for Indigenous students. A male student from Trent stressed how a sense of belonging is imperative for academic success, "I feel like that's very important especially when trying to decide from an Indigenous perspective, of where you want to go to school…what feels most like home…" Although not referenced by all of the students interviewed, it was present in discussions of all three universities. Future research in this area may benefit from including more specific questions as to how 'belonging' impacts academic experiences for Indigenous students.

<u>Responses:</u>

The students interviewed shared, in detail, the many different responses they chose when confronted with racism within the university environment. The numerous themes that arose include: in-class responses, social responses, social support, institutional support resources, disclosure/passing strategies, activism, code-switching/footing, and empowerment. The data regarding responses to racism was very rich and provides great insight. Along with outlining various coping methods and strategies, the students shared the methods through which they resist this oppression and press forward with their education, despite the additional load they may bare.

In-Class Responses to Racism:

A large majority of the students interviewed (82%) recounted details of how they chose to respond to racism that they faced within the university classroom. One of the main responses shared was deliberately choosing to speak up in class – to counter incorrect information or racist statements – whether this meant confronting other students or the professor. This aligns with previous research on responses to racism that indicated 'active' or 'problem-focused' responses are frequently selected; however, the frequency is much higher than Paradies and Cunningham's (2009) finding of approximately 50% (Denis & Traore 2019; Ziersch et al. 2011). Although often upset and/or angered by the experiences, this response was intended to ensure that the comment or misinformation did not get accepted as 'fact' by their fellow students and also as an act of self-protection

(standing up for their personal identity/position by ensuring the issue was addressed).

These responses appear to be a combination, serving dual purpose, of two response types

outlined by Mellor (2004): 'emotion-focused' responses (designed to protect the self) and

'problem-focused' responses (designed to directly confront racism, such as teaching or

verbally contesting) (Denis & Traore 2019). A male McMaster student shared how an in-

class discussion of how Indigenous peoples get 'free' tuition created a situation where he

could not stay silent, "ya I spoke up…I just remember feeling really ticked off that people

just don't know about (*it*)…it did get a rise out of me".

For some other Indigenous students though, there was an equally deliberate choice

to remain silent in the classroom. These response choices align with Mellor's (2004)

third response category, 'self-control', choosing to ignore the event or suppress their

response. There were numerous reasons provided for this choice, including personal

nature, uncertainty, needing time to process the incident, the idea of 'picking your battles'

and a sense of futility. These findings are supported by the argument of Denis and Traore

(2019:2) that "responses to racism are also systematically shaped by both personal and

contextual factors, including sense of (Indigenous) identity and access to resources". A

female student from McMaster stated that sometimes she chooses not to speak up at all

because it seems pointless, "He's the professor. So, what's the point of arguing with the

professor about his personal beliefs…because the setting and the environment isn't set up

for me to teach or to share Indigenous knowledge I don't bother". A male student from

Lakehead simply said it is not in his nature to speak up and he will wait for another

student to address the issue. If that does not occur, he stated he would speak to the

professor privately about what he wanted to share. Another student from McMaster

elaborated on how, for her, she was raised to speak up when something happens around

her that she disagrees with. However, the choice to speak up within class or not depends

on many variables and her decision may differ from day to day: "I think it has a lot to do

with what mind-frame I'm in at the time...I feel like it has a lot to do with me - if I feel

safe as well - just because I probably wouldn't speak up if I was by myself somewhere, if

I didn't feel safe to do so."

For some of the Indigenous students, the choice to remain silent in class

sometimes led to a sense of regret, "I didn't say that...and I wish I did. And by the time I

worked up the nerve it just felt like...the moment had passed..." (female McMaster

student). A female student from Trent shared a similar regret, "I wish I was (*the*) person I

am now...I wish I was the same person like the person in first year cuz there was a lot of

things I could have done differently and I wish I'd done differently...speaking

up...making space for myself and not to feel ashamed for people making me feel shitty –

but to speak up and do something about it". Several students shared a similar sentiment

in terms of wishing they had had more confidence about speaking up in the earlier years

of their education. Recounting an in-class situation where a fellow student had made a

culturally offensive comment about a piece of her clothing, a female student from Trent

described how immediately in the moment she firmly addressed the issue, "I think that's a

confidence that I've gained to be able to snap back like that and just be kinda snarky I

guess...because I don't think, like my past self, wouldn't have done something like that".

She stated that she has gained the confidence to defend herself and her culture, to have

opinions and confidently voice them. Regret was not saved solely for those who didn't speak up in class. A female student from Lakehead shared how she did speak up and confront a student in class regarding racist/ignorant statements he had made, but that in the moment her comments came from a very 'angry place' and when she looked back afterward, she wished she had approached the situation more from a position of 'opening a discussion' without the anger.

For students who felt uncomfortable, or unsafe, speaking up in class, a response frequently mentioned was to reach out to the professor (through email or meeting) after the event to discuss the situation and find a resolution. For some, the professors were willing to engage in an open conversation about their concerns, but other times the students were faced with professors either unwilling to discuss their concerns or unwilling to make a change. A female McMaster student shared how she emailed her professor regarding some ongoing issues in the class however he was not responsive or adequately interested in assisting. Subsequently she outlined her concerns in a course-evaluation paper. At that point the professor responded in writing, largely telling her that it had not been her place to try and address these issues and/or make changes within the course. For some students the experience (or fear) of having the professor respond in an unkind way, or not at all, has led them to reach out to the respective department for assistance. One example of this was from a female McMaster student who said, "we actually did bring our concerns to the chair and she was very receptive…she kind of worked out a plan moving forward – what would be better to do for next time, which was a really positive experience". A similar example, also from McMaster, involved a student who took her

concerns beyond the department when she could not find resolution there. She has placed three separate complaints to the Human Rights office at McMaster, regarding refusals to accommodate her needs based on her family status.

One strategy that some of the students referenced using when faced with racism in class, was to deliberately leave the class mid-way to make a statement. A female student from McMaster stated, "I feel like it's a good way of dealing with professors, which sounds really weird…I almost straight up make it obvious that I'm getting up and leaving and then email them later on and just say 'just so you know I left your class earlier because of *this*'". The choice to apply this strategy sometimes arose from high levels of anger and frustration. A Trent student recounted how, after a confrontation with a professor, she walked out of the class. However, looking back she wishes she could have explained herself better as the experience left her feeling disconnected and confrontational in that class. Responses to experiences of racism in-class were very similar between male and female students, however the data supports that female students would be more likely to complete a follow-up action, such as emailing the professor afterward to further address the issue.

When faced with particularly offensive racism in class, a few of the students shared how humour had helped them navigate the situation, and in some ways deflect the discomfort created. This supports the findings of Denis and Traore (2019) indicating that the strategic use of humour by Indigenous peoples is a common tool chosen to deal with racism while maintaining their sense of self-worth. The use of humour amongst Indigenous communities has also been cited as a tool for critiquing settler society,

building community, fostering pride in Indigenous identities and empowerment (Fagan

2001; Taylor 2005). A male McMaster student stated,

> We're talking about Indigenous rights…so from the context of this book much of it is based around the reserve system and what the rights are through treaties, not inherent Indigenous rights – so she was like saying things 'I don't know if I'm correct so I'm just playing devils advocate here'…those were her words…she's like 'I've heard things like what's with the special privileges that Indigenous people get cuz' she said 'I heard that if you went to an Aboriginal person's land they have the right to shoot you. So, I laughed. I'm sorry but that is literally crazy… like I was just laughing cuz it is so offensive and so far off that…ya know you just learn to laugh at bad things…like it's an inherent…a defense system…like this laughter is a sign that you're hurt. But like to hear that people think… 'oh if you go over to Six Nations, they have the right to shoot you'…who perpetuated that???

A male student from Lakehead provided another example of using humour when faced

with racism. He described how in his calculus class some of his fellow students mistook

his features as Asian. When they discovered he was not Asian, he reported that they cut

him off in terms of any communication (academic or social). He said, "well, it's not that

they said see you later…they just stopped talking to me. The next day they didn't sit

beside me in calculus class. I didn't really mind. I thought it was funny to be honest".

Within the interview process and subsequent data analysis, it was noted that only male

students spoke directly to the use of humour – however it was common, when recounting

details of events they perceived as particularly shocking/offensive, for the students (both

male and female) to begin laughing (often incredulously) as they retold the story.

When responding to in-class instances of racism, based on judgements of personal

comfort and safety, the students employed strategies that provided an element of self-

defence. For some that meant directly addressing the issue, and for others more time and privacy was required to process the incidents.

Social Responses to Racism:

Regarding responses to racism experienced within the social context on campus, there was not as much data within the interviews, with nine students (33%) discussing it. That said, there were two strong trends within the data worth noting. The students' responses largely fell into two categories: immediate and strong verbal responses or brushing it aside. One example of an immediate and strong response came from a female McMaster student who immediately confronted, and reprimanded, four male students she heard publicly saying derogatory things about Indigenous peoples. A second example is from a Lakehead student who confronted a woman who was making unkind comments about the smell of ceremonial smudging as she walked past the Indigenous student lounge, explaining to her how her reaction was inappropriate. In both these situations, the students chose to deliberately engage the other students with the intent of stopping the behaviour/comment in question. These reactions support previous findings that Indigenous individuals are likely to choose an active response (Denis & Traore 2019; Ziersch et al. 2011). Differing from female interviewees and from in-class examples (where male interviewees often described their tendency to speak up when they perceived it necessary), none of the male interviewees discussed using immediate/strong verbal responses within social contexts.

As an example of choosing to brush off the social interaction, a McMaster woman described how the frequency of these types of occurrences is so high that she sometimes chooses to simply disregard and move on: "I don't have the time to deal with that, I'll just brush aside your comment, like I don't have time to sit down and educate you right…". A Lakehead student describes her own similar way of responding as a coping mechanism. She stated that although she acknowledges the occurrences, she has learned to ignore it and move forward so she doesn't "boil or brew upon it". These responses appear to align with Mellor's (2004) self-control response-category (ignoring and/or suppressing).

Similar to the responses outlined above regarding in-class responses to racism, there is evidence of a balance created for the students between their need to protect themselves, while simultaneously doing what they perceive as necessary to defend Indigenous peoples in general. Drawing on the work of Goffman, Fleming, Lamont and Welburn (2012:13) refer to this as "the management of the self". Strategies for 'the management of the self' pertain to "1) projecting an image of oneself that is positive or conform to out-group norms, so as to gain recognition; 2) self-protection and the development of various aspects of identity." (Fleming, Lamont & Welburn 2012:13).

Seeking Social Support:

In dealing with racism on campus the majority of students interviewed (21 students, 78%) spoke to seeking out social support as one of their most consistent and immediate responses. Both male and female students, across all three universities, stated

how often their first response is to seek out fellow classmates with whom they can discuss and 'unpack' their experiences. A female student from McMaster stated, 'I think just talking about these things with people is enough support for me…for them to validate my experiences, for me to know that I'm not just being too sensitive or something like that and just to like kind of let it out…" For some students, the act of seeking out social support could involve something as simple as going for a walk with an Indigenous peer to talk through the situation or attending larger Indigenous student events on campus where they find inspiration, collective identity and positivity. The social support of friends and academic peers was described by many as an outlet for discussing and making sense of racism, as well as a source of support for continuing to move forward with their university education despite the conflicts and barriers. Although the most common people sought out for social support were friends on campus, or faculty who were perceived as approachable and supportive, a few students also stressed the importance of turning to their immediate family for support during difficult times. Ziersch et al.'s (2011) findings also found a strong prevalence for the choice to seek out social support resources.

For many this also involved a use of a perceived 'safe space', again echoing the earlier study results by Bailey (2016). A female McMaster student described how, for her, the Indigenous Studies Program office provided her the opportunity for necessary social support,

> So it's like you go there and there's so many students that are just hanging out and doing things we would do in like…the rest of the school setting…like studying and hanging out and whatever, but just doing it in that location where there is safe

> space and we can just be ourselves and not have to conform to what other students see the school experience being. I find for a lot of us, like our conversations are about how we can keep doing 'the whole school thing' whereas when I hang out with my non-Indigenous friends it's about like all the fun stuff to do with university and all that kind of stuff

For students who are experiencing complex intersections of oppression within their social position, seeking out social support in these safe spaces can also assist in gaining a sense of social inclusion. A female McMaster student stated,

> There's a lot more mature students than average…so I get to see people that are my age group, that have similar situations, whether they're parents, whether they work part time jobs, whether they're thinking about their next ceremony…and how they're going to juggle that with their school requirements…that social identity is definitely there.

Speaking to the supportive nature of 'safe social spaces' for Indigenous students, such as the Indigenous student lounge, a Lakehead student said that entering these spaces and enjoying traditional foods while spending time with fellow Indigenous students or elders "feels like home". Elaborating on the connection between social support and cultural elements of campus life for Indigenous students as key factors for academic success, a male Trent student outlined his belief that at Trent what makes such a strong Indigenous community is the inclusion of Indigenous culture in so many aspects of the academic arena:

> Well it's the cultural aspects of everything as I say…I've been running sweat-lodges I came here and also they've had me cooking out in the teepee every week…so that's a chance for students to have a taste of their own foods…they really appreciate that kind of weekly reminder of their home.

He further stated that a lot of Indigenous students have started bringing their non-Indigenous friends into Indigenous social events at the teepee because they sense that

their friends, regardless of being non-Indigenous, also need to experience the supportive environment created there.

Utilizing Institutional Support Resources:

In response to experiencing racism and discrimination within the university environment, many of the students referenced using more formal support resources on campus as one of the tools for managing the impacts. Of the 27 students interviewed, 17 (63%) students reported reaching out to at least one institutionally-based support service. Students on all three campuses reported that having an elder regularly available on campus was a tremendously important service for them. It was mentioned that talking with the elder provided a safe and comfortable environment for discussing issues of concern, and also for sometimes simply just 'talking' with ease – a welcome reprieve from the perceived stresses endured on a daily basis.

Several students at McMaster mentioned how they perceived the Indigenous students' academic counselor as a valuable resource. The academic counselor was described as providing guidance and support on both issues related directly to academics as well as the times when concerns regarding racism or discrimination became interwoven with academics. However, not all of the students were satisfied with the service provided by the Indigenous students' academic counselor. Although this resource person was found generally helpful and supportive, a male McMaster student shared how he was disappointed in a lack of 'help' available that moved beyond support and advice,

to advocacy, when he needed it. A female student at McMaster shared how she also found the Indigenous student counselor was not able to meet her needs: "I went to the Indigenous student counselor here at McMaster, but I didn't find that he was capable or had the knowledge to help me, which is why I moved on to Human Rights". From the descriptions provided it appears that this position is considered to be a valuable resource, however it needs to be either expanded – or a new position created in addition to the counselor – where more direct involvement with advocacy is included.

At Trent, several students mentioned the importance of accessing the Indigenous counseling service for their continued success. A female Trent student described how when she felt overwhelmed by a racist incident on campus, she engaged the Indigenous counselor for help: "I just started accessing the counseling at Trent because it can become overwhelming especially like the incident that happened in class…for me it made me really want to quit. It made me want to give up and go back home". For this student the Indigenous counseling service has provided her with a tool to assist her in continuing her university education. Another female student at Trent described how, for her, she found much more comfort and support after leaving the 'general' Trent counseling service and moving to the Indigenous counselor. Trent appears to be the only university, amongst the three considered, that has a dedicated Indigenous student counselor (who is not intended as mainly an academic resource). McMaster does not have this type of counseling service. A male student at McMaster expressed how he wishes that there was such a position in place, as he believes that Indigenous students in crisis would be more comfortable speaking to an Indigenous counselor and may also be seeking traditional

counseling methods. At Lakehead, the university maintains a position called 'Aboriginal Student Counselor and Transitions Advisor'. This counselor's goal is defined as helping the students work toward 'academic success'. Within the publicly available information, it is described that the services have a holistic/community focus, however the implementation of this approach is unclear.[92] Although this may be a helpful counseling resource for Indigenous students, none of the Lakehead students reported accessing this type of counsellor for assistance.

Many of the students shared that they often reached out to Indigenous professors as an important support resource. This type of support is not technically a 'support service' provided by the university but as the Indigenous professors are university employees, and because it was referred to so frequently at all three universities, it has been included here. A female from McMaster shared how she engaged an Indigenous professor when she encountered a very challenging in-class situation, "Immediately since the very first day I went in there and I was like shaking, almost crying, so I had to like…get counseled by her I guess". At all three universities, students referenced seeking out support and advice from Indigenous professors within their own programs as well as other faculties. Each student who mentioned this resource described how these professors were open to listening and helping, as best they could, and how important their role was for the students. From an analytical perspective, the accessing of Indigenous professors as a support resource is problematic. The professors, although described as very willing

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[92] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/indigenous/aboriginal-services-tb/individual-services/aboriginal-student-counselor

to assist, are not compensated by the university for supplying these additional services on top of their academic teaching and research commitments. The professors could potentially have such increased workloads as a result that it might prove a barrier to their own career-success and well-being. This finding is supported by the work of Henry et al. (2017) who challenge the perception of university environments as equitable and inclusive. Within their work Henry et al. (2017) outline how racialized and Indigenous faculty members are required to take on increased labour loads compared to their colleagues, often including increased mentorship responsibilities.

It was frequently shared that, although appreciative of the services provided, the students had many ideas about necessary services that were missing, such as dedicated Indigenous student counselors and a peer-mentor system to help with transition/adjustment to the university environment. That said, the students did describe the available services as very valuable. Speaking to how on-campus supports have helped her, a female student from Lakehead said the Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Center has been very beneficial,

> I tend to go to (*it*) a lot when I need to turn my inner anger…to let it out…like my frustration…I think that Indigenous support systems on campus really helped me embrace who I was and not be ashamed…like I just have to accept myself and I'm glad I did cuz I'm like doing way better in school and I'm happy to be there.

All of the students who referenced using a particular on-campus support service also addressed how these were always used in combination with the social support provided by Indigenous peers and family.

Each student was asked about their awareness of what services were available for Indigenous students for dealing with racism/discrimination and what steps were required to access them. The answers varied greatly between students who were confident they knew of the resources and how to reach out, versus those who felt they did not have any knowledge of what help was available to them on campus. A male McMaster student stated, "I was never told like where to go to talk about these certain issues on campus…" The majority of students were largely satisfied with their experiences when they had chosen to engage with institutionally supplied services, and considered them a valuable tool for academic and personal success. This fact indicates a potential urgency for each university to ensure that they are adequately disseminating information to Indigenous students about the resources that are available for coping with, and potentially resolving, on-campus issues of racism and discrimination.

Disclosure/Passing as a Strategy:

One response to racism, often used very strategically, was a careful selection of when and how students chose to disclose their Indigenous identity. Despite the findings of Denis and Traore (2019), which indicated a low level of use regarding the response strategy of passing, it was a prevalent theme amongst the Indigenous students interviewed.[93] For some students, based on phenotypical qualities, this was not a strategy

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[93] Denis and Traore (2019) were studying a very different context – a small town where many residents know each other. Therefore, for some people in that study, using passing strategically might not have been possible.

available to them. However, for others, it was described as useful for self-protection, managing racist encounters, and even as a teaching tool. Several students described their observation that those who are able to 'pass' generally experience better treatment overall. In terms of experiencing overt racism, a male student from Lakehead stated that his ability to 'pass' has significantly decreased the level of overt racism/discrimination that he has had to face. A female McMaster student supported this statement, sharing,

> As someone who's not visibly Indigenous…I look White…I don't look like someone of colour…I am privileged in a lot of ways and not experiencing that outright discrimination…not always…obviously there are experiences I've had that have fallen under that category…but do you see what I'm saying?

Further supporting their position, a female Lakehead student, who describes herself as very visibly Indigenous, described an incident on campus where she was waiting patiently and politely for service only to be deliberately passed over and service provided to the White student waiting behind her. This counterexample supports the perception that visibility on an individual level may increase the level of overt racism endured by Indigenous students. In chapter 3, it was discussed how visibility on campus on a larger group scale may also contribute to instances of racism on campus, and yet Indigenous students often described throughout their interviews how they are seeking to increase on-campus visibility on their campus to create space, encourage programming, and increase overall support. It seems there is a complex paradox between the need of Indigenous students to increasingly 'take up space' in order to secure the power and resources necessary for academic success and general well-being, and the backlash of racist and discriminatory treatment that these actions precipitate.

There was a distinct awareness amongst the Indigenous students about how those who are able to 'pass' when they wish may experience less overt incidences of racism and feel less 'weight' in class regarding being required to teach about or represent Indigenous peoples in Canada. A female student from McMaster described how her ability to pass and choose if/when she discloses her identity makes her feel as if there is less weight on her shoulders,

> I can kind of be a silent person in my classroom and then when someone says something problematic I can choose to be like 'HEY…INDIGENOUS STUDENT…I feel very differently then how you feel about this topic…whereas I know people who look very Indigenous, they kind of like are expected to say something…expected to be the voice of their people, whereas I don't have to. I can kind of like choose to sit there and not say anything.

A male student from Lakehead expressed that although he doesn't mind answering relentless questions about his home and background as an Inuit person, he can control when and how the topic arises: "Only comes up when I make it come up, cuz again I'm not a very visible minority". An interesting connection regarding disclosure was drawn by a male student at Trent. Although attending Trent university, he is originally from Thunder Bay. This makes him, coincidentally, familiar with multiple contexts involved in this study. The interview questions for this student were regarding his experiences at Trent but while discussing the nature of that context he did share that when he is away at school in Peterborough, he regularly chooses to wear his regalia in an every-day manner, a choice that he stated he would never consider making in Thunder Bay. This was a connection that he had not drawn for himself until our interview. The perception that being able to pass relieved pressure for students, in terms of anticipating hardship or

objectification, was shared by many students who described themselves as having the ability to select when they disclosed their Indigenous identity.

Using disclosure in a more preventative manner, a female student from McMaster described how she usually chooses to share her Indigenous identity immediately on the first day of class in the hopes that it would pre-emptively put a stop to racist or discriminatory behaviour, "I tend to say it the first day cuz I'm just like I don't want to hear your ignorant comments…I just feel like when they know there is an Indigenous student in the class, people are less likely to say problematic stuff…" A male student from Trent supported the observation that disclosure could either prevent or stop racist/discriminatory behaviours by describing how he deliberately chooses to hold back the information about his Indigenous background and then when conversations arise where people begin to "spout off crazy and racially charged conversations", if he perceives he is in a safe space to do so, he will share his background to put an end to it.[94] Similarly, a female student from McMaster also described how she strategically uses the disclosure of her Indigenous identity to catch non-Indigenous students off-guard when they are making racist statements in an attempt to teach them that they should be careful about what they choose to say. These experiences connect with earlier research done by Bailey (2016) discussing the impact of judgements regarding 'audience' and how the

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[94] Although beyond the scope of the data collected for this study, the implication that merely disclosing Indigenous identity has the social power to cause immediate cessation of racist conversations/activities raises interesting questions for future research regarding 'accepted' Canadian norms for either expressing or hiding racism.

composition of the audience (be that a classroom or social settling) can have a direct

influence on the level of overt racism expressed.

Activism:

Activism was frequently addressed by the students interviewed regarding

responses to racism on campus, with 23 students (85%) raising the topic. Activism was

discussed in two inter-connected ways: students feeling driven by their experiences to

create positive change for future students, and simultaneously as a burden on their time

and energy. A female student from McMaster, who is involved in many committees and

program activities, stated that her motivation to be involved in on-campus activism is

directly connected to her own experiences with racism and discrimination as an

Indigenous student:

> …just keeping in mind that like I'm going through this, but what would I like to
> see and what would I like to change…and what can I make sure that people,
> students, in the future have so they're not going through the same thing – so I feel
> like if what I'm going through is gonna lead to something that does make a
> difference, then I'd rather deal with it than have to make somebody else deal with
> it.

A male McMaster student supported this position stating, "I think it is our job…it's our

job to go out there and find a voice for ourselves and advocate for ourselves. So, I think

as long as we're willing to step up things will happen." The importance that Indigenous

students place on activism and improving the university environment was evident at the

Indigenous knowledge and education roundtable presentation at Trent. The students who

shared their experiences showed evident passion and emotion as they told stories of the

way things are and what they would like to see changed (Fieldnotes, November 23rd 2019).

Across the interviews, the students shared many different examples of 'how' they have engaged in on-campus activism, from committee/working group membership to the creation of grass-roots movements. A McMaster student shared how she works to push her professors "further" when she recognizes a lack of Indigenous course content. In one of her courses where there was no Indigenous content at all, she approached the professor (who was receptive) and arranged to have an Indigenous speaker come in and talk to the class about Indigenous issues that intersected with the course topics. Another example was shared by a female Lakehead student who described the many barriers she had encountered regarding racism at both the professor and institutional levels. Having endured what she did, she now dedicates some of her time to sharing her experiences with other on-campus groups that might be able to alert potentially affected students of the issues or even assist in creating change. A female McMaster student described how the actual content of her graduate work itself is dedicated to Indigenous people, as through her academic work she is attempting create "disruptive histories" – historical accounts that disrupt the colonially constructed narratives by interjecting Indigenous truths.

Activism by Indigenous students is commonplace and requires a great deal of time and dedication, beyond the requirements of their university programs. This burden of time and effort is recognized by the students, however the strong belief in the necessity of this work appears to drive it forward. Further, it is also recognized that the position of

being an Indigenous student can intersect with other social locations, which can make

involvement more difficult. A female McMaster student stated,

> There's a lot of Indigenous students who come here to learn, leave and go home,
> cuz they have families and other things, but then there's a lot of us who are
> younger and don't have families, who have the chance to be on campus for extra
> hours…so there's younger students like that who I think are trying to create
> change.

However, a strong belief in the importance of the work can lead even those who have

important familial commitments outside of school to dedicate their efforts to student

activism on campus. This was exemplified by a mature female student, and single mother,

who had recently been elected as the president of an on-campus Indigenous student group

just prior to our interview. Although students were active on every campus, the

McMaster students interviewed demonstrated an exceptionally high level of involvement

with, and commitment to, activism on campus. This may be due to the fact that

McMaster University has not yet implemented some of the more large-scale changes on

campus that Lakehead and Trent have already initiated, such as mandatory Indigenous

course content.[95]

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[95] A potential direction for future research might be to investigate the historical circumstances that have led
to the major differences in university policy and department services/programs for Indigenous students
across the three universities in question. This information, however, is not readily available to the public
and requires qualitative research beyond the scope of this project.

Code-Switching/Footing:

The idea of code-switching, involves the concept that within a social interaction, an individual will change their communication (language or style) to uphold a certain position, most usually outlined as bilingual individuals switching languages or particular language choices (Nilep 2006). Goffman further developed the idea of code-switching based on social context with his theory of 'footing' (Goffman 1979, 1981; Nilep 2006). Within the theory of footing, Goffman describes how, beyond switching languages, in a social interaction an individual may put forth several stances, or positions, depending on the context. Nilep (2006:7) states that in one social interaction a person might put forward a number of different roles, switching position as the context requires, "Goffman suggests that changes in purpose, context, and participant role are common in interaction", and the subsequent footing changes may be presented in a variety of different ways. Carter (2003) contributes to this theoretical discussion by adding the concept of cultural capital to the strategic use of code-switching/footing. Regarding the acquisition of both dominant and non-dominant cultural capital, and its strategic application, Carter (2003:139) discusses how individuals deliberately navigate different social contexts:

> The acquisition of non-dominant cultural capital does not necessarily signify a rejection of commonly shared values regarding social, economic, or educational attainment. However full reliance on non-dominant capital to maintain one's cultural status position does provide a challenge to socioeconomic mobility, since dominant cultural capital facilitates success within mainstream institutions and organizations. Nevertheless, some individuals employ both dominant and non-dominant cultural capital, negotiating strategically between their community, family, peer, and school spaces.

In response to the racism/discrimination they faced, five of the students interviewed spoke directly to the necessity and complexity of code-switching/footing for them within the university context. The interviewees who chose to discuss code-switching and demonstrated an acute awareness of the strategy, and perceived its necessity, were largely women.

In one of the most poignant examples, a female student from Lakehead described how she must employ code-switching/footing every time she enters the university environment and then again when she goes home. She described in detail on how she not only had to change languages, but also mannerisms and tone of voice, having to "get away from Native mannerisms" to find acceptance and success. However, when she returns home, she finds difficulty in switching back once more: "when I go back home it takes me a while to go back towards being Native…". This student stated that entering into the clinical part of her program she deliberately chose to try and act in a way that felt more natural: "I'm just gonna be myself…I'm gonna be who I am…and talk to people the way I want to talk to them", and her professors failed her within that portion of her program. She was told she had to take additional training to help her with communication and the person in charge of her training stated "Ok…I'm gonna teach you to be White!". The experiences of this student connect to Bailey's (2016) earlier work, where an Indigenous student from McMaster shared a similar experience of attempting to change her mannerisms and language depending on whether she was at the university or on her home reserve, but how she ended up finding incomplete acceptance in both spaces.

Sharing a sentiment similar to the student above, a female student from Lakehead talked about her perception of being caught in the middle of two worlds, as a lighter skinned woman who did not grow up on reserve. She said that she tries to mesh into both worlds, but finds herself facing judgement in both directions – not quite able to switch codes, or apply footing, successfully either way. Another Lakehead student described how she has tried to change her identity on campus to avoid encountering discrimination and racism, but how the process has impacted her emotionally,

> I have to do things to soften my identity…I have to be not the typical Native…I have to dress a little better, I have to talk a little different. Like, in a way, I did sort of assimilate, but because I didn't want to encounter ignorance… But at the same time, it's like all that stuff made me insecure as a person and a student… for a few years it was my barrier because I felt like everyone just looked down on me and that affected me as a person, as a student… I talk a certain way in class and to other students…I use manners and very polite – I make my voice higher – I just don't want to come off like aggressively…

This student went on to share how in more recent times she has, at least partially, moved away from these strategies that she was using for "survival" and feels more comfortable wearing items such as her beaded clothes around campus. The work of Paradies and Cunningham (2009), within the Australian context, indicated that changing oneself or one's behaviour was the least common response to racism within their data – however within the current study it was a choice repeatedly mentioned by the students interviewed.

The difficulty, and perceived necessity, of having to switch codes/change footing within the university context was clearly very difficult for the students who spoke to it so directly, causing them both academic hardship and personal distress.

Empowerment:

Although not all of the students interviewed used the same terminology, five

students described how some elements of their campus context have 'empowered' them

as Indigenous students, as well as Indigenous people more generally. A male student at

Trent describes how the immense cultural support for Indigenous students within the

university, and the environment that creates, empowers students to succeed. He stated:

> The students, they automatically feel more included when they're in the right
> kind of environment as a human being. They don't have to be told that this is a
> comfortable place for them, they just feel it and so they end up coming back and
> telling their friends about it, you know.

For a female Lakehead student, empowerment has come largely from the support she has

received from the Indigenous community on campus in the later years of her university

education. She also stated that seeing environments on campus, such as the Aboriginal

Awareness Center or Aboriginal Success Center, where non-Indigenous students are

showing an interest in knowing more about Indigenous peoples, gives her a further sense

of empowerment. A female student from Trent described how in the university context,

the knowledge she has gained about herself culturally, combined with her involvement in

activism, has been an empowering experience and helped her deal with numerous

difficult situations. These students have expressed a recognition that cultural support,

learning/awareness, and the act of 'taking control' through activist projects, has provided

them with a sense of empowerment that aids in both coping with and resisting oppressive

forces within the university environment. Although not using identical terminology, there

were several other interviewees who described a similar sense of emancipation and

confidence-building when they felt they were learning, moving forward and taking control.

Discussion and Conclusions:

The students took great time, and provided immense detail, within their interviews to outline and describe the impacts that racism on campus has had for both their academic success and personal well-being. Of the 27 students interviewed, just 3 described only minor impacts, but for each of these students other intersecting variables may have contributed to the decrease in (perceived) racial conflict.[96] Despite some small elements of difference, both male and female Indigenous students described very similar responses to their experiences.[97] For the majority of students interviewed the impacts were vast and extremely negative, impacting almost all facets of their university experience. The encounters with racism and discrimination in the university context negatively impacted both academic success and personal well-being as these are intricately connected.

The responses to racism shared by the students covered a wide range of choices and approaches. Where some responses were geared toward 'managing' the impacts of racism (such as seeking social support for emotional distress or academic

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[96] Of the three who spoke to less direct impacts from racism/discrimination; one described himself as not visibly Indigenous, and did not typically socialize with other Indigenous students on campus, another was a mature student with a family, who described himself as reserved, and did not spend much time on campus other than his in-class time, and the last a mature student (elder) who kept most of his on-campus experiences contained to the available Indigenous spaces and Indigenous student community.

[97] The data supports that aside from some minor differences, Indigenous students' responses to racism are quite similar for men and women. A larger interview sample would be required to look more deeply into possible gender-based differences in response selection.

discouragement), others were aimed at strategically navigating the racialized environment (such as code-switching/footing or passing) and still others were directed toward resisting the oppression and shifting the colonial system (such as the many forms of activism). Despite the varied nature of the responses to racism, they have one definite link – the responses are geared to furthering each student's ability to sustain themselves and persevere in the university environment – a refusal to be eliminated. The settler-colonial project, which invades all levels of society, and the institutions within it, is incomplete while still experiencing challenges by Indigenous peoples who refuse to be consumed (Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck and Yang 2012; Veracini 2011). Veracini (2011:6) states that the battle against elimination is a battle to keep the settler-Indigenous relationships ongoing - "Indigenous ultimate permanence". These students who persist with their university education, despite the racism and discrimination they encounter, are furthering an Indigenous project of permanence.

The combination of CRT and SCT throughout data analysis has created a more comprehensive approach for understanding the complexities involved in the impacts and responses to racism for Indigenous students. The fusion of these approaches creates an analytical framework that holds both race/racism and the settler colonial project as central, while acknowledging lived experience as formal data and evidence of ongoing resistance. As per CRT, the centering of lived experience, and the telling of these students' 'racial realities' as a form of counter story, is crucial for understanding the impacts of racism and what responses the students select (Dion and Dion 2018; Gillborn 2006; Ladson-Billings 1998; Lopez 2003:85; Solórzano & Yosso 2002; Tate 1997). CRT

stresses that the lived experiences shared by the Indigenous students interviewed act as vital data, conveying not only the astounding impacts that racism within the university environment is having on their lives, but also how their chosen responses may act as both survival and resistance efforts simultaneously. The lived experiences shared by these Indigenous students, indicating significant ongoing and negative impacts of racism on campus, challenge claims by the universities that they have created welcoming and safe spaces for Indigenous students through action plans, curriculum changes and promotion of reconciliation etc. (see chapter 1). Although all three universities have evidently taken positive steps in terms of supporting Indigenous students, the high level of ongoing racism (see chapter 3) and the considerable impacts on Indigenous students suggest that the depth and commitment of these movements has not been sufficient.

These counter-stories also provide valuable insight into various resistance efforts by Indigenous students – specifically how and why they begin. The students who described themselves as most involved in on-campus activism are often those who have been most severely impacted by racism and discrimination.[98] As per SCT, the settler-colonial project must be maintained as a central focus within the analysis of the impacts of racism and Indigenous student responses to racism on campus. The data indicates that the hegemonic nature of settler-colonialism continues to invade deep levels of the university institution – causing both personal and academic barriers for Indigenous students (Macoun & Strakosch 2013; Tuck & Yang 2012; Veracini 2011). However, the

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[98] The data gathered through this study was not designed to determine causality within the relationship between activism and personal experiences with racism. However, there is a strong indication of a direct connection between these two factors.

students have described their refusal to be held back, the systemic changes already gained

through their efforts, and their visions for a different future (theorizing social action

through personal experience) (Collins 2019). It appears that although locked into a

powerful battle with multiple forms of oppression, Indigenous students maintain a

determination that is slowly 'tipping the balance' in terms of recognition, response and

change on the part of the institutions. Although the settler colonial project is a powerful

combination of dominant forces, Indigenous students have demonstrated that they will not

relent and that, although apparently very slow, change is possible.

Chapter 5: Lateral Violence, Internalized Oppression and Resistance

"People forget we're trying to fight the fight together and not against each other…"
(Female Indigenous Post-Secondary Student)

Introduction:

Thus far, my research has established that the experiences of Indigenous students attending Canadian universities highlight the many areas of ongoing inequality, injustice, and embedded colonial thoughts, policies and practices. There are longstanding struggles regarding identity, power and resources. The question of whether Indigenous students are still faced with racism and inequality has been answered with a resounding 'yes' – on both interpersonal and structural levels (Bailey 2016). This chapter delves more deeply into questions of what role lateral violence is playing within these post-secondary institutions, as Indigenous student communities forge new roads and battle for equity. How are students seeking and securing community, power and resources within the post-secondary environment? And how do these experiences vary based on context and other intersecting categories (such as gender)?

As referenced above, the ongoing racism and colonialism within post-secondary environments has been documented, but the issue of lateral violence and how it connects with the broader structures of racism and inequality has been severely understudied. This chapter investigates the negative impact that lateral violence has within Indigenous student communities, at both individual and group levels. Strategic resistance and

empowerment strategies by Indigenous students are also discussed. Questions being addressed include: What role is lateral violence playing as these Indigenous student communities forge new roads and battle for equity? And how are students seeking and securing community, power and resources within the post-secondary environment?

Theoretical and empirical context - colonization and lateral violence:

Canada's history is a complicated one that interweaves colonization, domination and misappropriation (Henry and Tator 2010; Privy Council Office 2019; TRC 2015). This history has created a society that is permeated with racial tensions and contains many policies for higher education that often still presume assimilation, perpetuate misinformation and displace Indigenous knowledge(s) (Clark et al. 2014; Cote-Meek 2014; Neeganagwedgin E 2013; Sydell and Nelson 2000). Neeganagwedgin E (2013) describes how post-secondary institutions displace Indigenous knowledge(s) through a demanded assimilation to Eurocentric knowledge.

Despite the availability of ample information regarding Canada's past/current treatment of Indigenous peoples, Canadians have often chosen to deny any responsibility for the current welfare and socioeconomic status of Indigenous communities – a form of "cultural and colonial amnesia" and willful ignorance (Absolon & Absolon-Winchester 2016:46; Denis 2015; Satzewich 2011). Despite recent polls showing that there are some positive trends across Canada regarding awareness of Indigenous issues and support for reconciliation efforts, it is still a common response for both the Canadian government and

the country's citizens to place the blame for current situations squarely on the shoulders of Indigenous peoples and communities (Andrew-Gee 2019; Satzewich 2011). Within academic work, such positions are exemplified in theoretical approaches that continue to hold 'Indigenous culture' as the problem. One example of this is the 'welfare Indian' stereotype, which is based on a perception of an ingrained 'cultural deficit' (Flanagan 2000; Harrell et al. 2013; Satzewich 2011). Pyke's (2010) work on internalized oppression speaks to the implications of placing blame on Indigenous peoples.[99] Pyke (2010: 553) states that "internalized oppression is not the result of some cultural or biological characteristic of the subjugated" but rather it emerges from "intersections of multiple systems of domination". The impact of internalized oppression/internalized colonialism should not be underestimated but we need to "wrestle control of the concept away from a victim-blaming frame and give it a fitting conceptual frame" (Pyke 2010:567). Pyke (2010) also stresses that little is known about the roots of internalized racism, with the focus often on analysis of how it is perpetuated once already internalized.

This discussion moves away from victim-blaming approaches and extends the investigation to lateral violence. Applying Pyke's (2010:559) concept that previous understandings of the origins of internalized colonialism may be "misplaced", the role that 'lateral violence' plays for Indigenous students within the university environment and the root of lateral violence itself will both be examined. This will enhance understanding of the role colonization has played in the creation of this context. The steps that

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[99] Within this chapter, the terms 'internalized oppression' and 'internalized colonialism' are being used concurrently, as in the context of Indigenous peoples in Canada they are inextricably linked.

Indigenous students are taking to embrace positive change in light of past and current oppressions will also be addressed. To begin facilitating a discussion on this topic, some of the definitions, characteristics and contexts surrounding lateral violence will be outlined.

Lateral violence (sometimes also called horizontal violence or internalized oppression) can be described as a set of behaviours enacted by individuals and/or communities which are damaging in nature (to both the party performing the behaviours and those they are directed toward) and often occurring within oppressed societies (Bombay et al. 2014; Kweykway Consulting 2017; Pyke 2010; Wingard 2010). Some of the behaviours that fall under this label include "bullying, gossiping, feuding, shaming and blaming of other members of one's own social group as well as having a lack of trust toward other group members" (Bombay et al. 2014:2). It has also been simply described as "violence against their own" (Langton 2008:1). Although these behaviours are sometimes observed as conscious and deliberate acts, in some cases they may not be occurring with intentionality or awareness (NWAC 2011). These behaviours can have many serious impacts on those who are targeted such as sleep challenges, self-doubt, decreases in self-confidence, chronic anxiety and weakened immune system (NWAC 2011). Actions such as 'gossip' have been described as the "biggest killer of a person's spirit" – regarding both the sender and receiver (BearPaw Media Productions 2006: np). Lateral violence can lead to members of oppressed groups undermining their own people (Barker and Dion 2012; Korff 2016; Pyke 2010; Wingard 2010). In a mock interview with the entity 'lateral violence', Indigenous Australian health worker Barbara Wingard

(2010:14) asks what it 'does' and its reply is "I do my best work destroying people. I like to divide people and break their spirits. I break communities and make nastiness between families because people don't know how to deal with me".

The information above describes 'what' lateral violence is. However, this description does not address the question of 'why' it exists? And why does it seem to so heavily impact Indigenous communities? Bombay, Matheson and Anisman (2014) state that the residential school system has been suggested as a primary cause of lateral violence in Indigenous communities. More generally, the allostatic load of factors such as colonization, oppression, intergenerational trauma and present-day racism (both interpersonal and institutional/systemic) becomes the mechanism triggering behaviours that direct anger at peers and community members as opposed to the oppressors (Absolon 2010; Bombay et al. 2014, Korff 2016; Lateroute 2007; NWAC 2011; Wingard 2010).[100] Some have described this type of behaviour as Indigenous peoples becoming oppressors within their own communities (BearPaw Media Productions 2006; Korff 2016; Kweykway Consulting 2017; Langton 2008; NWAC 2011). However, these observations must be viewed within the appropriate context.

The internalization of the false and damaging information forced into the minds of Indigenous peoples over multiple generations of colonial rule is at the root of behaviours now coined as lateral violence. As Freeman and Lee (2007:113-114) state, "The internalizing of the oppressive messages conveyed by the powerful forces in society can

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[100] Within this paper, the terms 'internalized oppression' and 'internalized colonialism' are being used concurrently, as in the context of Indigenous peoples in Canada they are inextricably linked.

inhibit community members from participating in, or even sabotaging, the efforts to

create positive change for the community". Further developing the idea of how the

oppressor creates the context of lateral violence, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire

(2000:46-47) states:

> One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and
> oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of
> one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the
> man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's
> consciousness. Thus, the behaviour of the oppressed is a prescribed
> behaviour, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor.

As Mohawk scholar-activist Taiaiake Alfred (Alfred 2009:42) asserts, common discourse

often ignores the impact of "colonially-generated cultural disruption" that "compounds

the effects of dispossession to create near total psychological, physical and financial

dependency…". Colonial forces have instilled a negative 'internal dialogue' within

Indigenous communities that creates the appearance of community members turning on

each other when, in fact, it is the outward realization of deliberate colonial destruction

(Alfred 2009).

From an intersectional perspective, this 'negative internal dialogue' is the

culmination of the ways in which "differences and domination intersect and are

historically and socially constituted" (Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill 1996:329; Collins

2019; Castiello Jones et al 2013). Applying an intersectional approach, it is clear that a

focus on context must remain at the forefront of analysis. The lived experiences

produced by intersecting social, historical and structural factors will vary greatly

depending on the context being considered and therefore generalizations of possible strategies to counter oppression(s) need to be considered carefully. Despite the differing contexts, colonization (in both its historical and current forms) has planted the seeds that facilitate the existence of lateral violence in Indigenous communities.

With the knowledge of why lateral violence exists in Indigenous communities, the question remains of how to address it. This must be viewed from the positions of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada. Some have declared that lateral violence must be addressed by Indigenous peoples within each of their communities as they are "leading the roads to change" (Absolon & Absolon-Winchester 2016:46; BearPaw Media Productions 2006). As stated by Absolon and Absolon-Winchester (2016:8), "For Indigenous peoples, decolonizing is about transformation of oneself out of internalized colonialism, toward reclaiming ones' Indigeneity. There is a resurgence of reclaiming our strength and resilience as peoples".

Lateral violence has also been compared to the situation of 'crabs in a bucket' or 'crab syndrome' – when one tries to climb, the other crabs reach up to drag it down (Lateroute 2007). This story is intended as "an analogy for the dysfunction in historically oppressed communities" (Lateroute 2007:13). However, the analogy has been criticized for being far too reductionist – stating that all Indigenous peoples are crabs (lacking diversity) and not acknowledging that Indigenous peoples did not create the bucket (Khelsilem 2013). In essence the 'crabs in a bucket' notion misses the mark because it doesn't hold the colonizers responsible and tells Indigenous people to blame each other (Khelsilem 2013). Looking at 'the bucket' from this perspective, while witnessing the

power and resilience of Indigenous peoples, one can see communities and individuals that are embracing their right to create change: "As colonized and oppressed peoples – we must liberate ourselves. In oppression there is poverty, but in liberation there is power" (Khelsilem 2013:np).

Along with resilience, diversity within and amongst Indigenous communities must be acknowledged (Absolon 2010; Denis 2016). From an intersectional approach, the current factors that connect to impact each Indigenous person and community, including lateral violence, will be distinct in their complexity (Hankivsky 2012). The projects required to address it will also therefore be significantly varied (Hankivsky 2012). Absolon (2010:84) states "programming that might work in one community may not be appropriate for another because of the unique conditions and situations that exist within communities".

In general terms, Korff (2016) suggests that 'naming' lateral violence and self-determination within Indigenous communities are two initial steps to tackling this issue. Naming lateral violence may create a space for understanding, discussion, and developing potential solutions – "exerting control over it and an action of prevention" (Korff 2016). Richard J. Frankland (Indigenous singer/songwriter, author and filmmaker) endorses this approach stating "out it. Name it for what it is, a destroyer of Indigenous culture and life. Publicly admit it is happening and then take steps and measures to deal with it…" (Korff 2016:np). Self-determination may also play a large role in this movement as it can "stifle the toxicity of victimhood and powerlessness and enables communities to make their own decisions…taking responsibility for the well-being of the community" (Korff 2016:np).

The capacities for resilience and self-determination are very evident within Indigenous

communities. The following words, an excerpt from a poem by Sto:lo writer Lee Maracle

(2013:135-136) speaking to injustice, resilience and perseverance, highlight this strength:

> We are builders,
> We are singers,
> We are dancers
> We are speakers
> And we are still singing
> We are dancing again
> We are speaking in poetry
> In story, in film
> …
> We will need to nourish our imagination
> To include a new equality
> And summon our souls, our hearts and our minds to a justice,
> which includes all life

Although some Indigenous people have embraced the concept that they must 'lead

the charge' in terms of developing strategies and taking actions that will combat and

eliminate lateral violence within their communities, non-Indigenous peoples must also

recognize their roles and responsibilities. Non-Indigenous peoples must acknowledge

that there is no superiority in a Eurocentric worldview, and the imposition of this

worldview causes damage and ignores diversity (Battiste and Henderson 2000). Barker

(2003) presents the idea that there are options for non-Indigenous/settler peoples other

than the colonial project. Settler people have been taught to "respect and participate in

these systems of control", and must surpass the barriers and influences of greed, fear and

ignorance to truly engage in appropriately supportive partnerships with Indigenous

peoples (Barker 2003:66). It is important to understand that although it does exist within

Indigenous communities, lateral violence is not an "Indigenous problem" (as is often the

view from the government and an ignorant general population) (Absolon and Absolon-

Winchester 2016; BearPaw Media Productions 2006; Korff 2016). The important focus

points are understanding why lateral violence is impacting Indigenous peoples in Canada

and acknowledging the capability of Indigenous peoples to tackle the challenge of its

elimination (Korff 2016). Non-Indigenous peoples in Canada must genuinely absorb

these concepts and engage in the ongoing process of self-education regarding Canada's

history and present-day challenges (Denis and Bailey 2016).[101] They will then be

increasingly prepared to offer support if/when it is required and requested by Indigenous

individuals and communities.

Researcher Position:

Identifying as a non-Indigenous scholar, I was surprised by the extent to which the

Indigenous students wanted to speak with me about lateral violence. When beginning this

project, lateral violence was not initially the focus of my interviews. Over time, it

became clear that it was an important issue among the research participants. I feel as

though I have a responsibility to them to write about it. However, I also recognize the

challenges of doing this as a non-Indigenous scholar. In order to make sure that this is

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[101] Within the interviews, no questions were asked that addressed what role students believed non-Indigenous peoples should play in addressing lateral violence specifically. However, when asked more generally regarding the non-Indigenous students' role in decreasing racism within the campus context, students often referred to the importance of self-education and taking action to support and impact change (but not speaking for/taking up space). The more dominant focus, however, was on the role of Indigenous students themselves.

done in a sensitive way I strive to ensure that the students' views, concerns and beliefs are put at the forefront of the work – allowing their experiences and positions to guide the conclusions being drawn, including insights as to why it occurs and what steps can and should be taken to help alleviate this difficult aspect of their post-secondary experiences. Initially no questions were asked within the interview process regarding lateral violence specifically, with the topic emerging organically across multiple interviews. In acknowledgment of its evident importance, I subsequently included questions regarding if/how students had experienced lateral violence, what impact it had on them and why they believed it was occurring in the remaining interviews.

Findings:

The findings below are presented in two sections. The first is an illustration of the pervasive nature of lateral violence and the effects it can have. The second presents the power, strength and resilience of Indigenous students as they push through/past this obstacle and strive to achieve their best, while also leaving a better legacy for future Indigenous students.

Lateral violence:

Before entering into a discussion of the students' experiences with lateral violence, reflection on how university institutions and non-Indigenous students contribute

to the problem is pertinent. Regarding program funding, a male student from McMaster described how, with financial help from the Indigenous studies department, the Indigenous student group at his university would host cultural events. However, in his observation, these events were based on the traditions of only one particular Indigenous community. The university had no policy in place to ensure that additional Indigenous communities were represented. This left students from other communities feeling isolated and excluded, potentially leading to dissent. Another example has to do with the cultural infrastructure provided for Indigenous students. A female student from Trent described how at her university there was a teepee and a sweat-lodge, however there was no wigwam (which was the structure which most directly connects to the community/lands that the university resides upon).[102] A final example shared by another Trent female student described how she did not see her Indigenous culture represented within the curriculum or physically on campus. She took it upon herself to purchase a flag representing her community and donate it to the on-campus Indigenous space to increase community representation and her connection to the environment. The above examples demonstrate ways in which university polices/programs may privilege some Indigenous nations or traditions and ignore others, therefore still acting as a colonial institution and potentially exacerbating lateral violence.

Beyond the institutions themselves, non-Indigenous students can also act in ways that contribute to the lateral violence. One example was shared by a female Lakehead

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[102] Two years after this interview was completed, the university in question did construct a wigwam as an addition to their cultural gathering spaces. This interviewee indicated there was student involvement in moving the addition of this Indigenous space forward, but it is unknown as to the full extent.

student who stated that in her class, when the professor engaged in discussion of

Indigenous topics, the non-Indigenous students chose to make discriminatory and racist

comments. This triggered some of the Indigenous students to become enraged to the

point of losing control. Although she could understand the intensity of their reaction, it

also frustrated her that their outburst would be seen as representative of all Indigenous

students:

> Your fellow Indigenous student is flying off the handle and then it's like
> well – I'm gonna pipe up and say something so that at least the other
> students know we're not all gonna fly off the handle when you bring
> something up and we can constructively say something.

This shared experience exemplifies how the actions non-Indigenous students take may pit

Indigenous students against each other and contribute to lateral violence.

Of the Indigenous students interviewed, sixty-five per cent shared personal

experiences with significant lateral violence within their post-secondary environments. It

was often expressed as an ongoing issue as opposed to a singular incident, therefore

having lasting impacts on their experiences. There are several possible explanations for

the thirty-five per cent who did not express concerns about lateral violence. For example,

multiple students interviewed indicated that by personal choice they did not significantly

interact with other Indigenous students on campus and this would largely eliminate the

possibility for lateral violence to occur. The reasons for this choice varied significantly.

Some male students described alienation from a predominantly female Indigenous student

body, and others expressed a lack of connection with the most dominantly expressed

Indigenous community on campus (cultural perspectives and events). For one male

student at Lakehead, it was a combination of his personal sense of a lack of connection to the First Nations community he perceived to be at the root of the student community and the fact that there were no other Indigenous students in his classes/faculty. The decreased number of Indigenous male students on campus and the distribution of students amongst various faculties are not obviously connected to issues lateral violence on campus, however the lack of inclusion of a multitude of Indigenous backgrounds/communities could be an indicator of lateral violence.

Several students discussed instances where they had removed themselves from interactions with other Indigenous students when lateral violence was perceived as occurring, but these were situationally based decisions and did not reflect an ongoing disconnect with other Indigenous students more generally. In these examples, the choice to end interaction/engagement in the moment represented instances where the students were simultaneously experiencing lateral violence, while also resisting it, by refusing to either be complicit or passively accept its impacts (Pyke 2010).

The first example of lateral violence comes from an ongoing fracture within the student body that was discussed by most of the Indigenous students interviewed at McMaster University. Through a process that involved accusations, derision of character, gossip, bullying, back-stabbing, shaming and manipulation – a large divide was generated within the Indigenous student body creating two oppositional groups. The behaviours involved in the establishment of the rift align with those typically characterized as lateral violence (Bombay et al. 2014).

A male student (who grew up in an urban setting) declared how devastated he felt when one of the student body leaders publicly stated that if you were not raised and/or living on reserve that you were not "true Native people". He cited this as an example of the contentious types of behaviour that fueled the feud and ultimately resulted in a divided student group. This same student described a belief that those who chose to speak out and stand up for the unequal treatment they perceived around them were subsequently denied services designated for Indigenous students, by the Indigenous Studies department at his university, and excluded as a form of punishment.

On the opposite side, a female student stated how, as one who was raised on a reserve, she also felt devastated by the conflict when she was persecuted for not completing a task on time after a death occurred in her family. Referring to the ten days of mourning practiced after a death in the family, where no work is to be done, she stated "I had to explain (*this*) to another Indigenous person". Despite her taking the time to explain the reasoning for her inability to complete the task, she was harassed until she chose to quit, ending her involvement with the student group.

One of the female students who was targeted during this conflict through negative public commentary refers to how gossip and accusations have created a large "weight" for her and how the "narratives have festered". This created a damaging environment at the university that would bring her to tears at the mention of it due to feelings of stress, isolation and loss of community (reinforcing some of the negative personal tolls lateral violence can take) (NWAC 2011).

Another female student recounted how, after being involved in extensive work preparing an Indigenous student event for the 'The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women', students on the 'other side' of the divide took over the event and claimed credit for the preparation. She has completely removed herself from any contact with them. In choosing to disconnect from students on the other 'side' of the conflict, she became a target of gossip and intentional exclusion. She referred to these students and their behaviour as "very harmful".

Lakehead also has ongoing lateral violence issues within its Indigenous student community. Some of the examples cited by students include fights over appropriate skin colour, name-calling, and judgement regarding the (supposed) level of authenticity based on practicing (or not) of traditional teachings. A female student described the lateral violence she has experienced as a student who traveled to attend from a very northern reserve. She stated that she has been called "up-Northy" in a derogatory way by fellow Indigenous students, particularly those who are originally from reserves closer to city center, that she described as more "city-oriented". This aligns with Pyke's (2010:557) discussion on 'defensive othering' in regards to those impacted by internalized oppression – the subordinated trying to "distance themselves from stereotypes associated with the subordinate group". In speaking to this treatment, this student stated:

> I try to understand why people are the way they are, what my culture
> is…and it took me a really long time to figure it out. But the reason we
> call each other down and stuff like that is because of the past, of our past,
> and what we had to learn that…ya know they say like Native people are
> dirty because they're brown…but…they're just brown…

However, after making this statement, demonstrating an understanding of how the colonial interference has enabled/created the negative behaviour of lateral violence, she made a subsequent statement moments later which culturally 'owned' and generalized lateral violence: "well ya…that's how Native people are…they pull each other down". This is an example of the inner conflict that can occur as Indigenous students push past the boundaries that 'colonial powers' have attempted to instill and begin to replace the forced internalized colonialism with a new system of beliefs and understandings. Analyzing why lateral violence persists, another female student stated:

> I think it happens because people forget we're trying to fight the fight
> together and not against each other, but people have a different idea of
> what that fight is. I think that talking more and figuring out what we want
> to get and do…in an institution like this…I think maybe that wouldn't
> happen as often…

This is another example indicating that understanding the false narratives that have been internalized (their roots and consequences) and increasing communication within the Indigenous student community may be key. Students are using their power and agency to identify potential causes of lateral violence and develop potential solutions.

A female student at Trent also shared how she has experienced lateral violence. As a woman who has one parent that is not Indigenous, she expressed how demeaned she has felt when fellow Indigenous students make comments about her skin tone. Despite 'cushioning' her statement by saying that "they didn't mean it," she said, "I feel like even an off-hand comment like 'you don't look Indigenous', from another Indigenous student, is oh so, I'm like 'less than'..." She has personally experienced this along with comments

about how she was lucky to have grown up where she did because there are more light-

skinned Indigenous people there.

The majority of interviewees experienced lateral violence - on multiple occasions

for most. Beyond recounting the examples, these students also spoke to the significant

negative impacts that have resulted. Among the many impacts listed were students

requiring leaves of absence due to stress, negative effects on home-life as the stress

carried through to their families, loss of friends/community, lack of trust among

Indigenous students, academic success and compounding the intensity of already having

to manage conflicts with non-Indigenous students.[103]

Resilience and empowerment:

Indigenous students have shown that through strength and determination they are

fighting back against lateral violence. This is evident in the movements creating positive

change that Indigenous students have been either leading or strongly involved in.

Working to create safe/supportive spaces:

Students at McMaster were involved in a long process that resulted in the

Indigenous studies department getting a brand-new office space with upgraded services

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[103] Although not the main focus of this study, several students also mentioned how their lives outside of the university were also impacted by lateral violence within their family and/or community due to their university attendance. The complicated nature of code-switching also had implications for some students in navigating the social contexts beyond the on-campus environment.

and facilities. The new space created an improved 'hang-out' space for Indigenous students to relax, study or seek out academic and personal support. This is one example of the work that Indigenous students have been involved in that can foster positivity and success. Indigenous student involvement and persistence was a big part of making this new space a reality. While this was a significant step, not all Indigenous students feel comfortable within the space. A male student indicated that he has felt persecuted by members of both the Indigenous student community and Indigenous studies program faculty/administration (based on his affiliation to other students who have expressed criticisms of the Indigenous community and department), and therefore does not feel welcome. Along with this student having experienced lateral violence, this may be indicative of challenges relating to an increasingly diverse Indigenous student body. With a variety of backgrounds, experiences and identities, perhaps one space might not be suitable for everyone.

Peer support:

Indigenous students have shared that they "are the supports for each other". Within the Indigenous space on-campus, students spend a lot of time talking with each other about the strain of the environment. As described by one female student, it's about talking each other through "how we can keep doing the 'school thing'". The peer support reaches beyond the current generation of students to those who may follow. Indigenous students have described their involvement in multiple committees and policy meetings

geared at improving curriculum, support and services for Indigenous students. The results of this hard work may not be seen by current students, but they will certainly be felt by future students. One example is a social work student who dedicates time to a committee working at increasing the Indigenous content within the social work curriculum.

Self-Awareness:

Within the interviews, some of the students have spoken to a deep awareness and understanding of their (personal and community) history and culture, and how this plays out in their daily lives. This knowledge may be a particularly powerful tool in the efforts to battle lateral violence. When recounting instances of lateral violence that she both experienced and witnessed in the university environment, one female student stated that she simply won't engage with it. Based on the recognition that its roots are those of intergenerational trauma she refuses to participate, "won't sling mud", and encourages her peers to also avoid engagement. Another female student took her understanding to a deeper personal level when she recognized her own complicity in a situation from the past. She recognized her participation in actions that alienated another Indigenous student who was described as acting "very white". She now sees how her behaviour facilitated the exclusion of this student. Although she was evidently sad and uncomfortable as she recounted this information, this kind of personal insight can be a powerful tool for creating positive future choices/directions.

Lastly, another female student recounted how she experienced lateral violence from peers in combination with discriminatory behaviour from administrators (withholding of scholarship monies) and severe poverty during her first year of university. When questioned as to how she persevered when faced with such barriers, she described how she simply decided and set her mind to the task. It appears that Indigenous students are using their ability to learn about and identify lateral violence (and place it in historical context), as a tool for altering behaviour and plotting a more positive course. Of the students who witnessed and experienced lateral violence within the university setting, recognition of the phenomenon and its impacts were shared, however the data demonstrates that it was predominantly female students who went further into their understandings to determine their own roles and what steps they believed were necessary to overcome it.[104]

Lateral violence is a complex and insidious cluster of behaviours that can have a significant and detrimental impact on young Indigenous university students. That said, the data highlights the dedication, self-determination and perseverance of Indigenous students interviewed who are defying expectations, limitations and boundaries in order to achieve success, while improving the path for those to follow.

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[104] One possible explanation for the female students taking their discussions beyond 'recognition' to reflexive analysis and problem solving may be that women are in fact experiencing higher levels of lateral violence. Future research ought to seek data that analyzes this possibility more specifically.

Discussion and Conclusions:

The findings presented above emphasize the serious impacts of lateral violence within Indigenous student communities, but also challenge previous understandings of why and how this occurs and strategies for change. In Pyke's (2010) work on internalized oppression, it is discussed how academics have avoided this line of investigation for fear that it presents those impacted as inferior (through potential misrepresentations of weakness or blame) and a belief that the focus ought to be on resistance. Pyke (2010:552) counters this by insisting that in order to develop effective resistance "…it is necessary to understand how oppression is internalized and reproduced". The data reported above supports this position regarding lateral violence, but also takes it beyond just the academic realm. The importance of learning how oppressions, such as lateral violence, are internalized and reproduced appears to be of utmost importance for those who have themselves been impacted. The Indigenous students who volunteered their own understandings of lateral violence, its historical conception and current impacts, were often the ones who also described themselves as thriving and moving beyond its touch with positivity and determination.

Pyke (2010:554) further states that "Placing responsibility on the oppressed to solve the problem suggests it is of their own making, which easily leads to blaming the victims…". This project certainly supports Pyke's assertion that the true origin of oppression (such as colonial domination) and its effects (lateral violence), must be underscored. Yet what is missing from this description of appropriate 'investigative focus' is space for voice and self-determination by Indigenous peoples. The Gramscian

(1971) concept of hegemony outlines how the "ruling race attains consensus" by producing ideologies that construct reality (Pyke 2010:556). It is these damaging ideologies that both create/perpetuate structures of inequality and become internalized by those targeted for oppression, destroying individuals and communities over time. How is it possible to resist such oppressions? The interview data suggests that, in tandem with the wider Indigenous cultural and political resurgence that's been taking place in Canada and beyond (e.g., Coburn 2015; Corntassel 2012; Kino-nda-niimi Collective 2014; Leanne Simpson 2017), the students in this study have chosen to resist through an awakening of their own creation.

Strength and determination have been created for many students through their own labeling/conceptualization of the problem of lateral violence and their decision to battle against it through positive action. Absolon's (2010:82) wholistic theory describes how the northern direction of the medicine wheel is characterized by "healing, doing and movement". Absolon (2010:82) states that "this doorway recognizes the healing in being and doing, acknowledges collective work…diversity within Indigenous contexts". The lived experiences shared by the Indigenous students support that when they claim ownership of the space for voice and self-determination, deciding on both individual and collective actions to counter lateral violence and move forward, that positive results are achieved. To deny them the 'responsibility' of solving lateral violence, as Pyke implies, may in fact be a colonial action in itself. It would result, once again, in externally dictated frameworks for action, disregarding both the desire to challenge the oppression and the capability to do so within Indigenous communities. The question that remains is

how non-Indigenous peoples in Canada might assist in expanding the space for self-determination and providing support for chosen avenues of action within Indigenous communities (as desired/requested by Indigenous communities themselves)?

The intersection of the oppressive ideologies described by Gramsci (1971) creates a "matrix of power relations" demonstrating the interconnection between inequalities (Pyke 2010:564). We know that these intersecting forms of oppression create the opportunity for insidious anomalies such as lateral violence. Perhaps the approach to identifying avenues for the elimination of lateral violence is to pick up this matrix of power relations and inject it with ideologies of space, Indigenous voice, self-determination and self-awakening… refusing to remove any further power from Indigenous communities by saying lateral violence is not a problem for them to solve (incidentally implying inability), while simultaneously acknowledging that the problem was externally, colonially, created. Canadians must acknowledge that, as seen in the data above, the continued colonial nature of post-secondary institutions and the generalized ignorance presented by settler peoples in Canada regarding Indigenous cultures and communities can intensify the lateral violence Indigenous students are experiencing. Striving to rectify these inadequacies is a possible first step to supporting Indigenous students.

Throughout this chapter, several points have become clear:

- Lateral violence does exist among Indigenous university students in Canada and has serious implications.

- The roots of, and responsibility for, the impacts of lateral violence within Indigenous communities lies on the shoulders of historical colonial policies and practices, as well as ongoing discriminatory and colonial systems of domination.

- Indigenous peoples and communities have the strength and resilience to engage in a process of taking back power and eliminating lateral violence within their communities.

- Non-Indigenous peoples and organizations have a role to play involving self-education, acknowledgement of responsibility, recognition of Indigenous communities' strengths and rights, learning their 'place' within the process of support and healing (which some might describe as a process of reconciliation) and sharing/redistribution of resources.

As discussed above, recognition of diversity is key in terms of understanding that each Indigenous individual and community will need, and has the capacity, to design an approach for eliminating lateral violence in their lives (Absolon 2010; Battiste & Youngblood Henderson 2000).[105] Beyond that, non-Indigenous individuals, groups and organizations must engage in a long process of self-education to prepare for the potential of standing alongside Indigenous peoples throughout this time of change. The Indigenous university students who were so gracious as to share their time and insights demonstrate not only how their lived experiences have enabled them to develop expert testimony on how to move forward, but also how many are in fact doing so and finding pathways to personal and academic success.

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[105] Throughout this study, an emerging theme (supported by Pyke 2010) is how some of the same people can engage in both lateral violence and resistance simultaneously – how, a particular act of resistance can also sometimes be an act of internalized oppression. This means that eliminating lateral violence is extremely complex, however Indigenous students demonstrated their ability to push forward and often succeed despite its presence.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This research project has produced important data regarding the experiences of Indigenous students within the Canadian university context. The information gathered through the interview process and contextual comparisons builds on past research (Bailey 2016; Cech, Smith & Metz 2019; Clark et al. 2014) and sheds light on how racism and discrimination continue to impact Indigenous students' experiences, the ongoing racialized nature of the campus environments in question and the role that settler-colonial structures and narratives continue to play in the creation of the university context. The following sections will present the major findings that emerged through the data analysis under the three major categories of student experiences with racism, the impacts of/responses to racism, and lateral violence.

Findings:

Student Experiences:

The Indigenous students interviewed, across all three universities, indicated that they experience far more difficulty and burden (both academic and social) as they move through their university education than non-Indigenous students. High levels of racism and discrimination were reported at all three universities. The similar nature of the experiences across the varying contexts supports the argument that settler-colonial

narratives are continuing to substantially influence the environment and operations of university campuses, and therefore impact experiences at the individual level.

Although high levels of racism and a similar nature of experiences were shared across the universities, this is not to say that there were no differences. Reported instances of encountering racism in the social/interpersonal context shared a similar overt nature, but were reported less at McMaster university then the others. Due to the Indigenous student body having a lower visibility on campus at McMaster, and the administration having yet to make (as many) large structural/program changes to support Indigenous students, this could indicate that increased visibility also increases instances of racial backlash. The students attending Lakehead and Trent may be experiencing the higher level of racism and discrimination in the social context due to the higher level of visibility and institutional change present at their institutions.

Another difference that emerged in the data across/between campus contexts was the frequency of racism/discrimination that occurred specifically involving engagement with professors. Despite high number of incidences reported at McMaster and Trent, there was lower number reported at Lakehead. Being situated within the city of Thunder Bay, where racism and discrimination against Indigenous peoples is a well-known and widespread concern, it is possible that the university is more vigilant about ensuring that its professors are not acting (or perceived to be acting) in ways that contribute further to issues of discrimination on campus. With publicized strategic plans to support Indigenous students and many on campus support-systems and programs, it appears that Lakehead is endeavouring to present their campus as a safe and welcoming space for

Indigenous students. The interview data suggests that future research ought to investigate the efficacy of these efforts. Nonetheless, the academic and support programs in place do indicate an ongoing dialogue regarding these topics.

In terms of experiences with racism and discrimination that directly involve the institution, they fell into 3 main categories: blatant (overt) discrimination, a lack of support and/or follow through (involving the implementation of new academic or support programs) and a more generalized lack of consideration of Indigenous students needs/experiences. In this category we again see lower levels reported at Lakehead, with higher levels reported at McMaster and Trent. That said, all reported levels were significant and the instances outlined in the interview data demonstrated a high degree of negative impact on the students' experiences – sometimes as drastic as an inability to locate enough food on a daily basis, or the creation of hostile learning environments.

Throughout the data analysis it became evident that an Indigenous student's social positioning could exponentially increase the level of oppression (experiences with racism and discrimination) that occurred within the university context. A prime example, although not the only one represented within the data, was female Indigenous students who were also mature-students and mothers. The intersecting nature of oppressions would create a situation where these students experienced discrimination based on gender, race, age and familial status, amplifying the frequency of the experiences and their subsequent impacts.

Impacts and Responses:

The vast and often extremely negative impacts of experiences with racism on campus were discussed by 24 of the 27 students interviewed. Within the data analysis, four main impact areas emerged: academic impacts, high emotional tolls, experiences of isolation and a decreased sense of belonging. These themes were consistent across the three university contexts. Although differing based on the specific details of personal experience, the reported impacts were consistently centered around decreased academic motivation and/or academic success (such as choices for completing their program or considering future academic programs) and emotional strain.

In terms of how the students responded to their experiences with racism on campus, there was a wide range of approaches and choices. The analytic themes that emerged through analysis include: in-class responses, social responses, social support, institutional support, disclosure/passing strategies, activism, code-switching/footing and empowerment. The multitude of themes, and the different ways that students might choose to combine the use of different responses/resources, demonstrates the complex nature of the university context and how the 'area' of the university in question (such as a social context as opposed to in-class), as well as the student's particular social position, could impact their chosen response(s) or strategies.

Lateral Violence:

The findings demonstrate that the presence of lateral violence within Indigenous student communities is having a serious negative impact. Furthermore, the discussions within the interviews around this topic challenge previous understandings of how/why lateral violence occurs and the best strategies for change. The data indicates that there is a high value and importance for Indigenous students to learn about oppressions such as lateral violence, including how it is created, internalized and reproduced. For those who are being directly impacted by lateral violence, having their own understandings of how it works, its roots in historical/present-day colonialism and its impacts, enabled the students to position themselves with a shield to prevent some of the harmful effects. St Denis (2007:1068) states that having a "critical antiracist education" can help to lessen lateral violence, deepening understandings of history and context, and also provide Indigenous peoples with tools to respond to racist events in more constructive ways. The data demonstrated that through their own process of labeling and conceptualizing the problem of lateral violence, students were able to take deliberate and positive actions against it. This indicates that when Indigenous students are claiming ownership of the space for voice and self-determination, deciding on both individual and collective actions to counter lateral violence and move forward, that positive results are achieved.

Gender:

The data demonstrates that in many ways the experiences of male and female Indigenous university students are very similar. There were some differences, including approaches to 'follow-up' after experiencing racism in class, experiences of overt racism in the social context, and the depth of evaluation and processing of lateral violence. But there were also strong similarities in terms of types of racism experienced, the severity and selected responses. Overall there were many commonalities between the experiences of male and female students. In Chapter two, the literature reviewed regarding gender differences within the university exemplifies many issues of inequality. Therefore, one might assume that the experiences between male and female Indigenous students' experiences should be much grander. From an intersectional perspective, Yuval-Davis (2006:203) states that "in specific historical situations and in relation to specific people there are some social divisions that are more important than others in constructing specific positions". It is possible that within the Canadian university context (specifically being situated within a long colonial legacy), the social status of 'Indigenous' has taken on increased significance within intersecting systems of power and the creation of experience.

The one example of a major difference within experiences between males and female Indigenous students occurred for female students who were also mothers. For these women, the complexity of their social positioning created experiences where the impacts of racism (both interpersonal and institutional) had more severe impacts both personally (isolation) and academically (lack of support and difficulty accessing

necessary services). In comparison, the data did not support male students who were parents as having similar experiences. In fact, several male interviewees spoke to their own recognition of the burdens upon Indigenous students who are mothers that they did not experience themselves.

Theoretical Implications

Settler-Colonial Theory (SCT) / Critical Race Theory (CRT):

Throughout each chapter it has been argued, and supported through data, that when used in combination SCT and CRT complement and strengthen each other. Although each theory brings forward a particular point of analytic strength, when used separately the subsequent analyses are insufficient to understand Indigenous university students' experiences (with racism and colonialism) and therefore missing key elements of data.

SCT contributes a high-level of critical reflexivity (for both the researcher and the research project creation/implementation) that is necessary to ensure that settler-colonial goals are not inadvertently furthered by being trapped within particular positions/frameworks. SCT also stresses the importance of incorporating the concept of settler-colonialism into all analyses of systems of power and the experiences of oppressed peoples within settler colonial societies (a shift supported more recently by TribalCrit). CRT brings attention to the intersectional nature of dominant/oppressive powers while simultaneously centering racism within each phase of research design and data analysis.

The implementation of an intersectional approach highlighted the way in which experiences with racism seem to somewhat vary depending on variables such as gender, age, class background (a potential area for continued future research). Further, CRT demands the inclusion of the lived experiences of those impacted by oppression as a legitimate source of data and avenue for resistance. When used in combination, these two theoretical approaches create a much more comprehensive framework for analysis.

When speaking specifically to the experiences of Indigenous students within the Canadian university context, using these two approaches in combination has assisted in maintaining a critically reflexive position throughout while centering the knowledge, experience and direction provided by Indigenous student voices. The result has been the incorporation of perspectives outside my own frames of reference that generate a critical perspective not wholly contained within the settler-colonial paradigm. The Indigenous students involved in this project have identified ongoing colonial elements of their respective institutions, as well as describing/demonstrating the processes of resistance that are contained within these contexts. When applying these theories to the analysis of the impacts of/responses to racism, several elements of CRT in particular become highlighted. Within CRT the centering of lived experience as a valid data source is described as crucial. The lived experiences play a key role in understanding the impacts of racism, which responses the students select and why. The accounts shared by Indigenous students act not only as data, but also as counter stories and resistance to the dominant hegemonic ideologies.

When applied separately, SCT and CRT are incomplete, however in combination they begin to create a more comprehensive analytic approach for the contemporary Canadian social context. By applying this combined approach to the research data, the questions of what role settler-colonial narratives are playing in the creation of daily lived experiences and how intersecting forces of domination may exacerbate, or multiply, the effects have begun to be answered.

Internalized Oppression:

By arguing against academia's apprehension regarding researching internalized oppression (based on concerns of inadvertently implying an inferiority amongst those impacted), Pyke's (2010) work pushed the field forward. Pyke (2010) stressed that understanding how oppression becomes internalized and reproduced is imperative for creating counter strategies. Pyke (2010) also argued that the responsibility for rectifying internalized racism should not be placed on the shoulders of those impacted, as this might lead to 'blaming the victims'.

The data from this research project supports Pyke's assertion that understanding how oppression is internalized and reproduced is crucial. However, rather than containing that understanding to the academic realm of theoretical understanding, this study indicates that understanding these processes is of the most importance for those being impacted. The Indigenous students who shared their own understandings of lateral violence, its base in history and contemporary structures, were also the ones most likely

to describe how they were thriving by acknowledging and understanding its presence, but refusing to be complicit.

Pushing Pyke's work even further, I have argued against the position that those impacted by internalized oppression (lateral violence) should not be responsible for solving the problem. Within the interview data it is apparent that students have chosen to resist the existence and impacts of lateral violence through an awakening of their own understandings – awareness and comprehension of lateral violence and their role within it. The act of labeling and conceptualizing the problem, and the process of deciding to battle against it through positive action, has created a sense of strength and determination for many students. To move forward with the belief that the 'solution' to lateral violence lies entirely beyond the Indigenous community would result in further colonial action by placing an externally dictated framework upon them. This is supported by the work of Coulthard (2014) and Fanon (1952,1961), which argues that despite colonizers being responsible for the racism/colonialism, and acknowledging that these oppressive structures must be changed, that to achieve true freedom, Indigenous peoples in Canada must liberate themselves by exercising control and affirming one another's worth.

I argue that an improved approach to identifying avenues for eliminating lateral violence is to pick up the complex matrix of power relations created by the intersection of oppressive ideologies, as described by Gramsci (1971), and infuse it with Indigenous voice, self-determination and self-awakening. This would represent a commitment to acknowledging/supporting the power of Indigenous communities. However, it must be simultaneously acknowledged that the problem of internalized oppression/lateral violence

was externally, colonially, created. Canadians must recognize that the continued colonial nature of post-secondary institutions, combined with the generalized ignorance presented by settler peoples in Canada regarding Indigenous cultures and communities, can intensify the lateral violence Indigenous students are experiencing. Striving to rectify these inadequacies is an important first step to supporting Indigenous students.

Legitimized Racism:

Within the data, there are indications of important themes regarding how non-Indigenous students navigate the area between overt and covert expressions of racism. This raises theoretical questions regarding the nature of contemporary racism that Indigenous students are facing within the university context. When these instances of racism occur, it is overt or covert? Is it hostile or paternalistic? A representation of ignorance…or deliberate maintenance of dominant power? Robertson (2015) discusses her theory of 'legitimized racism' against Indigenous peoples in the American context, with 'American society' described as a clear jar containing different forms of racism that are overt but their nature hidden by other social norms and systems also contained within the jar. The way that non-Indigenous students were described as feeling free to express overt racism (particularly in the social context of the university environment) invites questions as to the relevance of 'legitimized racism' within Canadian society. Robertson (2015:141) argues that "when multilayered, intersectional, and dynamic racism becomes legitimized (normalised, institutionalized, internalized, and systemic), it becomes simultaneously

overt and invisible within social norms and social institutions". Further investigation is
required, but there are initial indicators within the data from this research project that a
form of 'legitimized racism' regarding Indigenous peoples is being exercised within the
Canadian university context, and potentially within Canadian society at large.

Have the universities done enough?

All of the Indigenous students interviewed discussed their views on whether or not
their respective universities have done enough to support Indigenous students as
individuals, as well as a community. Despite a few positive notes, the general tone of the
McMaster students was that McMaster has not yet done enough and that the pace of
change is far too slow. Although they expressed happiness with changes such as the
creation of a 4-year honours program in Indigenous Studies, the increase of spaces
dedicated to Indigenous students and the incorporation of land recognition statements,
there were many concerns outlined. These included (but are not limited to): a lack of
Indigenous professors, a lack of cultural community, Indigenous content (mainly) only
available within the Indigenous Studies department, a lack of advocates for students and
the fact that the positive changes that are occurring within the university are being driven
by the hard work of Indigenous scholars/student and not the university at large. When the
McMaster students were asked for specific ideas as to what immediate changes the
university could implement to policies/programs in order to better support Indigenous
students some of the responses included: cultural sensitivity training (for professors),

availability of Indigenous counselors, more opportunities to gain experience (such as work-study positions), more Indigenous faculty, ensuring inclusion of all Indigenous communities and better dissemination of information regarding the services and policies in place to support them.

At Lakehead, there appears to be slightly more support for the efforts of the university administration. However, this was often framed in a tentative way – stating that the institutional changes represent an idea of where things 'could' go. Despite a perception that some positive initiatives are in place, there was also simultaneous recognition that the areas where the university is lacking continue to have serious negative impacts. At Lakehead some of the concerns listed included a lack of buy-in/support by the institution in terms of fully supporting Indigenous students, a lack of integration/inclusion/education, questioning the effectiveness of the Native Access Program, a need for a mentoring program to assist Indigenous students in transitioning to university, and a lack of recognition of, or evident efforts to address, the racialized climate on campus. In terms of immediate changes that they would like to see, the students stated: implementing processes of change that protect Indigenous students from racial backlash, better communication between the different levels of university leadership and those 'on the ground' to increase understanding of student needs, ensuring different Indigenous groups are equally supported and visible, increasing the number of possible Indigenous student groups/events on campus, institutional promotion of interaction/integration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities on campus, more support for Indigenous Studies and Indigenous student programs in general, and

increased efforts at ensuring the non-Indigenous population better understands Indigenous peoples (opening up discussions of topics such as inequality and racism).[106]

Similar to students from Lakehead, those interviewed at Trent appeared tentatively supportive of the institution. There was a sentiment shared that they could see the positive intentions of changes made to support Indigenous students. There was appreciation expressed for elements such as Trent hosting the only Indigenous Studies PhD program in Canada, the focus on a direct community link, numerous student support services and a sense of being innovative and forward-looking. However, this sentiment was accompanied by an acknowledgement, or belief, that despite these positive intentions the university is falling short in many critical areas that create negative impacts for students. Some of the concerns shared were the desperate need for increased support to Indigenous support services and programs - as well as increased cultural and professional support for both students and administration, needing a more open perspective to traditional approaches (both academic and healing) and more generally that the pace of change at the institution is far too slow. Trent students declared immediate changes they would like to see included: an increased number of available Indigenous counselors, working groups/changes to address racism/discrimination on campus, increased number of Indigenous professors, increased communication from 'the university' to Indigenous

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[106] In terms of requesting implementation processes that protect Indigenous students from racial backlash, the students did not share specific outlines as to what this would 'look like', rather they spoke to it in terms of demonstrating how the current implementation structures cause significant harm.

students, increased safe spaces for Indigenous students to discuss their experiences and more significance/importance placed on Indigenous students' voices (by the institution).

Across the universities there are many similarities seen in terms of immediate changes that Indigenous students would like to see, regardless of the different policies and programs that each university has. Some of these similarities include requests for increased numbers of Indigenous faculty across departments, better communication between 'the university' and Indigenous students, increased support for Indigenous programs and services, and increased recognition of Indigenous student voices. However, it is also noted that at Trent and Lakehead, the students have explicitly expressed a need for the institution to address the racial climate on campus. This is not mentioned directly by McMaster students. Students at Trent and Lakehead also focus on the need for their respective institutions to place increased attention on how the new policies/programs (or the implementation thereof) are creating negative situations and environments for Indigenous students. This is another concern not specifically mentioned by students at McMaster (potentially because some of the large-scale program and policy changes implemented at Lakehead and Trent, such as mandatory course content requirements, have not as of yet occurred at McMaster).

Policy Implications:

The data gathered and analyzed throughout this research project has highlighted how the current policies and programs, designed to support Indigenous students, may be

simultaneously causing negative racial backlash and increasing barriers and emotional strain. The design of this study does not definitively sort out causal direction (did these locations have more racism initially and that is why more programs and services are in place?). Future longitudinal studies may determine whether there are significant positive impacts, however, the data certainly demonstrates that presently students are experiencing significant negative impacts, both personally and academically. This is a smaller-scale study that can be built-upon in the future. Should the findings hold-up in larger studies, as is anticipated, here are what some of the policy and program creation/implementation recommendations could be (drawing from the current data and some explicit recommendations from the Indigenous interviewees).

Students at all three universities mentioned concerns about how their voices are not being appropriately heard, recognized and valued. Further, it was also discussed that there is a disconnect between the perspective of those 'higher-up'/in power and the daily reality for Indigenous students. In terms of re-evaluating current policies and programs, or the creation of new ones, increased emphasis on the students' perspectives and experiences is essential. This emphasis would assist in creating strategies that are designed in ways that will further institutionalize goals of reconciliation and decolonization while also protecting and supporting current students more effectively.

The data has suggested that some of the large-scale program and policy changes implemented at the university level have simultaneously increased negative experiences for Indigenous students. This indicates the needs for increased reflexivity regarding the choices and changes that are made. Along with questions of 'when' and 'how' changes

will be made, universities should also be questioning: 'why' are we making these changes, 'who' will be impacted and how, and are these actual steps for positive change or will they ultimately, through design, further settler-colonial goals.

Included in the discussion of reflexivity is the concept of 'follow-through'. It was reported by many students that although they considered some of the policies and program changes to be positive, it was the lack of follow-through on the part of the institution(s) that was causing the negative impact on their academic success and personal well-being. None of the universities have a defined plan or process readily available to the public as to how they will definitively evaluate whether the new policies and programs are successful. A strategic plan for implementation and goals needs to be accompanied by careful measurements of success – whether the programs are achieving the goals they were designed for. This aspect of follow-through would prevent ongoing hardships such as a lack of financial or logistical support for policy and program implementation that effects both staff and students. If evaluation of the efficacy of change is not concretely in place then the process is incomplete and perhaps acting in solely a performative manner.

Limitations and Future Research Directions:

This research project has made significant contributions to understanding the nature of Indigenous student experiences within the university environment, as well as

challenging and expanding theoretical understandings of racism, context, intersectionality and settler-colonialism. However, there are important limitations to be noted.

The first of these pertains to the size of the project. Three universities were included in the analysis, and all of these are located in Ontario. Furthermore, although in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations have provided rich data, only 27 Indigenous students were interviewed. This is a larger study of Indigenous post-secondary student experiences in Canada than any that has been previously completed, but generalizability is still limited. The consistency of the findings across the universities indicates a strong potential that future projects will support this data, but more research will be required to make that statement definitively.

Another limitation of this study has to do with the availability of data from the universities. Not all of the universities had some key and relevant information publicly available, such as the number of enrolled, self-identified, Indigenous students or the institutional strategic plans for programs/policies impacting Indigenous students. This made certain comparisons of visibility, context and experience more difficult.

Included in study limitations is my own position as a non-Indigenous academic. At each step of the research process I endeavoured to be open and honest, to listen carefully and to place Indigenous voices at the forefront of all understandings, analysis and conclusion. However, it is possible that due to my position as a non-Indigenous person, and researcher, that some students either chose not to participate or those that did participate withheld details of experience or insight they were not comfortable enough to

share. Despite this potential, based on the deep level of the interviews, and the raw emotion and insights conveyed throughout the process, I do believe that the data gathered was legitimate, relevant and comprehensive.

Conclusion:

This study has made a large contribution to understandings of Indigenous student experiences with racism, processes/impacts of change and the persistence of the settler-colonial paradigm, but there is more work required. Future projects should consider expanding to additional universities across the country, and increasing the number of students interviewed, to assess the generalizability of these findings and the potentially significant policy implications therein, as there may be regional or institutional differences (based on different demographics and/or leadership). It would also add significant insight to include Indigenous faculty amongst those interviewed to assess whether the experiences of racism are contained to the Indigenous student population or arise (in similar levels and natures) at all levels of the institution, expanding on the work of Henry et al. (2017). In terms of further investigating lateral violence specifically, another potential avenue of investigation would be to include the analysis of lateral violence amongst other non-Indigenous university groups – to establish comparisons in terms of levels of severity and impacts, and perhaps evaluate why those differences exist.

When expanding the analysis to a grander, perhaps national, scale – it would be beneficial to compare the nature and extent of experiences with racism to the policies,

strategic plans and concrete changes in place at each institution. An initial analysis/comparison, followed by a longitudinal study of changes in experiences over time, could shed light on what changes truly impact experience on an individual level and which are performative, or even causing harm. Included in an evaluation of the impacts from new policies and programs, an analysis of the processes of implementation should be completed to produce new knowledge about the relationships between institutional change and the intersectional consequences for Indigenous student populations.

Within the university context, Indigenous students are driving forward with determination – a refusal to give up and a refusal to be eliminated. The data above shows that this resistance to ongoing oppression, and the achievements of academic success, despite the barriers of racism and settler-colonialism, come at a price. For those Indigenous students who persist, they are required to put in time and effort in significantly higher amounts than non-Indigenous students, while potentially experiencing traumatic encounters with racism and discrimination along the journey. Research must continue to further determine the policy and program changes required to lessen these burdens and enable Indigenous students to travel along equitable paths to the successful completion of a post-secondary education.

Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Template

Interview Questions – Indigenous University Students

RACISM WITHIN THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM:

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Kerry A Bailey, (PhD student)
(Department of Sociology – McMaster University)

Information about these interview questions: In asking these interview questions I am looking to gain a better understanding of how Indigenous university attendees perceive the 'university environment' and the opportunities/limitations that are presented to them. Interviews will be one-to-one and will be open-ended (not just "yes or no" answers), looking to generate conversation and insight. If necessary, I will use other short questions to make sure I understand what I'm told and possibly to clarify the meaning of a statement/idea.

1) Why did you choose to attend 'X' University (as opposed to the other possible universities)?

2) What types of things have you liked/disliked about your university experience so far?

3) Throughout your time at 'X' University, has there been a time(s) when you felt you were being discriminated against due to your Indigenous background? If so, could you tell me about this time or event?
>   a) Do you believe that this was discrimination from the university structure/administration or from particular individuals/groups within the university?
>   b) Do you feel that this/these events have been, or are, barriers to your success in the university environment academically? Socially? Why/Why not?
>   c) Why do you think that this discrimination occurred?
>   d) When this/these situation(s) occurred…what was your reaction?
>   i) Did you take any action in that moment?
>   ii) Once the situation had past, did you give it further consideration/take any additional action?

iii) When you think back to that time, would you have changed how you reacted in any way?

e) Could you estimate how many times you have been discriminated against based on your Indigenous background within the university environment? In other situations, outside of the university?

4) How do you define racism?

a) Do you consider the events you just described to me as racist?

5) Did you feel that you needed any type of support in dealing with the situation(s)?

a) If so, where did you turn for that support within the university?

b) If so, did you access any support systems outside of the university?

c) If not, what has helped you create a sense of self where you can manage these difficult situations without additional support?

d) What additional supports would you like to see the university have in place?

6) Do you feel that the university has taken the appropriate steps to support Indigenous students generally?

a) If so, what are some of the positive policies/actions that the university has enacted that you appreciate?

b) If not, what do you think is needed to create the environment/opportunities you wish to see?

c) If not, what steps do you think Indigenous students can/need to take to create change?

d) If not, what steps do you think non-Indigenous students can/need to take to create change?

7) *For female interviewees: How do you think being a woman impacts your experiences within the university environment in general?

a) Do you feel that you have ever been discriminated against as a woman within the university?

b) Would you say that Indigenous male students have different experiences, compared to Indigenous women within the university environment? If so, can you tell me more about that?

i) Do you believe there are different resources for men and women?
- either provided by the university or socially?

ii) Do you think that women or men tend to have a better sense of what they will do once they have completed university?

iii) Do you think there is a difference between what women and men get out of their university education after that have graduated?

c) How do you think your experiences as an Indigenous female student compares to those of non-Indigenous women on campus?

8) *For male interviewees: How do you think being a man impacts your experiences within the university environment in general?

a) Do you feel that you have ever been discrimination against as a man within the university?

b) Would you say that Indigenous female students have different experiences, compared to Indigenous men within the university environment? If so, can you tell me more about that?

       i) Do you believe there are different resources for men and women?

          - either provided by the university or socially?

       ii) Do you think that women or men tend to have a better sense of what they will do once they have completed university?

       iii) Do you think there is a difference between what women and men get out of their university education after that have graduated?

c) How do you think your experiences as an Indigenous male student compares to those of non-Indigenous men on campus?

9) Throughout your time at 'X' has there been a particularly positive time/event that you attribute to your Indigenous background?

10) Would you recommend 'X' University to other Indigenous students?

11) Is there anything else that you would like to include or you think that I should know?

END

Appendix II: Survey Questions

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Questionnaire – Indigenous University Students

RACISM WITHIN THE CANADIAN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM:

INDIGENOUS STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Kerry A Bailey, (PhD student)
(Department of Sociology – McMaster University)

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Information about this questionnaire: The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather demographic and baseline information about you and your family so that I may understand 'where' you come from and how you position yourself in society. It is also hoped that by asking these questions within a questionnaire, as opposed to during the interview, that we will have more time for valuable discussion during our interview time.

Demographic Information

1) What is your gender?

_____

2) With which Indigenous group(s) do you identify?

___ North American Indian (First Nations)

___ Métis

___ Inuit

___ Other (please specify): _____

___ None

3) Do you identify with any non-Indigenous racial or ethnic groups?

_____

4) Have you obtained a so-called "Indian Status card"?

___ Yes ___ No

5) Are you a member of a particular band or First Nation?

___ Yes (please specify): _____

___ No

6) Do you speak an Indigenous language? If so, which?

_____

7) What year were you born?

_____

8) In which town, city, or reserve community did you primarily grow up? (If outside

Ontario, please list the province).

_____

9) Where do you currently live?

_____

10) How many years have you lived here?

_____

11) What is/was your father's race or ethnicity?

_____

12) What is/was your mother's race or ethnicity:

_____

13) What is/was your father's occupation?

_____

14) What is your father highest completed level of education?

_____

15) What is/was your mother's occupation?

_____

16) What is your mother's highest completed level of education?

_____

17) Have either of your parents taken on leadership roles within your Indigenous

community? If so, which?

_____

18) Have any other close family members taken on leadership roles within your

Indigenous community? If so, which?

_____

19) To your knowledge, did either of your parents attend a residential or day school

during their youth?

_____

20) To your knowledge, did any of your grandparents attend a residential or day

school during their youth?

_____

21) Outside of your academic career, do you hold other (paid) employment?

_____

(If you answered no to the above question, please skip the following questions 15 and 16)

22) Is it part-time or full-time?

_____

23) Do you feel that you need to work in order to continue attending university?

_____

24) How worried are you about your (personal) future financial security?

___ Very worried ___ Somewhat worried ___ Only a little worried ___ Not worried at all

25) Through processes of biological inheritance and evolutionary adaptation to

different climates, human beings have a wide range of skin colours. Please

indicate on the following scale how light or dark you think your skin color is:

(very light) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 (very dark)

26) What is your marital status? (Please check one)

___ Single ___ Common Law ___ Married ___ Divorced ___ Separated ___ Widowed

27) In the space below, please list the gender and racial/ethnic background of your

five best friends within the university environment (not necessarily in rank order).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

END

Appendix III:

Summary Statistics - Demographic Survey:

Sex:	Male - 9	Female - 15	
Identity Group*:	First Nations - 21	Inuit - 3	Métis - 2
Average Age:	33 years old		
Speak an Indigenous Language	Yes - 13	No - 11	
Parent(s) or Grandparent(s) attended residential school:	Yes - 15	No - 7	No Answer - 2
Marital Status:	Married - 5	Separated - 1	Common-law - 3	Single - 14
Worried about financial security:	Little - 8	Somewhat - 9	Very - 6	Not Worried - 1
Employed outside school:	Yes - 11	No - 13	
Friend Group Composition:	All Indigenous - 4	Varied - 20	No Answer: 2
(*3 students self-identified in 2 groups)			

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