

A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF BLACK STUDENT RESPONSES TO  
DIVERSITY-RELATED MEDIA AT ONE U.S. AND ONE CANADIAN  
UNIVERSITY

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A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF BLACK STUDENT RESPONSES TO  
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This doctoral dissertation is a qualitative comparative case study about Black student responses to diversity-related print and web material at one Canadian and one American university. The research methodologies used in this study included: 1) a critical discourse analysis of diversity-related media and policy documents and 2) a thematic narrative analysis of in-depth interviews.

A cross-sectional sample of forty-two students were selected for in-depth interviews between both universities. A sample of twelve Diversity administrators were also interviewed for the study. The central research question asked how Black students articulated their experiences in response to diversity-related media within their universities.

This study drew on several overlapping theoretical frameworks. These theoretical frameworks included color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014), critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995), institutional diversity and language (Ahmed, 2012), and lastly I considered the agency of the students as demonstrated through their use of counter-hegemonic discourses.

The main findings from the textual and visual analysis of media was that both universities conceptualized diversity as differences in visible social identities. The institutional emphasis was on the diversity of the student population and managerial diversity discourses were fully integrated in brochures, web sites, and policy statements. Students in Canada and the U.S. generally reported similar experiences.

Most students observed contradictions between their experiences and the institutional diversity discourses. Diversity administrators felt silenced and disillusioned by the lack of change that they were able to effect. This study connects diversity policies and practices in higher education. The findings also illuminate some of the tensions and current challenges about race and higher education.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH**

Alana Butler was born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Economics from the University of Toronto. She earned a Master of Arts from the Department of Adult Education and Counselling Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. At Cornell University, she completed a Ph.D. in Education with a specialization in Learning, Teaching, and Social Policy.

To my parents, Althia and Herman Butler. Thank you for your love and support throughout my journey.

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

My personal connection to my research comes from growing up in Toronto, Ontario, Canada as the child of Caribbean immigrants. I was constantly reminded in many ways that I should consider myself fortunate to have been born in Canada because of its promotion of multiculturalism and long history of accepting immigrants. Yet in spite of these messages, I personally experienced and witnessed countless incidents of racism and discrimination in Canada. Upon informing a professor at my alma mater that I was going to pursue doctoral studies at an American university, she remarked with a stern tone of disapproval “It’s racist down there in the U.S.!” I wanted to reply “What about the racism *up here* in Canada?”, but I remained silent. I have always had ambivalent feelings about how my personal experiences contradicted the positive messages I received about Canada’s diversity. These are the tensions I sought to explore in my study. *How* does one respond to being *told* that they are being included when they don’t *feel* included?

In this introductory chapter, I will present some background research about diversity discourses within institutions. I will then state my research problem and connect it to my research questions. Next I will explain my choice of theoretical frameworks and how they relate to my research questions. Lastly, I will conclude by providing an overview of my dissertation chapters.

In this study, I draw on a definition of discourse that not only includes the use of language but a critical examination of power relations that underlie its usage (Fairclough, 2010; Foucault, 1972; Gee, 1999). The term ‘diversity’ also has been

defined variously. Diversity has become a ubiquitous term within organizations. Institutions typically employ the term ‘diversity’ to refer to ascriptive characteristics and social identities. These include but are not limited to gender, race, language, nationality, social class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, disability, marital status, and political beliefs (Ahmed, 2012; Anderson, G., 2006; Hays-Thomas, 2004; Herring and Henderson, 2012; Qin, Muenjohn, and Chhetri , 2014).

Diversity discourses in higher education are generally limited to ‘structural diversity’ that focuses on the demographic composition of the population (Clarke and Antonio, 2012). The institutionalization of the word diversity has also come to implicitly refer to the ‘other’ (Ahmed, 2012). Embedded in the meaning of diversity is also a normative White, heterosexual, male to which the ‘other’ is being compared.

Diversity-related discourses have become an intrinsic element of U.S. and Canadian higher education governance. Studies have shown that contemporary institutional diversity discourses have shifted the emphasis from a human rights or social justice perspective (Astin and Osegura, 2004; Blackmore, 2006; Chan, 2005; Giroux, 2001b; Westerman, 2010) to a neoliberal capitalist perspective that underscores the value of diversity within a global marketplace (Blackmore, 2006; Brown and Schubert, 2000; Comber, 1997; Devins, 2003; Eastman, 2007; Edelman, Riggs, and Mara-Drita, 2001; Ganz, 2001; Hays-Thomas, 2004, Westerman, 2010).

The institutionalization of diversity discourses have been criticized by scholars who argue from the position of social conservatism (Wood, 2003) and scholars who argue from a critical perspective (Ahmed, 2012; Anderson. G, 2006; Ridzki and

McIntosh, 2006; Wade, 2004). Advocates of both positions address the need for an analysis of the limitations of the discourse within institutional settings.

One must also clarify and make a distinction between ‘diversity as institutional practice’ and ‘diversity as language.’ With respect to institutional practices, Ahmed (2012) refers to ‘doing diversity’ as an action orientation that involves institutional initiatives for minority recruitment, representation, and retention. Several studies have concluded that the majority of diversity-related practices in higher education are limited to ‘diversity as language’ (Ahmed, 2012; Chan, 2005; Davis, 2002; Modood and Acland, 1998; Stewart and Humberd, 2008; Stewart, 2009). This study focused on ‘diversity as language’ but also explored the tensions and contradictions between ‘talk’ and ‘action.’

### **The Research Problem**

Most if not all predominantly White universities in the United States and Canada frame their institutions as inclusive spaces through the use of institutional diversity discourses that are manifested in policy statements and various forms of media (Chan, 2005; Franklin, 2013; Palmer, Wood, and Spencer, 2013). Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) are those which have historically been created to educate White students and have a 50% or greater White student population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) are institutions of higher education which were founded before 1964 to educate primarily

African Americans and have a 50% or more Black student population (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

The main research problem is that Black and other racial minority students continue to report experiences of racism and alienation while attending predominantly white universities that have discursively framed their institutions as spaces of inclusion.

Sociological research has concluded that ‘race’ is a social construct that has no biological basis yet the social implications of ‘race’ continues to be experienced by societal members. In spite of the election of President Barack Obama in 2009, the promise of the ‘post-racial’ has yet to be realized in 2015. In the face of recent anti-affirmative action legislation some scholars have argued that we have seen a regression in racial equality over the past decade (Clark, Fasching-Varner and Brimhall-Vargas 2012; Garces and Jayakumar, 2014; Palmer, Wood, and Spencer, 2013; Riccucci, 2014).

While there is a plethora of research about race and higher education, few studies have compared national contexts. Comparing national contexts is important because it can help us to re-frame the challenges faced by underrepresented racial minority groups in higher education as a global, rather than merely a national issue. For example, there is a large body of research from the United Kingdom about the challenges faced by Afro-British and Afro-Caribbean minority groups in higher education (Acland and Azmi, 1998; Ahmed, 2012; Bonnett, 2000; Curtis, 2006; Gilroy, 1991; Higher Education Statistics Agency of the United Kingdom, 2011). Another example is Essed’s (1991) study of Black Surinamese immigrants in Holland

described in her book entitled *Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory*. This study proposes a comparative perspective from which to view the topic of Black experiences in higher education.

This study proposes to critically examine the connection between institutional diversity discourses and the experiences of Black students in Canadian and U.S. higher education. I have selected one university in the province of Ontario, Canada and one in the state of New York, United States in order to provide a comparison of socio-cultural contexts. Each country has a multicultural population, yet has a distinct history of integration with respect to racial minorities. This national framework has influenced higher education in both countries. Despite the fact that the schools differ in their locations and diverse populations, they nevertheless provide meaningful comparisons.

### **Research Questions**

The central research question asks how Black students articulate their experiences in response to diversity-related media within their universities. These media constitute discourses that exist in and through intersecting national, institutional, and individual diversity discourses. At the national level, there are dominant discourses about the integration of minority group members that influence institutional discourses about diversity. At the institutional level, dominant discourses manifest themselves in diversity policies and practices. There are several preliminary research questions that have guided this study.

**The main research questions were:**

How do Black university students articulate their responses to diversity-related media at their institutions?

How do Black students experience the practices associated with institutional diversity discourses in their everyday interactions within their institutions?

How are diversity discourses manifested in university policy statements, web sites, brochures, and mission statements?

How do these diversity discourses influence institutional practices?

What are some of the similarities and differences between the institutional diversity discourses in Canada and the U.S.?

**Racial self-identification**

Racial self-identification is a contested issue that is influenced by historical, geographical and socio-political forces. Participants in this study were asked to racially self-identify during the course of each in-depth interview. After analyzing the data, I chose to use the term 'Black' to refer to individuals of African descent in my proposed study. Based on my reviews of the literature, I sought to assign a racial identification that would be appropriate for both the U.S. and the Canadian participants.

There has been a controversial social and legal history of racial identification for individuals of African heritage in the United States. Historically, the words Negro, Colored, Black, and most recently African-American has been used to designate individuals of African descent in the United States (Brunsma and Rockquemore, 2002; Omi and Winant, 1994).

A study by Boatswain and Lalonde (2000) on preferred ethnic labels for Black Canadians determined that the most common preferences were Black, Africentric, Caribbean, and simply Canadian. According to James (2003), Canadians of African descent are variously referred to as Black Canadians, Caribbean Canadians or African-Canadians. In the United States, African-American has become the contemporary usage (Brunsma and Rockquemore, 2002).

Litchmore, Safdar, and O'Doherty (2015) found that racial identities were fluid and often contradictory within everyday discourses, suggesting that a single racial label may be overly simplistic. The term 'Black' will be used unless the authors I cite throughout make specific references to African-American or other racial labels. A more thorough analysis of the topic of racial identification appears in chapter five.

## **Background and Purpose**

Since the 1960s, institutions of higher education in both Canada and the United States have developed policies that address the recruitment and retention of underrepresented racial minority groups (Bowman, 2013; Bledsoe, Oatsvall, and Condon, 2010; Davis, 2002; Chan, 2005, Franklin, 2013; Jones, 2013; Palmer, Wood, and Spencer, 2013; Strayhorn, 2011; Westerman, 2010). One of the most researched problems in higher education is the persistence of racial inequality in achievement and access. Carnevale and Strohl (2013) reported that the U.S. Higher education system

has become increasingly racially stratified over recent decades with regard to access to the 468 most highly selective institutions. While Black enrollment at open access and two-and four-year colleges has increased between 1995 and 2009, their access to the most selective institutions has declined (Carnevale and Strohl, 2013). This research shows that although progress has been made, there are still persistent challenges. Institutions in higher education have historically addressed this problem with diversity policies and practices.

One of these historically underrepresented groups has and continues to be Black students. According to a 2014 report from the National Center for Education Statistics, the White graduation rate for those entering a four-year institutions was 73 per cent, for Black and Hispanic students it was 51 per cent and 52 per cent respectively (NCES, 2014). In 2010, disparities were also evident in degree attainment for young adults between the ages of 25 and 34. 33% of White males and 42% of White females earned at least a Bachelor's degree (NCES, 2012). For Blacks, 15% of Black males and 23% of Black females had earned at least a Bachelor's degree (NCES, 2012). For Hispanics, 11% of females had earned at least a Bachelor's degree and 16% of females (NCES, 2014).

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2012), Blacks earned 12.6% of all Associate's degrees, 9.6% of all Bachelor's degrees, 10.3% of all Master's degrees, 6.7% of all professional degrees, and 6.1% of all Doctorate degrees. The National Center for Education Statistics (2012) reports that in 2006-7, Black females earned 69 percent of Associate's, 66 percent of Bachelor's, 71 percent of

master's, 63 percent of first-professional, and 66 percent of doctoral degrees awarded to Black students.

There is *no* mandatory collection of race-related data for Canadian universities but the data has been acquired through voluntary self-report surveys. The author of a Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) report argued that the absence of comprehensive race-based statistics impairs the ability of policy-makers and researchers to promote equity in Canadian higher education (CAUT, 2007). Only recently have Canadian researchers begun to study how Black students and faculty members negotiate higher education. Henry and Tator (2009) in their book *Racism and the Canadian Academy* argue that Canadian universities have a “culture of whiteness” (pg. 23). The authors base their assertions on the history of exclusion in Canadian universities with respect to racialized minorities. Their book described the history of racist incidents at Canadian universities and the failure of the institutions to adequately address the problem of racism.

In 2002, the then president of the University of Toronto made the statement that “ White students too often choose to go to other universities because we are so diverse” (The University of Toronto Varsity Newspaper, November, 4, 2002). President Birgeneau enraged student and community members with remarks he made at the October 31, 2002 meeting of the Governing Council, University of Toronto’s highest decision-making body. The president further responded that the university had no action plan to increase diversity within the students, staff and faculty at the University of Toronto.

The patterns of achievement among Black Canadian university students appear to vary by gender and immigrant status (Simmons and Plaza, 1998). Using Canadian census data, Abada, Hou, and Ram (2009) reported that African-born Blacks had higher educational achievement and were more likely to be enrolled in advanced level high school classes than were Caribbean-born immigrant children in Canada. In 2012, the percentage of Canadian-born citizens with a post-secondary college or university degree was slightly over 50% (Statistics Canada, 2012). Abada et al. (2009) reported that immigrants to Canada tended to have an overall higher rate of educational achievement with the exception of some Black ethnic groups and Filipinos. The researchers reported the university degree attainment rate of 69% for East Asians (Koreans and Japanese), 59% for the Chinese, 57% for South Asians, 25% for Blacks, and 38% for Filipinos (Abada et al., 2009).

One institutional strategy to recruit and retain underrepresented minorities has been to publish diversity-related statements on web sites in addition to developing institutional diversity policies and practices (Chan, 2005; Rau and Hyland, 2003). Chan (2005) found that almost all institutions of higher education in North America have published formal statements about diversity. Moses and Chang (2006) refer to the language that frames diversity discourses in higher education as ‘the diversity rationale.’ They trace the philosophical foundation of the diversity rationale as one that enriches a democratic society to the current rationale that all students benefit from institutional diversity. Both Blackmore (2006) and Westerman (2010) suggest that neoliberal ideology has facilitated the shift of discourses and practices away from a

civil rights discourse to discourses that reinforce traditional hegemonic discourses and power relations.

Edelman, Riggs, and Mara-Drita (2001) explain that civil rights law offers employers very generalized ideas about what policies should be created. This allows managers to construct the meaning of law and the forms of compliance. Edelman et al. (2001) conclude that as legal concepts shift to managerial arenas, law tends to become 'managerialized' or gradually infused with managerial values. Brunner, Hofbauer, and Prabitz (2000) trace managerial discourses to the theory of business administration that arose in 1960s Germany. They explain that managerial discourses became popularized in the 1970s and that managerial language has been almost universally adopted in institutional discourses. What had formerly been the specialized means of articulation between managers and economists have become discourses for the populace (Brunner et al., 2000).

Bell and Hartmann (2007) in a large qualitative study of public perceptions of diversity, found that there were contradictions and tensions among the 166 white participants and participants of color in how diversity was defined. Bell and Hartmann (2007) write "Race is always both present and absent in the diversity discourse. This paradox is key to the historical distinctiveness, cultural power, and social problems of the current American way of talking about diversity" (p.95).

African American and Black Canadian students have uniquely different historical experiences related to the national policies of minority integration. However, studies have shown that both African American and Black Canadian university students have common educational experiences. Over the last few decades, several

U.S. studies have reported that Black students experience social and academic exclusion at predominantly White universities (Anderson, 2002; Astin and Osegura, 2004; Clarke and Antonio, 2012; Clark, Fasching-Varner, and Brimhall-Vargas, 2012; Feagin, 1996; Furr and Elling, 2002; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson & Allen 1999; Noel-Levitz, 2001; Palmer, Wood and Spencer, 2013; Ross, 2014; Strayhorn, 2011; Turner, 1994).

The few Canadian studies on the topic show that Black Canadian university students also share these experiences of exclusion (Braithwaite, 2003; Henry and Tator, 2009; James, 1997; Joseph and Kuo, 2009; Solomon, 1997; Stewart, 2009; Tong, 2002). Historically, satisfaction reports have shown evidence of racial disparities. The 2012 *National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report* included data from more than 622,000 students at more than 800 four-year and two-year public and private institutions across North America. The report found that African-American-student satisfaction levels are significantly lower than those of their White counterparts (Noel-Levitz, 2012).

The problem of Black faculty underrepresentation, the need for informal sources of peer support and the Eurocentric curriculum are forms of academic and social exclusion which are significant for Black students. Many studies of Black students at PWIs report that the students express disappointment about the relatively low percentage of minority faculty (Acland and Azmi, 1998; Allen, 1998; Fries-Britt and Turner, 2002; Franklin, 2013; Willie, 2003). A 2011 report from the Higher Education Statistics Agency of the United Kingdom that was reported in the daily

newspaper *The Guardian* drew international attention to the paucity of Black faculty members in academia. The agency reported that only 0.5% or 80, out of 17,465 professors were Black Caribbean or Black African (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2011).

A 2014 report from the American Association of University Professors showed that Black faculty comprised seven percent of total U.S. faculty but that 61% of the total were concentrated in part-time, non-tenure track appointments (Curtis, 2014).

In Canada, data from a 2010 Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) survey showed that university teachers who self-identify as Black constitute 1.6% of all university teachers, while comprising 2.2% of the overall labour force. Canadian Census data also reveal that visible minority university teachers experience an earnings gap. In 2005, all professors earned an average of about \$77,000, while visible minority professors earned just under \$69,400, for an earnings gap of about 10% (CAUT, 2010).

The research evidence shows that institutional factors are very important for Black students in particular. Over eighty-five percent of African-American college students are the first generation in their families to attend college (Choy, 2001). First generation university students are less likely to receive academic and social support outside of the university (Choy, 2001; Fullinwider and Lichtenberg, 2004; Nunez and Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998; Striplin, 1999; Thayer, 2000). Loo and Rolison (1986) found that dropout behavior among Whites was primarily due to academic variables,

but for Blacks dropout behavior was due to ‘social estrangement’ in addition to academic variables at PWIs.

Davis (2002) defined successful non- HBCU colleges and universities as those with high percentages of African American and Latino American faculty and students. Davis (2002) also determined that successful schools implemented a greater variety of strategies to achieve racial diversity than did the unsuccessful schools. Successful diversity practices are also connected to particular types of diversity discourses and practices that are not framed in neoliberal terms, but in terms that emphasize social justice. Brown and Clignet (2000) maintain that “...fuller participation of any marginal group in a mainstream institution requires special structures of support” (p.32).

### **Demographic Changes**

Demographic changes will be a major imperative since higher educational institutions in Canada and the United States will receive a more diverse range of applications and will admit students from more diverse backgrounds. In the United States, approximately one third of the total U.S. population are racial minority group members (U.S. Census, 2014). That does not include the millions of undocumented residents (Pew Research Center, 2013). By 2030 a projected 40% of Americans will be racial minorities and by 2050, 50% will be members of such groups (U.S. Census, 2014).

An additional demographic change that will influence access to higher education is the increasing proportion of single parent households in the United States. While thirty-percent of all households are headed by single women, for the African-American population, this percentage is about seventy percent (Whitaker, Whitaker, and Jackson, 2014). The policy implications for higher education means that African-American students in particular will require both financial and institutional support.

In Canada, the 2011 population census showed that visible minorities comprise 19.1% of the total Canadian population of 34 million. Black Canadians number 2.5% of the total population, but 75% of the 750,000 Black Canadians reside in the three metropolitan areas of Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver (Statistics Canada, 2011). According to the 2011 census, the number of foreign-born people in Canada accounted for 20.6% of the total population, the highest proportion in 75 years. Canada's foreign-born population increased by 13.6% between 2001 and 2006. The growth of the Canadian-born population was only 3.3% between 2001 and 2006. The 2006 census data showed that 1.1 million immigrants came to Canada between 2001 and 2006. Between 2006 and 2011, approximately 1.2 million foreign-born individuals emigrated to Canada, comprising 17.2% of the foreign-born population (Statistics Canada, 2011).

This study contributes to research on Black student experiences in higher education by illuminating the ways that diversity-related media and their related discourses shape the experiences of these students. This also helps us to understand the relationship between the theory and practice of diversity in higher education. The

research shows that despite the fact that virtually all U.S. and Canadian institutions claim to value diversity, there are many gaps at the institutional level that fail to demonstrate this commitment. Few studies have compared national contexts in this respect.

This study also contributes to the area of comparative higher education since very few studies have examined the experiences of Black students in both Canada and the U.S. This study also contributes to the research on Black student retention, which is a major research topic in higher education (Bowen and Bok, 1998; Bowman, 2013; Clarke and Antonio, 2012; Furr, and Elling, 2002; Griffin, Muniz, and Espinola, 2012; Person and Christensen, 1996; Ross, Kena, Rathbun, KewalRamani, Zhang, Kristapovich, and Manning, 2012; Thayer, 2000). This study examined how three intersecting levels of the dominant diversity discourses operate in what Fairclough (2010) would characterize as a dialectical relationship.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

This study connected several overlapping theoretical frameworks, representing the national, institutional, and individual discursive contexts in Canada and the U.S. Rather than exist in isolation, these discursive contexts exist in a dialogic relationship to one another. The two main areas that comprise the theoretical framework are *language/discourse* and *agency*.

Table 1.1.Theoretical Frameworks

Theoretical Frameworks		
Context(s)	Theory	Data
Individual, Institutional, National	Color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014)	Chapter five Chapter six
Institutional	Critical discourse analysis of language (Ahmed, 2012; Fairclough, 1995)	Chapter four Chapter seven
Individual	Counter-discourses and agency (hooks, 1995; Solórzano and Yosso (2002)	Chapter five Chapter six Chapter seven

I drew on Bonilla-Silva’s (2014) framework for color-blind racism and on Ahmed’s (2012) work on the language of diversity in institutions of higher education. Both approaches helped me to understand how the institutionalization of diversity discourses shifts the focus away from critically examining the pervasiveness of racism within those institutions. Lyotard (1979) described grand narratives as meta-narratives that link historical events into a cohesive narrative. The meaning of diversity in higher education has become part of a grand narrative about a process of historical exclusion to one of full inclusion. The historical and current institutionalization of the language associated with equity, diversity, and inclusion (often referred to by the acronym EDI) has become so pervasive in higher education that it can be seen at least as a hegemonic or at the extremes a totalizing discourse.

I utilized Fairclough's (1995) critical discourse analysis as both a theoretical framework and methodology for interpreting the textual and visual media. For the narratives of the students and administrators, I chose to treat the data differently because their narratives represent spontaneous utterances that are often performative (Riessman, 2008). Textual and visual representations are deliberate forms of communication that have been reviewed multiple times and filtered to represent an institutional 'voice.'

Lastly, I examine students' *counter-discourses* as a form of agency in response to both the dominant national discourses as well as the institutional diversity discourses. The existence of counter-discourses and their related actions demonstrate the ways in which the students are able to navigate the institutional landscape.

### **Color-Blind Racism**

This study drew on Bonilla-Silva's (2014) framework of *color-blind racism* which provides a tool to interpret the current neoliberal shift in how race is addressed in higher education. I understand this to mean a shift away from the radical anti-racism and social justice oriented discourses of the 1970s and 1980s (Blackmore, 2006). I found Bonilla-Silva's (2014) framework helpful for my understanding of the current discourses in Canadian and U.S. higher education. This framework operates at the national, institutional, and individual level in my analysis. Some scholars have interpreted contemporary socio-political changes like color-blind racism as 'regressions' that shift the focus away from a critical examination of racial injustice

(Bonilla-Silva, 2014; Bowen and Bok, 1998; Giroux and Giroux, 2006; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2002).

Bonilla-Silva (2014) observes that race affects the lives of many Americans in spite of the fact that only a tiny percentage of individuals claim to be racist. The claim to ‘not see color’ is the foundation for his theory about color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). *Color-blind racism* refers to the idea that racial inequality exists simultaneously with the contemporary view that race is no longer relevant. Racial inequality is attributed to other causes which are not explicitly tied to race. Bonilla-Silva (2014) claims that color blind racism is the dominant racial ideology. Its primary manifestations are in subtle, racially coded language, and in institutional practices. Bonilla-Silva (2014) claims that color-blindness allows White people to express resentment and prejudice towards minority groups while appearing to be racially neutral.

Neville, Coleman, Falconer, and Holmes (2005) argue that Blacks and other racial minorities can also adopt color-blind racist ideology. For minorities, it may manifest itself as internalized racism and the adoption of dominant group belief systems. The examination of color-blind racism in higher education is also important because it reifies liberal ideals about meritocracy, equal opportunity, and individualism. Bonilla-Silva (2014) contends that this ideology ignores the social dynamics that result in racial inequality.

Bonilla-Silva (2014) proposes four frames to analyze color-blind racism. These are *abstract liberalism*, *naturalization*, *cultural racism*, and *minimization of racism*.

Abstract liberalism is tied to political liberal discourses about fairness, equality, and meritocracy. Bonilla-Silva (2014) explains that under the framework of abstract liberalism, using legal force to achieve social policy is unfair. By framing race related issues in the language of liberalism, one can oppose efforts to address racial inequality while appearing to be reasonable and moral. Opposition to affirmative action and similar measures can be taken with the frame of abstract liberalism. The notion of meritocracy emphasizes that success is an individual responsibility and that with hard work and perseverance, anyone can succeed.

The second frame of naturalization allows individuals to explain racial phenomena by suggesting that they are natural occurrences. For example, to explain campus racial segregation as a 'natural' occurrence absolves the institution of the responsibility to address the issue. The third frame is cultural racism, which is to rely on a cultural basis for racial inequality. This frame of racism originated with British cultural studies theorist Barker (1981) who developed a theory called 'new racism' to explain how biological racism has been supplanted with cultural racism. The fourth frame is to minimize the impact of racism. Using this frame, racism and discrimination are seen as vestiges of a long ago past and no longer relevant in contemporary society.

The four frames of color-blind racism also apply in the current Canadian context of race relations. Harper (1997) argues that denying racism in Canada has been part of the official discourse on multiculturalism, which is a 1971 Canadian official policy. Multiculturalism involves the public celebration of ethnic and racial cultures without acknowledging racial inequality (Bannerji, 2000).

The racial contexts in Canada and the U.S. differ, yet offer interesting comparisons for this study. Prior to 1960, Canada had officially racist immigration policies and sought to nation-build by recruiting Europeans, mostly of British origin (Simmons, 2010). Slavery was abolished in Canada in 1830 and many enslaved African-Americans were able to make their way to Canada via the Underground Railroad, a network of safe houses on the way to Canada (Simmons, 2010). All non-Europeans were subject to overt forms of racism and systematic exclusion until increased labour demands and a growing economy forced the policymakers to recruit immigrants from developing and ‘Third World’ nations. As of 1960 with the introduction of the Bill of Rights, color was no longer a barrier for Canadian immigration.

Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau first introduced Canada’s official multiculturalism policy in 1971 (Li, 2003). The roots of multiculturalism lay in political tensions about Francophone language minority rights in Quebec (Dewing and Leman, 2006). The 1988 Multiculturalism Act contains provisions about official support for cultural maintenance, learning one of two official languages, and overcoming barriers to full participation in society (Dewing and Leman, 2006). This represented a significant policy shift from assimilation to integration.

Porter, (cited in Isajiw, 1999) argues that Canadian society is a vertical mosaic, with each ethnic group occupying a hierarchical level with the top representing those who are closest to the British and French ‘founding’ ethnic group. This vertical mosaic has structured ethnic group stratification within Canada by influencing the distribution of social status, power, and prestige (Isajiw, 1999). Since the 1970s, the

public discourse has been one of tolerance and multiculturalism but the reality is that racialized minority groups occupy a marginalized social and economic status (Bannerji, 2000). Although the Black Canadian population is relatively small at 2.9% of the total Canadian population, in the city of the study, the Black population was 9% (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Connelly (2008) asserts that the neoliberal logic of colorblindness is prevalent in Canadian discourse on diversity in schools. Connelly (2008) explains that the current notion of a common education for all overrides diversity in superimposing the stability of bodies and knowledge. Stewart (2009) describes ‘color-blindness’ as the Canadian cultural condition. This color-blind discourse serves to silence those who attempt to criticize institutional racism. Similar to the fourth frame of Bonilla-Silva (2014) about denying racial differences, Harper (1997) asserts that it has historical roots and is receiving a renewed contemporary focus. Harper (1997) claims that denying differences was a popular approach in Canada in the 1960s and has been reinvigorated with the new context of school accountability. The discourse of accountability stresses common performance standards as measured by government testing and common learning outcomes.

Giroux and Giroux (2006) agree that color blind ideology has displaced the tensions of contemporary race relations. They add that racism has been reconceptualized as a private as opposed to a structural or institutional phenomenon. Giroux and Giroux (2006) claim that “Riding the wave of P.C. backlash, students on campuses across the country (many, like Penn State, remain less than 4 percent minority) have repeatedly challenged, and even organized against, diversity

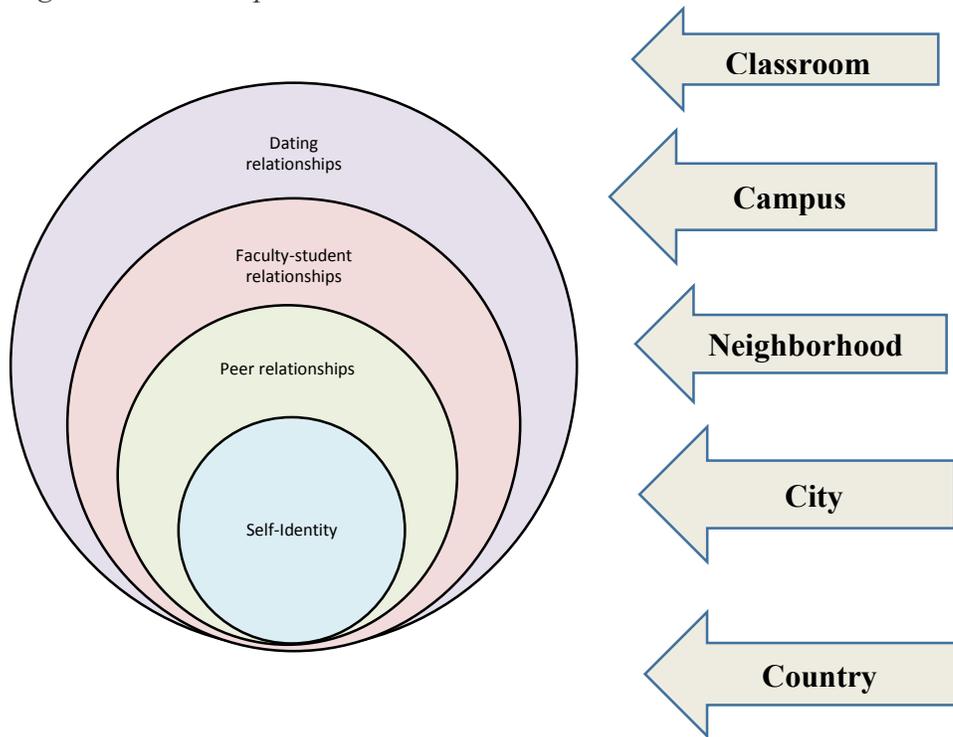
requirements, politically correct curricula, and teachers who assume ‘politicized’ notions of race, class, and gender” (p.208).

This study examined how contemporary color blind ideology has manifested itself in the institutional literature and discursive practices at the two universities I selected. Color blind ideology is often enacted discursively through language that emphasizes fairness and equality while obscuring historical and institutional causes of racial inequality.

In addition, color-blind ideology was present in the beliefs of both White students and students of color, as found in the study by Neville, Coleman, Falconer, and Holmes (2005). Wing Sue et al. (2008) identify color-blind ideology as a manifestation of racial microaggressions. Denying the experiences of racism encountered by individuals can contribute to their feelings of exclusion.

In this study, I considered several spheres of exclusion in my analysis of the participant narratives. They are summarized in the figure below.

*Figure 1.1 Social Spheres and Contexts*



### **Critical Discourse Analysis of Language**

Institutional diversity discourses draw on dominant discourses about diversity that incorporate the language of managerial diversity discourses. Ahmed (2012) presents an analysis of the historical and current complexities in how the language of diversity is utilized within institutions and what it means for everyday practices. Ahmed (2007) contends that the language of diversity in organizations serves to reify or quantify ‘difference’ as an organizational asset. Diversity is marketized and racial minority bodies are commodified in a manner that shifts the focus away from racial justice claims and marks them as ‘others.’ While some may see this marketization as

positive, Ahmed (2007) reminds us that claims to embrace diversity do not imply a commitment to social justice and prioritizes the organization over the individual.

Ahmed (2007) argues that the use of the term 'diversity' allows organizations to conceal institutional practices that reproduce inequality. Ahmed (2012)'s study of institutional diversity practitioners demonstrated that the term 'diversity' was discursively invoked to minimize institutional resistance to discussion about race and racial inequality. Ahmed's (2012) analysis critiques the supplanting of the term diversity for anti-racism, which clearly implicates institutional members. Ahmed (2012) concludes that the institutional neutrality of the term diversity limits the possibility for structural change.

Managerial discourses are implicated in the shift to neutral language. Comber (1997) explains how managerial discourses have dominated educational policy through the use of terms such as 'measurable outcomes.' Comber (1997) explains this as part of a process that shifted from education being conceptualized as a human right to a conceptualization as an investment in human capital. Edelman, Riggs, and Mara-Drita (2001) argue that diversity rhetoric has become quite pervasive in organizational management discourse. In multiple institutional settings, the leadership expresses the values and virtues of 'diversity' by publicly claiming to 'value' or 'embrace' diversity.

Kezar (2004) documented how corporate language and practices have become central to the work of higher education administrators. Diversity began to become linked with productivity and its value to the 'bottom line' (Kirby and Harter, 2002). Kirby and Harter (2002) charge that this powerful metaphor has shaped how we talk

about diversity. The researchers conclude that the metaphor of the business case emphasizes the interests of the institution.

Ahmed's (2009) analysis of university-related literature on diversity shows that the language of 'valuing diversity' is a mainstream management term that draws reference to the business case for diversity. Termed the 'business case/business model for diversity,' this body of literature focuses on reinforcing the economic benefits or 'return on investment' that diversity may bring to an organization (Gandz, 2001).

In this project, I chose to draw on Fairclough's (1995) approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA) for the analysis of institutional media. Critical discourse analysis can be a critical implement for the study of written text. It can allow me to study how institutional diversity in higher education has been constructed through language and how institutional power has shaped this language. CDA is an approach that takes seriously social inequalities, power relations, and also recognizes that language is implicated in such processes of domination. CDA allows us to form connections between text and social context that contributes to our understanding how discursive practices are manifested within institutions (Fairclough, 1992).

### **Critical Discourse Analysis of Language: Neo-Liberal Discourses**

An examination of neoliberal discourses not only accords with Bonilla-Silva's (2014) framework but also my analysis of the diversity-related media. Westerman (2010) notes the existence of a critical gap in literature interrogating the relationship between neoliberal discourses and university policies. This study also considered how the national ideology of neoliberalism in Canada and the United States have

influenced the language of diversity in higher education. The neoliberal turn on campuses has emphasized the need to educate future members of a global workforce that is diverse (Aronowitz, 2000; Ayers, 2005; Spring, 2009). There are two neoliberal trends that affect the current framing of diversity in Canada and the United States—accountability and globalization. Characterized as the ‘era of accountability’, the current context is influenced by policies and practices that have influenced k-12 as well as higher education (Brown and Clignet, 2000; Brown and Schubert, 2000; Connelly, 2008; Eastman, 2007). Eastman (2007) noted that there was a global decrease in public funding for higher education. Cuts to government funding has meant that higher educational institutions face pressure to justify their expenses.

Brown and Schubert (2000) claim that the academy is facing increased pressures for accountability and this means that efforts to maintain diversity policies and affirmative action are under threat. Diversity policies and practices can only be justified if they meet accountability measures. Kezar (2004) connects neoliberal philosophy with the emergence of the economic rationality as a model for higher education. Kezar (2004) explains that there has been a shift away from the traditional social charter between higher education and society that focused on the public rather than private good.

The second major trend is globalization. This is very central to the study of the current discourse on diversity since there has been a shift to frame diversity in higher education with the global economic context. Connelly (2008) defines globalization as the expansion of production on a global scale. Current school reform efforts have been

framed within this discourse of global competition, economic productivity, and international trade relationships. Neoliberalism is a political-economic ideology that promotes the ideal of privatization and marketization in both the private and public spheres (Giroux, 2001b).

Ayers (2005) analyzed university mission statements for evidence of human capital theory and neoliberal discourse. Ayers (2005) found that the ideology of preparing workers for the global economy as well as restructuring the curriculum to meet business interests were central themes. Kezar (2004) adds that neoliberal logic posits university and college students as possessors of human capital who must develop the skills necessary to compete in a global economy. Their human capital will benefit their future employers who will in turn contribute to the economic productivity of the nation. The students are reconceptualized as ‘customers’ while education is the ‘product.’ This neoliberal tendency to blend the economic and social domains fundamentally changes the operation of traditional state services and individual behaviour (Jones, 2009).

The current focus on globalization can be seen in the 2005 Spellings Commission report. In September 2005, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings announced the formation of the Secretary of Education’s *Commission on the Future of Higher Education*, which was charged with examining higher education’s ability to fulfill the nation’s workforce needs and to compete in the global economy (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Several scholars have conducted discursive analyses of the Spellings report and have found it to be replete with neoliberal discourses about globalization and human capital theory (Bassett, 2006; George-

Jackson, 2008; Hutcheson, 2007; Jones, 2009). The analyses of the language found in the Commission's meeting transcripts, issue papers, final report, and related Congressional hearings revealed that a broad theme was the importance of utilizing higher education as a vehicle for U.S. global competitiveness (Hutcheson, 2007). Hutcheson (2007) observes a shift in focus of national commissions on higher education, beginning with President Truman's Commission on Higher Education in 1947. The Truman Commission and other previous national commissions focused on democratic ideals and equality while recent commissions focus on the global economy and international competitiveness.

Diversity initiatives in higher education have been reframed to reflect these neoliberal trends. As I conducted my critical discourse analysis of institutional documents related to diversity initiatives, I paid particular attention to manifestations of neoliberal language.

### **Counter Discourses and Agency**

It is important to recognize that each of the participants, in their own ways, were actively engaged in resisting dominant discourses that labelled them as deficient. These set of theories examine how individual actors exert their agency in response to the dominant discursive practices within institutions. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) claim that counterstories offer a way to challenge the dominant discourse about certain marginalized groups. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) challenge the objectivity of scientific research by arguing that storytelling is a valid method of critical research

about race. The researchers developed a critical race methodology that argues for the intersectional analysis of race, class, and gender. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) affirms the experiential knowledge of people of color as legitimate sources of information. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) claim that racist ideology exists as a ‘master narrative’ that counter-storytelling can disrupt and interrogate.

Resistance is something that hooks (1995) claims should be embraced by racialized individuals as a way of responding to racism in their everyday lives. In *Killing Rage*, hooks (1995) argues for collective movements that channel racism-related rage into social justice for all.

Willie (2003), in her study of African-American students in higher education, argues that many students regard attending college itself as an act of resistance in opposition to the expectations of the dominant culture. Similarly, Mirza (1998) argued that Afro-Caribbean women sought higher education in Britain as a way of resisting the dominant discourse of failure and as a strategy to create social change. Regardless of the approach one takes, educational institutions can be recognized as sites for power struggle and contestation (Apple, 1979). This study investigated the ways that Black students orchestrate their agency discursively.

### **Summary and outline**

This dissertation examined how Black students articulate their responses to diversity-related discourses that exist within their institutions. These discourses are manifested in promotional media, diversity policies as well as the practices around

those policies. As stated earlier in this chapter, the research problem is that Black and other racial minority students continue to report experiences of racism and alienation while attending predominantly white universities that have discursively framed their institutions as spaces of inclusion.

The diversity practices that arise from such institutionalized discourses do not address the exclusion that Black students report at predominantly white institutions (PWIs). This supports the current evidence about Black student exclusion and the increasing stratification that has contributed to differential retention rates at selective four-year institutions.

The first part of the dissertation will present an overview of the current literature and the methodological approach undertaken. Specifically, chapter two is a literature review of diversity discourses in higher education, including the literature related to Black student experiences. Chapter three begins with a discussion about the epistemological aim of this study and its research design. The chapter also includes a discussion about recruitment, sampling, coding, and institutional profiles.

The second half of the dissertation consists of the presentation of the findings. Chapter four presents a critical discourse analysis of diversity-related media. The findings were that both the Canadian and U.S. university conceptualized diversity as differences in ascriptive social identities and promotional diversity discourses were used to showcase the university.

Chapters five and six present the Black student narratives. Students actively constructed counter-hegemonic discourses about themselves and their identities as a

response to dominant cultural perceptions about them. One finding was that Black students in Canada and the U.S. reported common experiences. The racial identities of the students varied between the contexts. Chapter seven presents the narratives of the diversity administrators. The main findings were that administrators felt silenced by the institutions in both Canada and the U.S. Their use of language was monitored and restricted, they experienced institutional resistance to their work, and were disillusioned by the lack of change that they were able to initiate. Collectively, these chapters present a case study analysis of two predominantly white institutions who are engaged in the effort of implementing diversity policies and practices. According to the typology presented by Kezar (2007) and Banks (2003), both institutions are in the early stages of equity and inclusion.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

*...they're not using real people, real experiences on those web sites. They're just using things that they wrote, that the president or the administration—wrote up for the university. It's nothing that kind of connects me to the student.*

*(Nadira, 29, non-traditional student undergrad, Canadian University).*

This review of the literature is connected to the main research problem about the persistence of racism at universities that have discursively framed their institutions as spaces of inclusion. The section is organized in a manner that reviews the literature about the institutional and individual factors that must be considered when evaluating the central research problem. The first section will focus on the extensive body of literature about Black student experiences of exclusion in higher education. It will be followed by a review of the literature about diversity discourses in Canadian and U.S. higher education.

The second half of the literature review will address the factors related to individual identity. The Black student participants in this study were in late adolescence at the time of interview and were in the process of forming their racial identities in addition to other social identities such as gender and sexual identities. Considering theories of racial identity formation helped me to understand their experiences. The chapter concludes with a review of the literature about individual agency and resistance. An analysis of individual agency was useful for my analysis of how Black students articulate their experiences in response to diversity-related media.

## **Black Student Exclusion in Higher Education**

While the political and social contexts differ in the U.S. and Canada, Black students still experience feelings of academic and social exclusion within an institutional system that is legally but not substantively multicultural and inclusive. For the purposes of this study, the two relevant areas of literature concern Black student exclusion and campus racial climates. As has been stated, in spite of institutional discourses which frame these universities and colleges as both culturally and racially inclusive, Black student experiences present a critical challenge to these dominant discourses. Recent studies in the area of racial diversity in higher education has drawn attention to the persistence of this problem (Bowman, 2013; Clark, Fasching-Varner, and Brimhall-Vargas, 2012; Denson and Chang, 2015; Franklin, 2013; Garces and Jayakumar, 2014; Griffin, Muniz, and Espinola, 2012).

Historically, Blacks have been physically excluded from U.S. institutions of higher education and when admitted prior to the 1950s faced *de jure* segregated universities (Wright, 1987). After the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, President Lyndon Johnson responded to pressure from human rights groups to encourage U.S. institutions of higher education to accept racial minority students. As cited in Anderson (2002), almost 80 per cent of all Black students attended HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) in the 1960s. In recent years, the situation has reversed itself. According to the National Center for Education Statistics

(2012), roughly 12% of Black students attended Historically Black Colleges and Universities and almost 88% of Black students were enrolled in non-HBCUs. Freeman and Thomas (2002) conducted a study to determine which factors led Black students to attend PWIs (Predominantly White Institutions) rather than HBCUs. Their findings showed that Black students selected PWIs for financial assistance and academic reputation. The researchers found that Black students chose HBCUs because of lower tuition and an anticipated sense of cultural connection.

Freeman and Thomas (2002) also found that high-achieving Black students would choose an HBCU over a PWI if there was comparable financial aid. Willie (2003) noted that Black students often felt conflicted over the choice of a PWI over an HBCU since they believed that the PWI might provide them with better career opportunities. Fries-Britt and Turner (2002) found that Black students at PWIs tend to come from families with higher socioeconomic backgrounds and also tend to have at least one parent who has attended college. Despite the fact that fewer Black students as a percentage of total college enrollment attend HBCUs, these institutions have higher retention rates for Black students than PWIs (NCES, 2012). The next section will present the literature about the experiences of exclusion that Black students have experienced at PWIs.

### **Academic Exclusion at Predominantly White Institutions**

I define exclusion as perceived or actual experiences of alienation that limit one's full participation within the institution. Social psychologists have argued that

perceptions, whether real or not, influence individual motivation and behavior in powerful ways (Brynne, 2001).

Academic exclusion refers to the negative classroom experiences that Black students have with peers and faculty that prevent them from participating fully in the learning process and engaging in the college or university environment. There were thousands of research studies about Black student experiences of racism at predominantly White colleges and universities from the 1970s to the 1990s (Allen, 1992; Centra, 1970; Chambers, 1991; Feagin and Sikes, 1994; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson and Allen, 1998; Mirza, 1998; Modood and Acland, 1998; Person and Christensen, 1996; Stikes, 1984).

Clark, Fasching-Varner, and Brimhall-Vargas (2012) conducted a case study analysis of fifteen public universities who have developed diversity initiatives. The authors have argued that U.S. higher education is far from post-racial, and that racism persists on university campuses. This review will focus on more recent studies that show the persistence of experiences reported since the 1970s.

Many research studies show that Black students may perceive that faculty and peers hold negative perceptions about their intelligence, work ethic, and ability to participate in class discussions beyond Black-focused topics (Anderson, 2002; Beamon, 2014; Foster, 2005; Fries-Britt and Turner, 2002; Smith, Allen, and Danley, 2007; Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso, 2000; Truong and Museus, 2012; Wing Sue, Nadal, Capodilupo, Lin, Torino, and Rivera, 2008). Below are brief descriptions of selected

studies that have addressed the issue of Black student experiences of exclusion in higher education.

Reynolds, Sneva, and Beechler (2010) studied 151 Black and Latino/a undergraduate students attending two predominantly White universities in the northeastern United States. They surveyed the students using the IRRS-B (Index of Race Related Stress), a survey instrument developed by Utsey and Ponterotto (1996). The researchers found that those who scored high for measures of racism related stress had lower academic motivation. The researchers suggest that programs and initiatives aimed at providing social support for Black students may help to foster a positive academic self-concept.

Academic exclusion mostly occurs within the domain of the classroom. Fries-Britt and Turner (2002) studied the experiences of 34 Black juniors and seniors who successfully persisted to graduation at an HBCU and a PWI. Students attending PWI institutions perceived that they were expected to represent the 'Black perspective' during class discussions and felt that they were perceived as 'tokens' by their classroom peers. Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) found that Black students in technical fields reported that they were ostracized from majority-race study groups since they were perceived as less capable study or work partners.

Foster (2005) studied Black student experiences at a predominantly White Midwestern university over a period of nine years in his role as instructor and advisor. His essay was based on student stories as recounted to him as well as his own personal observations. The first part of the essay addressed institutional racism and the second

part individual racism. For individual racism, Foster (2005) reported that Black students experienced racist stereotypes about their academic abilities by professors and advisors who recommended that they take remedial courses without investigating their GPAs first. Black students also reported that counselors seem to undermine their academic efforts by providing misleading or incomplete advice about their course selection and enrollment.

Beamon (2014), in a study of 20 African-American athletes attending predominantly White universities, found that the students perceived that they were the targets of racism and stereotyping. Student athletes in particular face challenges because of the perception that they were admitted because of their athletic ability. Compounding their situation as Black males made them vulnerable to stereotyping.

Truong and Museus (2012) conducted interviews with 26 African-American doctoral students at predominantly White universities who self-reported that they had experienced racism and racial trauma during the course of their studies. The authors found that racial trauma had reported physiological effects on the students that ranged from nausea to depression. The authors found that the students coped by enacting a combination of responses that included avoiding campus environments that they perceived to be racist as well as avoiding individuals who had offended them wherever possible. They formed social support networks and used spirituality to cope with the racism they experienced.

There is a paucity of literature related to the Black student experience in Canadian higher education. Smith, Schneider, and Ruck (2005) acknowledge that the

available Canadian data on this topic are primarily descriptive or ethnographic in nature thus making it difficult to identify the factors that may predict Black Canadian students' academic outcomes. Braithwaite (2003) contends that the recent discourse in Canadian higher education about excellence and merit has reduced demands for equity and access for underrepresented minorities. Braithwaite (2003) cites the currently stated mandate to attract the 'best and brightest' at one Toronto university as a problematic since it underscores the ideals of meritocracy while maintaining the elite reputation of the institution.

Wane (2009) conducted a qualitative study of 16 Black Canadian women who attended a university in Toronto. Wane (2009) uses the African term 'spirit injury' to refer to social experiences at the institution that left the participants feeling hurt and discouraged. Some participants reported racist incidents in the classroom that were ignored by the professors while others talked about seeing their Black peers drop out of teacher education programs and feeling disturbed by it. Each of the 16 participants talked about the importance of creating a support system both within and outside the institution to sustain themselves. Wane (2009) comments that Black women who succeed in entering the academy as students or faculty are treated as outsiders.

In a study of Black teacher candidates, James (1997) found that participants indicated that they were conscious that peers and faculty members perceived them as less qualified. James (1997) interviewed 10 African Canadian teacher candidates, 5 males and 5 females, who volunteered to participate in a focus group discussion about the Canadian Faculty of Education Access Program. The findings show that the

teacher candidates experienced problems with their supervising teachers. They also reported that support staff failed to provide support for their teaching practice or academic work. Students credited their peers with providing informal sources of support that helped to prevent attrition.

Academic exclusion may also occur when Black students experience a Eurocentric curriculum and have no visible minority faculty as professors (Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, and Utsey, 2005; Griffin, Bennett, and Harris, 2011; Smith, 2004).

The relative absence of Black faculty members is a persistent problem. A major finding across all the literature about campus diversity initiatives is that there is a tendency to dedicate most of the recruitment efforts at the level of the undergraduate student (Anderson, 2002; Smith, 2004; Stewart, 2009; Wane, 2009).

Very few institutions make strong gains in increasing the number of Black faculty members. The research indicates that Black faculty members can be an important source of institutional support for Black students as informal or formal mentors (Allen, 2002). Their presence may serve as an important signalling factor to Black and other minority students that the university is committed to diversifying its campus. Stewart (2009) contends that people of color need to be better integrated within Canadian universities. He cites systematic institutional problems such as the current discourse about merit and how this serves to limit more progressive policies to achieve true racial integration. He also argues that the universities have been able to 'talk the talk' about integrating diverse Canadians but has not been held accountable

for actual outcomes (Stewart, 2009). According to Stewart (2009), “The greatest single problem in the Canadian university is the unrepresentative composition of the people who teach in it. The university looks hostile, exclusive, inflexible, and alienating to many people who might otherwise contribute productively to it” (p.49).

Margolis and Romero (2001) conducted a qualitative study of 26 female graduate students of color enrolled in sociology programs. The researchers noted that mentorship remains outside formal institutional rules, and that no faculty can be forced to mentor a graduate student. The result is a form of social reproduction since most faculty members tend to mentor students who are similar to themselves in race, social class, and gender. Margolis and Romero (2001) use the analogy of a mirror: “...part of the game of mirrors is that mentoring is for the mentor to shine by reflection...many select students who are already reflections of themselves ” (p.82).

Women of color in the study who were of lower social class and had racial or ethnic backgrounds that differed from the faculty found it more difficult to locate a mentor. Margolis and Romero (2001) note that it is with some irony that when university administrators talk about mentoring, they position it as an open, meritocratic process when it is not experienced by students as such.

The higher education curriculum is another way that Black students feel excluded. The curriculum in higher education is in part a hidden curriculum of dominant ideologies and cultural perspectives (Margolis, Soldatenko, Gair, and Acker, 2001). Gusa (2010) argues that predominantly White institutions have embedded

practices that normalize the ideologies and culture of the dominant White society, which have the impact of marginalizing the few African-American students there.

Foster (2005) noted that the Black Studies program at a midwestern university was constantly under attack from White faculty and others for perceived deficiencies in academic rigor. While it may be more prevalent in the social sciences and humanities than the physical sciences or mathematics, a common finding across the literature is that Black students experience the university curriculum as alienating (Allen, 1998; Anderson, 2002; Bowman and Smith, 2002; Davis, 2002; Elabor-Idemudia, 2001; Gusa, 2010; Mirza, 1998; Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso , 2000).

Elabor-Idemudia (2001) asserts that many worldviews are excluded from the curriculum and non-European histories are mentioned only during the period when the Europeans ‘discovered’ them (Elabor-Idemudia, 2001). Dei and James (2002) claim that the Eurocentric bias and systemic exclusion of minority experiences has resulted in an assault on the racial identities of Black Canadian students.

Margolis et al. (2001) argue that the hidden curriculum in higher education can be revealed through course availability and syllabi content. Certain courses are offered with multiple sections to accommodate more students while other courses are offered every other year. The hidden curriculum in higher education can also be revealed through ‘core’ versus ‘elective’ options. With the exception of Ethnic Studies majors, almost no ethnic studies courses would be part of a ‘core’ traditional academic degree program at any large doctoral granting university. The authors also

argue that many syllabi contain works by White scholars and perhaps one or two scholars of color which reinforces the tokenism of diversity to the students.

A Eurocentric curriculum can be alienating to students of color who are already self-conscious about the way they will be perceived by others. For students to read no or very few scholarly contributions by members of their racial or ethnic group throughout the course of their academic study conveys to the student that their future scholarly contributions may be devalued or ignored.

Perry, Steele, and Hilliard (2003) also contend that since language is such a key component of culture and identity, that it presents a challenge for some Black students who may now encounter perceptions that their cultural vernacular may be deficient. Most importantly, Perry, Steele, and Hilliard (2003) claim that it is not the fact that many African-American students speak African-American Vernacular English as part of their home culture, but the negative response this language may elicit from teachers. Although Delpit (1995) refers primarily to elementary and secondary high school settings, she theorized that classrooms constituted a culture of power. Aspects of the culture of power include linguistic styles, self-presentation, and behavioural norms. There is a culture of power within higher educational institutions and the norms and linguistic styles reflect this reality.

Another aspect of academic exclusion involves learning styles. Fries-Britt and Turner (2002) found that Black students attending HBCUs vs. PWIs perceived that their Black classmates were more willing to help them and that there was a greater sense of collaborative learning. Guiffrida (2006) suggests that minority students with

more collectivist orientations may have difficulty becoming integrated into the more competitive, individualist academic and social culture that prevails at many PWIs.

Some scholars have demonstrated that collaborative learning opportunities are effective at minimizing stereotype threat (Anderson, 1988; Steele, 2003). Psychologist Claude Steele (2003) developed the term stereotype threat to refer to the idea that the threat of being regarded through the prism of a negative racial stereotype may have a negative impact on academic achievement. Aronson and Inzlicht (2004) found that academic self-efficacy measures were negatively affected for those Black students who scored highly on stereotype vulnerability measures.

Steele (2003) studied stereotype threat with a sample of 20 White and 20 Black Stanford University students. Students were given a 30 minute section of the Graduate Record Examination to complete. In the stereotype threat condition, Black students were told that it was a test of their verbal ability. In the non-stereotype threat condition, the Black students were told that the purpose of the test was to see how problems were solved. In the stereotype threat condition, Blacks scored one full standard deviation below White students. In the non-stereotype threat condition, the Black students' scores equalled White students. As a policy implication for Black college students, Steele (2003) recommends that 'identity safety' be implemented in academic settings. Identity safety fosters racial trust through pedagogical methods, institutional changes, and individual personal responses. Steele (2003) notes that higher educational institutions should represent a philosophy of value for diversity that is rooted in social justice.

These findings suggest that there may be some validity to idea that certain ethnic groups may have a different cultural orientation toward learning that have arisen either through historical inequality or cultural socialization patterns. Yet, this rationalization lends itself dangerously to a cultural deficit argument. Deschenes, Tyack, Cuban (2001) explain that cultural deficit theories for differential achievement often place the blame on the cultural or racial group and leave the structure of the school intact.

Cultural deficit approaches also ignore the strengths that these groups bring to the learning process. Deficit theory (Valencia, 1997) is inherent in the current discourse of ‘students-at-risk’ that constructs many Black and Latino students as lacking and deficient and shapes how they are streamed into different tracks that limit their future options. Capitalizing on the strengths of all students would require a shift in the teaching and design of learning material in higher education. A more nuanced approach to higher education teaching needs to recognize various cultural styles while avoiding the danger of labelling Black students as deficient.

### **Social Exclusion at Predominantly White Institutions**

Social exclusion refers to exclusion from cross-racial peer relationships outside the classroom environment. This includes overt and covert incidents of racial discrimination as well as exclusion from campus social activities (Bowman, 2013; Chambers, 1991; Chen and Hamilton, 2015; Davis, 2002; Korgen, Wang, and Mahon, 2006; Lett and Wright, 2003; Noel-Levitz, 2001; Rose and Firmin, 2013; Ross, 2014; Willie, 2003). Black students who attend PWIs often experience a combination of

academic and social exclusion. Willie (2003) conducted an ethnographic study of Black students at Northwestern University (a PWI) and Howard University (an HBCU). In all 55 Black students were interviewed along with administrator interviews and field observations. Willie (2003) noted that Northwestern University successfully recruited African-American students so that they comprised between 7 to 10 percent of the undergraduate student body during the course of the study. Yet, Willie (2003) reported that racism and racial polarization was a universal finding among her participants. Very few of the 55 participants were able to form friendships outside of their race. Students also reported that it was difficult to find mentorship opportunities from the ranks of the predominantly White faculty. Participants believed that the institution was at least complicit in allowing this to continue. They felt that the administration failed to address racist incidents on campus when complaints were brought forward. Renner (1998) urges us to recognize that as a consequence of *de facto* racial segregation, the majority of White students attend predominantly White schools throughout their education. Renner (1998) notes that more than 50% of White undergraduates attend an institution where Black students comprise less than 10% of the student body. Renner (1998) explains that these students have had limited social interaction outside their own racial groups and may be less willing to forming cross-racial friendships.

Pierce (1995) argues that most instances of racial discrimination are subtle. He defined the cumulative effects of these subtle racial incidents as racial microaggressions. He claims that racial microaggressions “...may seem harmless, but the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggressions can theoretically contribute to

diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence”(Pierce, 1995, p. 281). Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) used Pierce’s (1995) theory of microaggressions to examine the experiences of 36 Black male students. The researchers conducted focus group interviews with Black males enrolled at Harvard University, Michigan State University, University of California, Berkeley, the University of Illinois, and the University of Michigan. The African American males in their study reported experiencing various forms of racial microaggressions in three racialized domains: (a) campus–academic, (b) campus–social, and (c) campus–public spaces. The Black male subjects experienced racial microaggressions through hypersurveillance by campus police both on and off campus and received subtle messages that their presence was unwanted in White social spaces such as fraternity houses. Subjects reported being asked for university ID multiple times by campus police in academic spaces such as computer or science labs in addition to social spaces on campus. Another common racial microaggression in the study involved the perception of being stared at by White students in academic and social spaces.

Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) argue that there are very few safe spaces on historically White campuses and in surrounding communities where racial microaggressions can be avoided. Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) define racial microaggressions as subtle race-related insults that may be verbal or non-verbal. Using focus group data from African-American students at three universities, the authors developed a model that illustrated how racial microaggressions occurred within academic spaces and social spaces on campus. The researchers concluded that this contributed to a sense of isolation and alienation for the students. It also acted as a

barrier to cross-racial friendship formation since the racialization of campus spaces made it difficult to transgress these boundaries. The students coped by creating counter-social spaces on and off campus that were experienced as positive racial climates.

Smith (2004) uses the term racial battle fatigue to refer to the psychological stress responses to cumulative incidents of racial discrimination. These include but are not limited to physical avoidance, frustration, anger, acceptance of racist attributions, emotional withdrawal, and physical exhaustion. Smith (2004; Smith et al, 2007) contends that many Black students and Black faculty at PWIs experience racial battle fatigue as a consequence of their everyday interactions within the institution. Acland and Azmi (1998) noted that the cumulative effects of minor racial incidents contributed to a sense of being unwanted at the university in their study of minority undergraduates.

Langhout, Rosselli, and Feinstein (2007) conducted a meta-analysis of class experiences in higher education and found that for many Blacks who may be poor or working class, they feel marginalized, and psychologically distressed. Overall, the researchers concluded that working-class and working poor students of all races frequently do not feel supported at college. Constantine, Anderson, Berkel, Caldwell, and Utsey (2005) examined the cultural adjustment experiences of 12 Nigerian, Kenyan, and Ghanaian international students. Prior to their arrival in the U.S., all 12 of the participants had high expectations that there were many academic and personal opportunities for them in the United States. Eleven of the participants reported that

they experienced incidents of racial discrimination, isolation, alienation, and they perceived that the curriculum was Eurocentric/oriented to White American culture.

Rose and Firmin (2013) examined the narratives of 13 African-American students at a predominantly White university in the Midwest. The students reported that they experienced racism in peer relationships as well as challenges conforming to the dominant White culture.

Childs and Matthews-Armstead (2006) conducted two focus groups with two non-random samples of 20 White and Black students drawn from a larger sample of 433 students who had been given a Social Distance scale survey. The purpose of the study was to explore the quantity and quality of social interactions across racial and ethnic boundaries at a predominantly White public university. The findings from the Social distance survey showed that 52 percent of White students frequently attended parties with Black students. For Black students, only 30 percent attended parties with White students in attendance.

Korgen, Wang, and Mahon (2006) surveyed White students from a comprehensive university in New Jersey about the degree of social distance desired from Black students. The 90 respondents were asked to respond to questions about their degree of comfort socializing with Blacks. The five situations presented were: sitting next to a Black student in class or in the cafeteria, going to a school dance, being a roommate, and dating. The findings were that only 44% of the White students were comfortable with Blacks in all five situations. The greatest degree of comfort

(90%) was to sit next to a Black student in class. The least degree of comfort was dating a Black student (48%).

Schoepflin (2006) studied interracial interaction at a PWI in the Northeast with a 2,700 undergraduate student body with a total Black student population of 120. Schoepflin (2006) interviewed a sample of 35 Black and 35 White students about their cross-racial social interactions. Using Goffman's (cited in Schoepflin, 2006) theory of interaction maintenance, which refers to the conscious self-presentation styles, the researcher found that both Blacks and Whites were careful in their verbal social interactions to avoid offending each other. Yet, Black participants were aware of how racial stereotypes were present in their everyday social interactions. White students asked questions related to rap music, professional sports, or other topics stereotypically assumed to be of interest to the Black students. The Black students were offended by these types of questions but the White students did not understand that these types of questions were offensive.

One interesting finding was that Black students overwhelmingly were the ones to initiate the cross-racial social interaction while White students tended to remain aloof (Schoepflin, 2006). Schoepflin's (2006) analysis is that Whites as members of the dominant society expect the onus to be on Blacks and other minorities to assimilate to their culture and approach them for friendship and social group membership.

Pike and Kuh (2006) found that the strength of the relationship between structural diversity and informal interactional diversity also provides persuasive

evidence that experiences with diversity are more likely to occur as the heterogeneity of the student population increases. In a second study, Pike and Kuh (2006) examined data for 317 institutions participating in the 2001 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). They found that at some institutions informal interactional diversity was positively related to the diversity of the student body.

The empirical evidence suggests that Black students who attend PWIs tend to practice what Dickerson and Bell (2006) refer to as non-assertive segregation. Non-assertive segregation occurs when students are interested in having more interracial contact but lack the means and social support to accomplish this. Assertive segregation is based on a conscious rejection of the ‘other’ which the findings do not support (Dickerson and Bell, 2006). Willie (2003) reported that most Black students were never approached by White students interested in forming friendships with them. Schoepflin (2006) explains that some members of the dominant culture may believe that the onus should be on Blacks and minorities to establish such friendships. The social exclusion that Black students may experience while attending PWIs is rarely overt. The subtle racial microaggressions are experienced by Black students as alienating. These experiences may cause the students to withdraw into their own racial groups, rather than engage in forming cross-racial friendships.

Diversity policies and mission statements do not typically address forms of subtle discrimination but focus exclusively on overt acts of racism and harassment which are not ‘tolerated.’ Students feel ambivalent about how to address their concerns since the acts are not sufficiently egregious to file a formal complaint, but

nevertheless leave the students feeling that they have been wronged (Willie, 2003). Rather than view Black spaces as segregated spaces, the literature shows that predominantly white campuses need to have Black ‘safe’ spaces where students can share their experiences with others and develop strategies for coping with these microaggressions (Tatum, 2003). There is also an equally important need for opportunities to participate in interracial social interactions on a formal and informal basis.

### **Campus Climate**

While social exclusion occurs at the level of individual interpersonal interaction, the campus climate encompasses many interrelated dimensions. The other broad area of literature related to the Black student experience at PWIs is the study of the campus climate. A campus climate refers to the individual subjective sense of belonging within an institution of higher education (Hurtado et al.,1998).

Hurtado and Carter (1997) define institutional campus climate by four interrelated dimensions. They are (a) institutions’ historical legacy of inclusion or exclusion of various racial/ethnic groups, (b) numerical representation of various racial/ethnic groups, (c) the psychological climate of perceptions and attitudes between and among groups, and (d) behavioral climate dimension characterized by intergroup relations. There have been very recent studies outlining the benefits of a positive racial campus climate for post-secondary education (Bowman, 2013; Denson and Chang, 2015; Franklin, 2013; Jones, 2013; Park and Denson, 2013; Ross, 2014).

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education (2007), 167 hate crimes were reported on U.S. campuses. Over 70% of those were race-related. Van Dyke and Tester (2014) in their analysis of U.S.-wide campus hate crimes at 349 colleges, found that racial hate crimes were more likely to occur at predominantly White universities that have a Greek system of fraternities. Since 1998, hate crimes have increased 15.5% in total for larger campuses (5000 or more students).

Since the 1950s educational researchers have studied the effects of the college environment on student achievement. Historical studies such as Pace and Stern (1958) found that there was a direct relationship between person-environment compatibility and successful achievement in college.

Tinto (1975) proposed a theoretical framework to show the relationship between student persistence and their interaction with the institution. Tinto (1975) based his framework on Durkheim's theory of anomie and suicide, which holds that a person will likely commit suicide if they are insufficiently integrated into society. Tinto (1975) extended this theory to examine student retention in higher education. Tinto (1975) argues that the better the student is integrated with the social and academic system of the college, the more likely they will persist to graduate. Tinto's model is based on the theoretical presupposition that students must undergo a three-stage process of separation, transition, and integration.

Key variables in Tinto's (1975) model include institutional commitment which includes teaching, learning, resource support, and counselling. Critics of Tinto's (1975) theory argue that his framework is not appropriate for the Black students since

the separation stage requires a person to separate themselves from their traditional cultural heritage and the transition stage requires them to adopt the culture of the campus. The final stage of integration involves sharing the normative values and attitudes of peers and faculty within the institution.

Guiffrida (2006) argues that minority college students have a need to remain connected to their ethnic identities in order to thrive. Guiffrida (2006) explains that institutions of higher education should support the maintenance of strong ethnic and racial identities. In addition, Black student experiences of racism and discrimination may prevent the full integration required by Tinto's (1975) framework.

Museus, Nichols, and Lambert (2008) found that their results confirm earlier findings (e.g., Harper & Hurtado, 2007) that Black students are the least satisfied with the racial climates on their campuses. Anderson (2002) claims that the student community is an important aspect of the campus racial climate. Underrepresented students seek out student groups in order to seek solace because of the absence of professors from their ethnic group, the absence of cultural fit, or the lack of positive faculty-student interaction.

Bowman and Smith (2002) argue that there is a more complex racial climate at historically White institutions of higher education. These changes have been influenced by recent trends such as the growing opposition to Affirmative Action, demographic changes involving the inclusion of other smaller ethnic minority groups, and the changing racial ideologies that students bring to the campus. Bowman and Smith (2002) argue that reactionary racism at colleges and universities is characterized

by a growing resentment that Blacks are receiving unfair advantages and also making demands on the institutions. The researchers argue that this is rooted in conservative political views that Blacks do not value hard work or merit the opportunities they are given. Bowman and Smith (2002) conducted a survey of 178 female and 112 male students from a multiethnic sample that included 49 Black females and 19 Black males. The researchers wanted to determine the extent of reactionary racism at a major Midwestern public university. They found that Whites and Asians were twice as likely to hold views that represented reactionary racist beliefs. They also found that among Whites there was weak support for campus diversity policy initiatives.

Hurtado (2002) argues that an institution's success in attracting minority students has a great deal to do with how the students perceive the institutional climate for racial and ethnic diversity. Their awareness of institutional efforts to create diverse learning environments is also an important factor.

The four set of interrelated dimensions that are proposed by Hurtado and Carter (1997) illustrate the complex ways that Black students may experience a campus climate. The historical legacy of exclusion at most predominantly White institutions is evident in everything from the spatial arrangement of the campus to the design of buildings. Black cultural centers are typically located off the main campus (Margolis et al., 2001). Yang Costello (2001) describes how donors and founder images are prominently displayed in campus spaces. These faces are almost exclusively white and male. Yang Costello (2001) explains that these images convey implicit messages to underrepresented minorities.

The research evidence shows that numerical representation of minority groups is a necessary but insufficient condition to assure a campus climate that is welcoming. Differential treatment of various ethnic groups on campus and the existence of racial microaggressions may undermine the value of high numerical diversity as evidenced by Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) as well as Willie (2003). The third dimension of psychological climate of perceptions and attitudes between groups may be also undermined by the lack of informal interactional diversity outside the classroom (Childs and Matthews-Armstead, 2006; Korgen, Wang, and Mahon, 2006; Willie, 2003). Lastly, the behavioural climate may be negatively affected by incidents racial hostility (Chambers, 1991) and the existence of reactionary racism as Affirmative action policies remain controversial (Bowman and Smith, 2002).

### **Institutional Diversity Discourses in the U.S. and Canada**

Institutional diversity discourses appear in mission statements, policy documents, web sites, and other promotional materials (Ahmed, 2012). Kezar (2007) notes that administrative leaders at campuses across the United States are engaged in a process of implementing a diversity agenda or initiative. Westerman (2010) noted the near universal adoption of harassment and discrimination policies in Canadian universities. This section will first provide a brief discussion of the legal framework for diversity policies in higher education and then review some of the literature about managerial discourses in higher education. The literature will show that there has been

a shift in the framing of diversity discourses from one of legal compliance to one that takes market interests into account.

The emergence of diversity discourses in higher education can be traced historically. By the end of the 1960s, all leading U.S. institutions of higher education had initiated policies and programs to include more students of color (Anderson, 2002). The previously White institutions moved towards inclusion of minorities. Since the 1970s, published journal articles about diversity initiatives in higher education began to appear (Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker, and Riley, 1977; Centra, 1970; Schwebel, 1972 ).

The early literature about institutional policies framed diversity as a benign additive feature but one that would not change existing social structures. Schwebel (1972), wrote that “Diversity in higher education has no merit in and of itself” (p.89). Schwebel (1972) argued that increased cultural pluralism need not fundamentally change institutions of higher learning. Baldrige, Curtis, Ecker, and Riley (1977) argued that diversity in higher education has been motivated by three factors: institutional imitation, which is a process where lower-ranked institutions imitate the policies of the higher ranked ones, the shift from private to public institutions, and lastly the availability of federal funds for institutions who attempt to diversify.

Between 70% and 80% of all U.S. institutions of higher education do not receive enough applications to be considered highly selective (Anderson, 2002). The relatively small number of institutions that are selective (20-30%) are the subject of debate about affirmative action. Affirmative action refers to a series of policies that

take race or gender into account in an attempt to redress historical inequality (Rai and Critzer, 2000). Rai and Critzer (2000) trace the origins of affirmative action to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, particularly the Title VII, which was an initiative to increase equality in the workplace. Based on a series of Executive orders to establish fair employment practices, the phrase affirmative action was included in the 1964 act. Federal department and agencies created policies based on these executive orders. Federal contractors or subcontractors are required to show compliance with affirmative action.

Edelman, Petterson, Chambliss, & Erlanger (1991) point out that affirmative action officers in universities embody a contradictory position in that they must challenge the institutional power that they themselves are beholden to. These contradictory institutional tensions comprise the complex contemporary framing of the diversity in higher education.

Recent Supreme Court decisions have threatened to dismantle the affirmative action programs. The most recent being the 2013 *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* (Riccucci, 2014). The 1996 *Hopwood vs. Texas* ( 78 F.3d 932) decision, *The 1978 University of California Regents vs. Bakke* ( 438 U.S. 265) decision, and the 2000 *Gratz vs. Bollinger* case each presented affirmative action as a violation of civil rights (Riccucci, 2014). In 1996, California's *Proposition 209* prohibited all colleges and universities from considering race, color, ethnicity or other social dimensions. Recent 2013 efforts to repeal the bill have failed. The 2003 *Grutter v. Bollinger* decision by the Supreme Court upheld affirmative action policies by invoking the

principle that diversity served a compelling interest for the institution (Clarke and Antonio, 2012; Denson and Chang, 2015; Devins, 2003). Recent researcher have attempted to synthesize the findings and generate a definitive conceptualization of what precisely a ‘compelling interest’ is (Garces and Jayakumar, 2014). Quantitative researchers have also attempted to measure the effects of racial and cultural diversity within institutions (Fryer and Loury, 2013).

Hurtado (2002) explains that changing access policies will influence minority students’ perceptions of which college is ‘right’ for them. Davis (2002) found that successful schools with high percentages of minority students differed from unsuccessful schools with lower percentages in that there was both a formal and informal structure in place to manage affirmative action practices. Davis (2002) noted that unsuccessful schools tended to relegate affirmative action responsibilities to human resources administrators or academic affairs staff. Davis (2002) reported that successful schools devote one more position to affirmative action/equal opportunity than do unsuccessful schools.

In Canada, the legal corollary to affirmative action is the Federal Employment Equity Act of 1986 (Bill C-64). This does not apply in the case of university admissions, but for faculty applicants from designated groups. The purpose of the act was to remove barriers of discrimination in employment for four designated groups: women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and visible minorities (Harvey and Blakely, 1996). Visible minorities are defined by the act as those individuals who are non-Caucasian or non-Aboriginal in race. Under this Act, federally regulated

corporations and companies that do over \$200,000 per year with the federal government are subject to audit by the Canadian Human Rights Commission (Human Resources and Development Canada, 2007). The Federal Contractors Program applies to provincially regulated employers with a national workforce in Canada of 100 or more employees. This includes public universities and colleges.

The Federal Contractors Program affects over 800 employers across Canada (Human Resources and Development Canada, 2007). As a condition for bidding on large federal contracts, such contractors are required to certify in writing their commitment to employment equity. Contractors who refuse to honor their commitment to employment equity and are found in non-compliance with program criteria may lose the right to bid on further federal government contracts (Human Resources and Development Canada, 2007). One problematic aspect of these policies is the lack of penalties for non-compliance. Employers merely have to demonstrate that they are making efforts to achieve gender and racial equality. This suggests that the lack of penalties may encourage employers to offer only 'lip-service' to their diversity efforts.

The above literature described how the legal framework has influenced diversity discourses in U.S. and Canadian higher education. Another important factor is the influence of the corporate managerial discourses. Corporations have had an influence on the development of higher education policies since the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Aronowitz, 2000). Neoliberalism has shaped contemporary discursive practices about diversity within Canadian and U.S. institutions of higher education. Neoliberalism is a

political-economic ideology promoting the ideals of privatization and marketization in both the private and public spheres (Giroux, 2001). Kezar (2004) observes that the three main trends in higher education are privatization, commercialization, and corporatization. These are all features of neoliberalism and have influenced the current model of higher education.

Shifts toward accountability and financial constraints tend to relegate the actual practices related to diversity and equity to the margins (Gérin-Lajoie, 2008). Equity-related issues are only justifiable if they are linked to issues of productivity (Westerman, 2010). Westerman (2010) argues that there has been a discursive shift away from the politicization of the diversity discourses to a de-politicized neutral language. Westerman (2010) characterizes the recent trend toward neutral language as one that ignores historical oppression.

The ideals of corporate social responsibility involves a public representation of equity within organizations. Corporate social responsibility is an aspect of the business case that is also presumed to benefit organizations (Hart, 2010). Bartkus and Glassman (2008) suggest that most corporate mission statements are adopted as a form of impression management. Rau and Hyland (2003) conducted a study to determine the effect of diversity recruitment brochures on women and minorities with a sample of 181 undergraduate students. One of their hypotheses was that, among minorities, both men and women will view organizations with statements that demonstrate commitment to diversity more favorably than those without such statements, with a stronger positive effect resulting for women than for men. Their results suggested that

diversity statements in recruitment brochures did influence applicants' attraction to organizations. Rau and Hyland (2003) contend that organizations can become more attractive to minority applicants and at the same time benefit themselves by capitalizing on the creativity and knowledge of a multicultural workforce. Wade (2004) characterizes corporate diversity rhetoric as 'doublespeak' that is a deliberate way to ignore discriminatory acts. Wade (2004) defines doublespeak as a form of language that shifts responsibility from the institution to the individual or avoids naming racial issues.

Bell and Hartmann (2007) concluded after their analysis of 166 in-depth interviews about how people talked about diversity, that diversity discourses obscure issues related to deeper structural inequality and oppression. This superficial level of engagement among participants was in their opinion indicative of the current popular diversity discourses. Anderson, G. (2006) maintains that the discourses of 'embracing diversity' may obscure the processes involved in privilege held by the dominant societal members. Tlili (2007), in a critical discourse analysis of UK Higher Education diversity policies, determined that the policy statements drew on several genres such as legal, promotional, and memorandum. Notably absent were the ideals of citizenship rights or social justice. The discourse of meritocracy was also present in the examined policies.

Singh and Point (2006) in their analysis of corporate diversity statements, found that the visual representations tended to reinforce stereotypes and positioned diversity as a source of competitive advantage. This competitive advantage was presumably

gained through ‘differences’ that would generate creativity in teamwork. Kirby and Harter (2002) argue that such discourses reinscribe categories on individuals and essentializes racial and ethnic identities.

DeCuir (2010) studied mission and diversity statements from 12 universities who participate in the annual Big 12 athletic conference. 10 out of 12 universities had diversity statements on their web sites. DeCuir’s (2010) thematic analysis of the diversity statements showed that two dimensions were highlighted—1) climate and intergroup relations and 2) institutional vitality and viability. The first dimension included language that addressed the need for students to be prepared to work in diverse workforces. The second dimension included statements that referred to diversity in a globalized world and the need for the institution to reflect the diverse society.

Casado and Dereshiwsky (2007) give hospitality programs in university as an example of diversity initiatives that are explicitly tied to the needs of industry. The authors cite demographic changes as providing the impetus to the changing composition of the hospitality industry personnel. Westerman (2010) found that contemporary trends in higher education around diversity policies even involve physical changes. For example, the location of Equity or Human Rights offices may be moved from Student Services departments to Human Resource departments. Westerman (2010) explains that students may perceive that the policies apply only to employees.

Ayers (2005) studied 10 university mission statements in search of discursive manifestations of human capital theory and neoliberal ideology. The researcher's analysis identified two prominent ideologies. The first was the ideology of preparing workers for the global economy and the second was about restructuring the curriculum to meet the demands of business and industry. These neoliberal ideologies are also present in the contemporary framing of diversity in higher education, which positions diversity as an asset that will benefit the institution by preparing its students to 'deal' with a future diverse workforce.

Additional literature critical of diversity discourses in higher education focus on the appropriation of diversity and the marginalization of minority populations. Interpersonal communication is critical to organizational change and practitioners must develop what Tlili (2007) refers to as the requisite amount of 'discursive capital' within a certain genre. Anderson, G. (2006) contends that the appropriation of material produced by racialized individuals serves to generate cultural capital for the dominant white culture in institutions of higher learning. Giroux, S. (2006) adds that higher educational institutions can contribute to the illusion of a post-racial or racelessness world through the addition of multicultural curricula materials without investing heavily in the recruitment and retention of minorities at all institutional levels.

Ahmed (2009) contends that the language of organizational diversity reifies the idea that diversity exists in the bodies of others who become assets of the organization. Abu El-Haj (2006) acknowledges that while the term diversity is meant to invoke elements of human variability, it 'glosses' over relationships of power and privilege.

This benign variability with which the term diversity is used in educational settings does not pose a challenge to the organizational structure.

Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, and Allen (1998) explain that most of the focus of campus diversity efforts has been to increase numbers in the student body, while ignoring the dimensions of the climate that the students enter such as the positive administrative leadership, faculty composition, multicultural student organizations, and academic resources.

Ahmed (2009) reasons that most conceptualizations of diversity in higher education are predicated on numerical diversity. People of color are seen as additive to white organizations, not an integral part of the organizations. Ahmed (2009) claims that we need to look beyond simply numbers as evidence of an institutional commitment to diversity. Ahmed (2009) argues “ It is this very structural position of being the guest, or the stranger, the one who receives hospitality, which keeps us in certain places, even when you move up. Diversity becomes both a problem and a paradox for those who embody diversity” (p.42).

Ahmed’s (2009) critique points out several problems with the way diversity is addressed in higher education. The focus on numerical diversity obscures the historical relations of inequality between groups. Simply adding more bodies of color does not solve existing institutional racism. The numerical diversity in higher education is also targeted at the lowest levels and ignores the need for diversity within the administrative leadership at the level of Chair, Dean, Provost, and President. The second point is that those who embody diversity occupy a paradoxical existence. The

power resides with those who grant permission for the guest to enter. This relegates the guest to a fixed positionality of secondary status. Students of color may perceive themselves as guests at PWIs and are surrounded by reminders of their secondary status.

Acland and Azmi (1998) recommended that prospectuses and other pre-entry information provided to students contain accurate information related to diversity initiatives at the institution since the students in their study did not believe them to be accurate upon matriculation at the university. Anderson (1988) asserts that “it does not take an incoming student of color long to realize that the university or college does not actually value cultural diversity in a practical sense. Ideally, it may have been verbalized, but no mechanisms are in place to affirm the assets of the culturally diverse” (p.33).

Stewart, Crary, and Humberd (2008) note that discourses related to organizational advocacy for diversity draw on the premise that diversity leads to performance gains. The authors remind us that for these gains to occur, effective integration of the diverse bodies must occur through inclusion. In contrast, Black students continue to report experiences of exclusion at predominantly white institutions in spite of their inclusive discursive framing. This study will extend this literature by investigating how Black students articulate their responses to these current diversity discourses within their higher educational institutions.

## **Race, Racism, and Racial Identity Formation**

This section presents the theories about race, racism and racial identity formation that have guided my analysis of the data. In this study, I incorporated Omi and Winant's (1994) theory of racial formation. Contemporary sociological and psychological theories on race view race as a social construction (Brunsma and Rockquemore, 2002; Cox, 1948; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Goldberg, 1993; James, 2003). They contend that race has long been abandoned as a valid category since there are tremendous genetic differences and variations within 'racial groupings.' Yet, most theorists recognize—albeit to varying degrees, that the construction of race has far-reaching social implications (Dei, 1996). Williams (1996) reasons that identifying 'race' can best be understood as a process of 'racialization'. The meaning of race is not fixed but is related to a particular historical, social, and geographic context.

Omi and Winant (1994) developed a racial formation theory based on the concept that the racial order of American society was based on the interplay between micro-level and macro-level social relations. The micro-level represents the interpersonal relationships between people and the macro-level refers to the social structures and societal perceptions about race, class, and gender.

Omi and Winant (1994), like Cox (1948) argue that racial formation arose out of material relations. They assert that the ideological need to reconcile the production of slavery with the ideals of freedom necessitated the creation of a subordinate racial

category. Forming a mutually reinforcing boundary of the Black slave and White owner, slavery served the purpose of cementing racial categories. Unequal treatment was justified since the slaves were deemed to inferior to Whites and suitable as a cheap supply of labor.

Miles (1993) agrees that through the process of racialization, racism became an ideological relation of production. The Other was constructed as being naturally suited to providing labour power within the relations of production. He notes the example of Black labour exploitation in the 18th and 19th centuries in the West that was legitimated by representations that conferred biological inferiority.

At the micro-level, race is a component of individual identity that structures our interaction with others. At the macro-level, race is part of a collective social structure that permeates institutions. Omi and Winant (1994) assert that the micro and macro level are continuous and reciprocal. The macro-level structures both reinforce and contribute to the creation of individual racial identity and vice versa. In sum, Omi and Winant (1994) reason that there exists a racial dimension to all identities and institutions in the United States. Appiah (1994) reminds us that individual identities have both an individual and collective dimension that intersect. Appiah (1994) adds that once a racial label has been applied to an individual, ideas about the characteristics of such labels come to have social effects.

Omi and Winant (1994) describe racism as an ideology of superiority of one racial category over another racial category. The dimensions of inferiority may be

intellectual, moral, physical, and/or spiritual. Racist beliefs can be grounded in biology or culture (Omi and Winant, 1994).

Bonilla-Silva (2014) has termed the contemporary form of racial ideology in the United States as color-blind racism. Color-blind racism explains racial inequality in non-racial terms. Color-blind racism is a rationalized form of racism that explains racial inequality by invoking the explanation of existing structural inequality or cultural differences. Bonilla-Silva (2014) contends that color-blind racism shields Whites from accusations of explicit racism by allowing them to rationalize the racism. Barker (1981) referred to similar phenomena in Great Britain as ‘new racism.’ The challenge of ‘new racism’, as noted by Barker (1981) has been a regression which shifts the focus from race to a focus on cultural difference. Racial differences become supplanted by cultural differences. Instead of race, the culture is pathologized and used to justify inequitable treatment.

Other modern regressions include what Kincheloe and Steinberg (2002) have termed ‘crypto-racism’. Crypto-racism is a form of double-speak that renders any mention of the word race or racism as a manifestation of racism itself. Thus, mentioning racist practices becomes ‘playing the race card’ (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2002). Those privileged by racial status can claim to be its victims.

Critical race theorists adopt a position known as ‘racial realism’ which holds that racism is a means by which societies allocate privilege and status (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). Racial hierarchies exist as fixed entities that determine access to power and prestige. Critical Race Theory in education is another useful tool to

examine experiences of Black students. Critical Race theory takes seriously the narratives of the Black experience which will be a key component of my research methodology. Critical Race theory also takes the salience or significance of race as a key predictor of social outcomes such as educational attainment. (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995).

The ‘salience’ of race refers to the idea that race is an important conceptual category on the basis of which power, prestige and privilege are rendered meaningful in contemporary society (Dei, 1996). Race has also played a pivotal role in the formation and structure of institutions (Goldberg, 1993). In this project, I took a critical view of the way that race affects the schooling process in higher education. Dei (1996) articulated a critical integrative framework that examines the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexuality and social oppression. In doing this, I considered how the interlocking oppressions of social difference have affected the participants.

I believed that it was also important to consider theories about racial identity formation for this study. This is because most of the students were between 18-25 and were experiencing late adolescent identity development (Erickson, 1970). Along with many social identities such as sexual and gender identities, the participants in this study were also in a process of racial identity formation. Earlier models have been elaborated to reflect current critical understanding about how human developmental stages may vary across contexts and not correspond to ‘ages and stages’. One of the early models is the Nigrescence Model developed by Cross (1978). This model includes five stages for Black identity formation. Pre-encounter is the first stage.

During this stage, the individual may not have developed an awareness about the social implications of their race. For many African-Americans who attend predominantly White institutions, the post-secondary transition may be the first time that their racial identity has become salient for them. This is particularly true if they were raised in predominantly African-American neighborhoods (Allen, 1992). In the second stage, a personal incident related to race or a significant race-related event caused them to experience the encounter stage.

Cross (1978) explains that this process often takes place during late childhood for most racial minorities. During the *encounter* stage, the child realizes that their skin color may carry a social stigma. Goffman (1963) defines stigma as an attribute that is deeply discrediting in a particular social context. In North America, social identities such as the female gender, racialized minorities, lower social class, non-dominant religious groups, and sexual minorities have been stigmatized. A revised model of Black identity development was created by Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, and Chavous (1998). This measure contained four dimensions of racial identity which include centrality, regard, ideology, and salience. This model better accounts for situational contexts of Black identity development.

While self-identity is how the individual sees him or herself as belonging to a particular group, social identity is how others perceive the individual (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Social identities are created in relation to others. With certain 'markers' others may label an individual in a way that may be quite different from their self-identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). For many Black immigrants to the U.S. or

Canada, their social identities may not match their personal identities. Upon migration, they are labelled with social markers based on skin color. In their countries of origin, their identities may be more strongly connected to religion, ethnicity, or language.

Social identity theory also holds that the environment in which one lives constructs one's identity over time. The adaptation may be conscious (i.e. a person actively chooses an identity) or it may be reflected in automatic cumulative experiences (i.e. their experiences over a long period of time leave them with no choice but to adopt a certain identity). Tajfel and Turner (1986) explain that a positive self-identity is correlated with positive self-esteem. They maintain that having a social identity that is devalued in your particular environment will negatively affect one's self-esteem.

Recent research has also begun to study the development of bi-racial identity. A person is defined as bi-racial if they adopt a multiracial or bi-racial self-identification rather than choosing one race (Basu, 2007). Brusma and Rockquemore (2002) studied bi-racial (Black/White) identity development and the role of parents in assigning racial identification. The participants in this study were influenced by their individual racial identity development as they navigated their institutions.

## **Post-Colonial Theories**

Other scholars have studied Black racial identity formation not in terms of developmental stages, but in ways that focus on the historical situation of race. One of DuBois' (1903) contributions to Black identity theory was his notion of double consciousness. Double consciousness refers to the idea that Blacks in America have a divided self-identity that causes the individual to look at themselves through the eyes of the dominant cultural group. He imagined that Blacks had two souls that formed a dialectical relationship to one another. In order to survive in America, Blacks needed to have this double consciousness. Blacks possessed this unique attribute a social consequence of having a marginalized social identity within the dominant society. Bearing a double consciousness also comes with a psychic cost that creates additional stress for Black Americans.

DuBois (1903) further explained that double consciousness prevented Blacks from forming a strong sense of self-identity. Arising from the vestiges of slavery, Blacks could realize that the promises of freedom were not to be met with true substantive equality in the eyes of the dominant White culture (DuBois, 1903). DuBois (1903) also conceptualized a metaphor of the veil, which represents how Blacks perceive the outside world. The veil forces the Black individuals to perform a role to enact their racial identity, which may be very different from their self-identity. The metaphor of the veil also accounts for the fact that Blacks must be vigilantly aware of the presence of the dominant culture while often being invisible to members of the dominant culture.

Fanon (1952) articulated similar ideas within the context of post-colonialism. Like DuBois (1903), Fanon (1952) also conceptualized that Blacks living in a post-colonial context are constantly aware of the dominant white societal culture and evaluate themselves in relation to it. Blacks in a post-colonial context develop their identities with a sense of inferiority in relation to the White ruling culture. Describing his experiences growing up in Martinique, a French colony in the Caribbean, Fanon (1952) explains how Blacks internalize the French perception of them. Although the colonial leaders have returned to France, the Black leaders adopt the sensibilities of the French including mastery of the language in order to become human. The more the Black colonial subject can adopt the language and culture of the French, the closer he or she is to becoming human in the eyes of the White colonists (Fanon, 1952). An examination of internalized racism is the contribution that Fanon's (1952) work brings to an understanding of Black racial identity. Fanon (1952) illustrates how the physical *presence of Whites is not necessary to achieve cultural and racial domination.*

### **Intersectionality**

Many scholars argue that racial identity must be recognized as one of many intersecting social identities. Intersectionality theorists contend that race is one of several interlocking oppressions and that gender, class, and sexuality cannot be separated from one's identity (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). Carter (2005) contends that members of racial groups are heterogeneous and hold multiple intersecting identities. Intersectionality provides a wider theoretical approach to examine their experiences in the social contexts where the dominant culture is White,

heterosexual, and middle-class. Not only do the intersections operate on multiple levels of oppression but also shape individual agency and resistance.

In the Canadian context, Dei (1999) articulated a critical integrative framework that examines the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality and social oppression. Social identities may form interlocking oppressions that are mutually reinforcing. Intersectionality does not negate the salience of race as a significant social category that confers privilege and stigma. Similar to critical race theorists, social identity theorists argue that race and gender tend to form ‘master traits’ that are the most important aspect of one’s identity (Frideres, 2002). These types of identities are often the most salient forms.

### **Agency**

This project devoted particular attention to the ways in which students resisted institutional discourses and defined diversity and its related practices in their own terms. Resistance theorists consider the agency of the individual actors and reject the idea of rigid determinism. Giroux (2001a) offers a dialectical critique of the way that the hidden curricula can open space for resistance because of its contradictory nature.

Allen (1998) described Black student perceptions of their position within institutions of higher education as a ‘Black skepticism.’ By Black skepticism Allen (1998) refers to the critical cultural location that Black students use to navigate themselves through the university. Allen (1998) explains that “Black skepticism interrogates the legitimacy of institutional knowledge claims in the light of one’s own

lived reality” (p.91). Black skepticism operates through different levels such as interpersonal interaction, assessment of the curriculum, and perceptions of the hospitable nature of the environment. This conceptualization helps to explain how Black students are located differently within institutions of higher education and how their perceptions are shaped by their personal identities and histories.

Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) developed a model that illustrated how racial micro aggressions occurred within academic spaces and social spaces on campus. The researchers noted that the students coped by creating counter-social spaces on and off campus that were experienced as positive racial climates. Anderson (2002) claims that the student community is an important aspect of the campus racial climate. Underrepresented minority students seek out student groups in order to seek social support. The absence of professors from their ethnic group, the absence of cultural fit, or the lack of positive faculty-student interaction are contributing factors. This project considered the many ways that Black students employed their own agency to challenge and resist the racism they encountered.

## **Conclusion**

The historical and current literature on Black student exclusion, the current framing of diversity discourses, as well as the current socio-political neoliberal climate, illuminate the need for a critical examination of diversity policies and practices in Canadian and U.S. higher education. Black students at predominantly white universities (PWIs) in the United States and Canada continue to report feelings

of exclusion in spite of the fact that most universities actively engage in discursive practices that frame their institutions as inclusive spaces. Conducting a discourse analysis of these diversity related discursive practices as well as studying the lived experiences of Black students around the practices will provide valuable insights into this research problem. Both language and discursive practices structure policy and diversity practices around campus climate. The ways in which students engage with the dominant discourses of diversity and how it contributes to their experiences are important questions to study. As the aforementioned studies show, students also produce counter-discourses to enact their own agency. The language by which they do so, and the discursive practices which they draw from have not been systematically studied. The next chapter will present a discussion of the methodological structure of the study.

### CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

*I mean I would do it to get ahead I mean, you sit more proper, you talk more proper, because I am actually talking, sitting here right now I am talking like who I am but when it's time to wear a mask after the interview I have got my tie on, I am talking real proper. I act like I am, you know I act like my home situation is fairly well, you know I have two parents at home, not like my step daddy is in jail you know it's like all you know, you just put up a lie basically you just lie.*

*(Trevor, 19, Sophomore, American University)*

The above narrative excerpt provides an illustration about the complexities of qualitative interviews. Riessman (2008) suggests that interviews are discursively limited by time and space. As evidenced by the above excerpt, there is also the element of performativity that is enacted in the subject-researcher relationship (Riessman, 2008).

I chose to use a thematic method of analysis for the data from human participants and chose to use critical discourse analysis for the textual data. A thematic approach to analysis would focus on the content of the words spoken as well as the manner in which they were communicated (Riessman, 2008). This was a methodological choice that I made after reviewing the data. I considered the interview narratives as spontaneous utterances that were embedded in time and space (Riessman, 2008).

I also wanted to capture the rich non-verbal data that I obtained from the participants. I considered the institutional texts as a separate 'discourse'. Through my own interpretive lens, I believed that the textual documents I studied had been written,

reviewed, and edited by multiple individuals and represented the ‘final’ institutional voice.

I employed multiple methods of qualitative research in this study as a means of triangulation. Triangulation is a way to enhance the validity of a study through multiple reference points (Patton, 2002). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible” (p.4). Qualitative methods involve the use of various empirical materials that can be interpreted. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) assert that qualitative research as a set of interpretive activities does not privilege any particular method, but there are multiple interpretive methods each with their own disciplinary history. First, the epistemological foundations will be explained, followed by a description of the data collection methods. Lastly, the research design and methods for data analysis will be discussed.

### **Epistemological Foundations**

First, consideration will be given to the epistemological foundations of this research. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) argue that there are four major interpretive paradigms in qualitative research. They are positivist and post-positivist, constructivist/interpretive, critical, and feminist/ post-structural. According to the typology created by Guba and Lincoln (2007), my project fits into the tradition of critical theory. Rather than seeking a positivist experimental outcome showing causation, this work will show how social constructionism is embedded in various

institutional processes. This type of social research is grounded in a strong social critique (Guba and Lincoln, 2007). Denzin and Lincoln (2003) explain that critical theoretical approaches to qualitative research privilege a materialist-realist ontology where the real world makes a material difference in terms of gender, race, and class. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), critical theorists locate the foundations of knowledge and truth in historical experiences of oppression based on economic and social identities.

### **Black Subjects/White Methods?**

As I began this study, I became keenly aware that as Scheurich and Young (1997) argue, the epistemologies we typically use in educational research are Eurocentric and may be racially biased. Tuhiwai-Smith (1999) and Reviere (2001) have argued for a decolonial research methodology. Reviere (2001) suggests that an Afrocentric approach to research challenges hegemonic ideas about objectivity, reliability, and validity in research. I adopted several of the guiding principles outlined by Reviere's (2001) Afrocentric approach to research which were *Ukweli* (ground your research in the experiences of the community being researched), *Utulivu* (promote harmony and justice), *Uhaki* (be fair to all participants), *Ujamaa* (foster community), and lastly *Kujitoa* (objectivity is impossible).

My research was grounded in the experiences of the Black students. I conducted in-depth interviews with each participant and then emailed them a copy of their transcript to review approximately one year later. This was to ensure that their interview narratives appropriately reflected their experiences. It was also one method

of being fair to the participants. In one instance, a participant elected to delete a large section of her transcript that she believed could lead to her being identified.

Objectivity was also impossible because I identified with my participants and felt a sense of racial solidarity. I would have succeeded in fostering a sense of community if I had elected to conduct focus groups. I am encouraged by Charmaz and Mitchell (2001) who claim that “methods are only a means, not an end. Our subjects’ worlds and our renderings of them take precedence over methods and measures” (p.161).

Patton (2002) defines various epistemic aims of qualitative research as descriptive, explanatory, and causal. This study is a descriptive analysis of the experiences of Black students that is grounded in an analysis of their narratives. Babbie (2001) notes that descriptive studies provide the impetus for explanatory studies, which examine why the observed patterns exist and what these patterns imply. This study may also contribute to explanatory knowledge about the reasons for Black student recruitment and retention.

### **Research Questions**

This study was guided by the following research questions based on individual, institutional and national contexts that presented overlapping levels for analysis. Since all the interviews were semi-structured, I sought to discover the answers to my questions through an analysis of the cumulative data collected.

Table 3.1 Research questions

CONTEXT	QUESTION	DATA COLLECTION METHOD/CHAPTER FINDINGS
<b>Individual</b>	i) How do Black university students articulate their responses to diversity-related media at their institutions?	Qualitative interviews with a sample of Black students from each institution (Chapters Five and Six)
	ii) How do Black students experience the practices associated with institutional diversity discourses in their everyday interactions within their institutions?	
<b>Institutional</b>	i) How are diversity discourses manifested in university policy statements, web sites, brochures, and mission statements?	Qualitative interviews with diversity administrators at both institutions (Chapter Four, Chapter Seven)
	ii) How do these diversity discourses influence institutional practices?	
<b>National</b>	i) What are some of the similarities and differences between the institutional diversity discourses in Canada and the U.S.?	Textual analysis of policy documents (Chapter Four)

### Research Design

This dissertation study was designed as a comparative case study of two institutions. The research design for this study involved two units of analysis outlined by Babbie (2001). The two units of analysis were the individual and the organization.

The explication of the research design also explains the rationale for choosing one Canadian and one U.S. university for this study. I studied the individual experiences of Black students through one-on-one interviews. I examined the organization through interviews with university administrators and through textual analysis of diversity-related media.

Given that there are two institutions, this study may also be considered a comparative case study. Stake (2007) outlines three primary types of case studies: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective case study. The first is intrinsic, in which a researcher wishes to understand a particular case in isolation and out of pure interest in the particular entity. Instrumental case studies are examined mainly to draw generalizations from the single case to other cases. Collective case studies occur when a number of cases are studied jointly to investigate a phenomenon (Stake, 2007).

This aims of this study fit Stake`s (2007) description of a collective case study. The cases selected may be similar or different but it is believed that understanding them will enhance our general understanding of the issue. This will also provide grounds for the development of theory or policy.

According to Stake (2007), qualitative case researchers have major conceptual responsibilities such as bounding the case, selecting phenomena (interview questions), and eventually developing generalizations about the case. The first and second aims were accomplished throughout the process of refining the research proposal, while the third was accomplished through data analysis. Through the process of bounding each case, I decided to critically reflect upon my own experiences in Canadian higher education and sought to explore the similarities and differences between U.S. and

Canadian higher education. Both Canada and the U.S. have a population that is ethnically and racially diverse although both countries have a different history with respect to the integration of racial minorities. I selected one university in Canada and another university in the United States because of their geographical proximity to each other and for the racial diversity within the metropolitan areas where the universities are located.

Criterion based sampling was used to select the two institutions. Criterion based sampling is one in which specific criteria must be met prior to inclusion (Patton, 2002). The first consideration for the sample was to select one Canadian and one U.S. institution. Using secondary source data from the 2011 Consortium on Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE) I was able to match the institutions based on demographic similarities and size. Housed at the University of Oklahoma, the CSRDE is a consortium of 333 public and 90 private U.S. two-and-four year colleges.

Thirty-three of the institutions are Canadian universities. I used the data from the CSRDE to assist me in the selection of universities but did not do any additional work with the data. Since all Canadian universities are public, I selected a public U.S. research university instead of a private one. I also selected four-year, doctoral granting research institutions as categorized by the Carnegie 2000 system.

## **Sampling**

For the student data, I conducted 42 in-depth semi-structured interviews with Black students in a stratified purposeful sample (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). A stratified purposeful sample is a sampling method whereby particular dimensions of a

category are selected in order to compare across groups (Patton, 2002). This study included a multi-level sampling design as depicted in Table 3.1. Demographic data was collected from each participant at the beginning of each interview.

A cross-sectional sample of 21 undergraduate and graduate students at each of the two institutions was selected. For the Canadian university 16 undergraduate students and 5 graduate students were interviewed. For the U.S. university, 18 undergraduates were interviewed along with 3 graduate students. Six diversity administrators were also interviewed at each institution.

Efforts were made to include a roughly equal number of male and female participants but response rates varied between the two institutions and the Black female population was higher in both instances (m=15, f=27). Sophomore, Juniors, Seniors and Graduate students were selected for interview because it was important for the students to have experienced at least one year of study at the institution. The average age of the participants was 21 years of age. A range of academic disciplines were represented. Twenty-one of the participants were enrolled in the Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines, 10 in Biological and Health Sciences, 7 in Business Management, and 4 Engineering. None of the participants were enrolled in the physical sciences such as Physics.

Patton (2001) describes purposeful stratified samples as ‘samples within samples’ and suggests that purposeful samples can be stratified or nested by selecting particular units or cases that vary according to a key dimension. The key dimension in question was the year of study. I interviewed a selection of Black sophomores, seniors, and graduate students in order to assess the maturational effects of my sample.

Although several freshmen indicated their willingness to participate by responding to my recruitment posters, I had to remind them of the criteria which were in fact stated in the poster. I also interviewed a small sample (12) of university administrators of various ethnicities between the two universities. The data collection period for this study began in November 2010 and continued until March 2012. Administrator interviews were more challenging to obtain because of their busy schedules and a result many interviews were cancelled and rescheduled for later months.

Table 3.2. Summary of Student and Administrator Sample

<b>Country</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Racial Identification</b>	<b>Year</b>
U.S. (students)=21	Male (11) Female (10)	Black	Sophomores (6) Juniors (6) Seniors (5) Graduate students (3)
U.S. (administrators)=6	Female (4) Male (2)	Latina (1) Black (3) White (2)	
Canada (students)=21	Female (15) Male (6)	Black	Second year (4) Third year (7) Fourth year (5) Grad students (5)
Canada (administrators)=6	Female (3) Male (3)	Black (3) White (3)	

## **Recruitment**

Participant recruitment began in November 2010. Prior to recruiting subjects, I had to obtain institutional permission from each university. The research ethics process took place from September 2010 to November 2010. In the U.S. case I was able to obtain permission from the Research Ethics Officer within a one week period. For the Canadian university, I had to undergo an 8 week period of ethics review by the university. I was required to submit the original ethics approval from Cornell University as well as the interview schedules, consent forms, and recruitment flyers. Both internal and external researchers must participate in the review process. This delayed my recruitment by several weeks but through this process I learned a great deal about the policies and practices of the institution. As part of the ethics requirement, I was instructed not to write information that would in any way identify the institution or its personnel. This became an issue later on when I interviewed diversity administrators at the same university and had to devise methods to include their narratives while protecting their anonymity.

Recruitment posters advertised for students who self-identified as Black (see appendices). The recruitment poster listed the main criteria for participation in the study as well as the purpose of the study. I placed recruitment posters around the main campus at each institution and targeted in particular the areas where students tended to congregate. I also forwarded the exact text of the recruitment flyer via email through public campus list serves as well. Upon contacting me via email, participants were emailed a copy of a description of the study and consent form. In all, I had 55

respondents and eventually 42 decided to participate after reading the full consent form and description of the study. In order to achieve criterion sampling, several potential participants were excluded if there were too many respondents representing a particular year of study. There were a few participants who scheduled interviews and declined to participate after initially agreeing, perhaps for their personal reasons. These participants either failed to attend the interviews and or sent me a text that they could no longer participate. Participants received a \$25 campus bookstore gift card after they had completed their interview.

Diversity administrators were recruited via email and word-of-mouth as well. The university web site listed their names and job functions. In several cases, the job functions and titles were unique to the particular institution and identifying the job title would easily identify both the individual and the university. In my descriptions, I have referred to each of the administrative participants in general terms as ‘diversity administrators.’ I then emailed each potential participant a recruitment letter requesting an in-person interview. Participants were able to indicate their preference for an on-campus or off-campus interview. Ten of the twelve participants preferred an on-campus interview in their offices, while two of them preferred off campus locations such as local cafes. My preference would have been to interview them all at local cafes but their busy work schedules did not permit this in most cases. Administrators were also provided with a \$25 gift card for the campus bookstore and some of them elected to donate the card to student clubs or associations.

I sought to avoid an essentialized description of Black identities in this study. I recognized the intersectionality of race, gender, ethnicity and class (Collins, 2000;

Crenshaw, 1991) in the lived experiences of the participants. This is especially important since the participants were from two different countries with distinctly different histories of racial integration. This was reinforced through semi-structured interviews where participants were asked how they identified themselves racially. I also gathered demographic information from the student participants in the study about their age, year of study, field, parent ethnic origin, and GPA. The descriptions of the participants are listed below:

Table 3.3 U.S. Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Year of Study	Field	Parent Ethnic Origin	GPA
Vincent	Male	21	Senior	Psychology	St. Vincent	3.3
Milan	Male	20	Sophomore	English	U.S.	3
Michael	Male	21	Junior	Psychology	U.S.	3.2
Christine	Female	27	PhD	Education	U.S.	4
Devon	Male	20	Sophomore	Biology	Liberia	3.5
Dane	Male	20	Junior	Electrical Eng.	U.S.	2.5
Rosa	Female	22	Senior	Legal/AA Studies	Jamaica	3.02
Desiree	Female	20	Junior	Undeclared	Grenada	2.7
Jaleesa	Female	21	Senior	Management IS	U.S.	3.2
Sahara	Female	24	Masters	Rehab Counseling	U.S.	3.78
Aaliyah	Female	19	Sophomore	Biology	U.S.	3.2
Donald	Male	20	Junior	Exercise Physiology	Haiti	3.1
Sean	Male	21	Junior	Computer Eng.	U.S.	2.85
Marsha	Female	21	Senior	English/Legal Studies	U.S.	3.3
Tony	Male	19	Sophomore	Political Science	U.S.	3
Tina	Female	19	Sophomore	Occupational Therapy	U.S.	3.2
Trevor	Male	19	Sophomore	Bus Management	U.S.	3
Alicia	Female	20	Junior	Engineering	U.S.	3.1
Chante	Female	20	Junior	Communications	U.S.	3.3
Amir	Male	24	Masters	Electrical Eng.	Tanzania	3.5
Joseph	Male	23	Senior	Sociology	U.S.	3.5

Table 3.4. Canadian Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Year of Study	Field	Parent Ethnic Origin	GPA
Phyllis	Female	26	Masters	Sociology	Jamaica	3.7
Chyanne	Female	24	Masters	Environmental Studies	Jamaica	4
Jennifer	Female	20	Junior	Theatre Studies	Canada	3.5
Vonette	Female	25	Sophomore	Human Rights & Equity Studies	Kenya	2.7
Millie	Female	21	Junior	Kinesiology	Jamaica	2.7
Jasmine	Female	23	Senior	Law	Jamaica	3.2
Lisa	Female	21	Senior	Business	Grenada/Antigua	3.4
Andrea	Female	19	Sophomore	Health	Burundi	3
Tyrell	Male	20	Sophomore	Sociology	Jamaica	2.5
Nadira	Female	29	Senior	Psychology	Trinidad	2.8
Shanice	Female	27	PhD	Geography	Jamaica	3.7
Jillian	Female	25	Sophomore	Business	St. Lucia	2.5
Malcolm	Male	25	Junior	Economics	Zimbabwe	3.3
Stella	Female	22	Senior	Information Technology	Tanzania	3.9
Dahnay	Female	22	Senior	Law	Ethiopia	3.7
Stephen	Male	36	PhD	Sociology	St. Kitts	4
Adeola	Female	35	Masters	Environmental Studies	Nigeria	3.6
Pierre	Male	21	Junior	Business	Cameroon	2.8
Keisha	Female	22	Junior	International Development	Jamaica	3.3
Dwight	Male	21	Junior	Kinesiology	Jamaica	3.8
Stuart	Male	20	Junior	English	Barbadoes	3.2

### Methods: Interviews

The primary method of data gathering was from semi-structured interviews with 42 Black students and 12 administrators. Riessman (2008) suggests that interviews allow individuals to construct their identities through storytelling. I selected narrative inquiry as a method to examine Black students' responses to institutional diversity media in order to examine the complexities of their experiences. I attempted to frame questions in a way that Chase (2005) notes should elicit and invite stories rather than reports. I sought to compare Black student responses to their school's official diversity discourses as manifested by various media. I chose the method of interviews since I wanted to explore the ways in which students articulate their responses to diversity-related media and believed that such information could not be

satisfactorily obtained through a quantitative method such as surveys. A major part of this study explores how language is used discursively and as such, interview data represented a rich source of data for the analysis of language. The in-depth interviews ranged in length from 45 to 90 minutes. Very few interviews were 45 minutes and most were at least 60 minutes. In some cases, follow-up interviews were requested from participants in order to clarify one or more of their responses or to conduct validity checks once my findings were partially analyzed. Qualitative interviews as a method were an appropriate method for this study since the type of knowledge sought is a descriptive measure of personal experiences (Bryman, 2001). Through interviews, one can attempt to understand the world from the point of view of the subjects (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009).

The interview method provided participants with the opportunity to tell their stories through the use of open-ended research questions. Student participants were asked a series of 18 questions in a semi-structured interview (see Appendix I). Diversity Administrators were asked a series of 10 open-ended questions in a semi-structured interview (see Appendix II). Administrators were asked fewer questions because of time constraints with regard to their occupational roles. In addition, I consciously attempted to avoid asking too many questions because I wanted the administrators to share their knowledge and insights and raise issues that I may not have thought to include in the interview schedule.

Bryman (2001) describes semi-structured interviews as a process whereby the researcher has a list of questions that are referred to as the interview guide. The

interview participant has a large degree of flexibility in how they may respond to the questions. Semi-structured interview questions may not necessarily be asked in order and some of the questions may not be asked at all (Bryman, 2001). The interviewer also has the flexibility to ask additional or probing questions that are based on prior responses.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) argue that knowledge is produced socially in through the interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee. The interview method allowed me to obtain additional information by observing my participants as they respond to the questions. I took field notes and memos that recorded observational details of the interview process. The limitation of surveys administered without the presence of the researcher is that they do not permit the acquisition of observational data. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) explain that narrative interviews should elicit stories from the participants. I was able to elicit stories that will be useful in learning about the research problem. I made every effort to let the stories emerge from the participants by establishing rapport, being flexible in my approach to the sequencing of questions, and attending to nuanced forms of non-verbal communication such as body language, gestures, and eye contact.

### **Methods: Critical Discourse Analysis**

For my analysis of documents, I reviewed a sample of diversity policy documents (11 at the Canadian university, 12 at the U.S. university), web sites (over 200 institutional web pages at both universities), diversity promotional material such as posters and brochures (8 at the Canadian University and 15 at the U.S. university),

and lastly admissions brochures (6 at the Canadian university and 7 at the U.S. university).

Kvale and Brinkman (2009) explain that classical hermeneutics involved the study of the interpretation of texts. Hermeneutics is study of meaning in texts that is not obvious in the sense that the meanings may not even be understood by the author (Margolis et al., 2001). The purpose of hermeneutical interpretation is to attempt to find a common understanding of the meaning of a text. Kvale and Brinkman (2009) contend that contemporary discourse analysis follows the hermeneutic tradition (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). There has also been an expansion of the definition of text to include speech acts and even actions (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). The use of discourse analysis in this study was for the epistemic aim of uncovering the meaning of texts.

For the analysis of textual data, I drew on Fairclough's (1995) approach to critical discourse analysis. Discourse is defined as language use conceived as a social practice (Fairclough, 1995). Fairclough (1989) uses the term discourse to refer to the whole process of social interaction of which a text is just a part of the process. This process includes the social conditions of production and the social conditions of interpretation of the text. I analyzed organizational literature such as web sites, newspapers, policies and advertisements related to diversity at the two institutions in this study.

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be a critical implement for the study of written, visual and spoken text. It can allow me to study how organizational diversity

in higher education has been constructed through language and how institutional power has shaped this language. The three dimensional framework includes an examination of text, discourse, and social practices. Fairclough's (1995) method is appropriate for this study because it focuses on linguistic analysis, intertextuality, and the study of social practices. Fairclough (1995) determined that organizational texts such as diversity statements or diversity messages on web sites play a role in constituting the relationship between personal and social identities.

Westerman (2010) claims that the way that institutional policies are discursively framed shapes how people are 'allowed' to perceive them. By examining institutional policies as discursive practices can reveal hegemonic processes and power relations. By studying policy texts and web site material, it enabled me to move beyond simple linguistic usage by examining material practices and their related consequences. By analyzing the discursive representation of social issues, it may illuminate the ways that situations are perceived by students and shape how they respond.

Fairclough (1995) describes a three-dimensional framework of framework for analysis. The first is discourse-as-text, which focuses on linguistic and organizational features such as the choice of vocabulary, sentence structure, or grammar. Text is the written or spoken language produced in a discursive event (Fairclough, 1995). An example of the discourse-as-text analysis might be to consider how the use of pronouns has been employed in institutional diversity literature. Fairclough (1989) also illustrates how the use of repeated words and phrases can reveal what the author

wishes to emphasize. The use of pronouns such as ‘we’ represent ideologies that stress the unity of people at the expense of individual interests (Fairclough, 1995). These shifts in agency are commonly seen in the literature of diversity management.

Fairclough (1995) considers discourses not just as mere texts, but as “orders of discourse” contextually ordered in time and space, and subject to social interaction.

Discourses belonging to intertextual realms such as diversity policy statements would be situated within the contemporary ‘Managing Diversity’ discourse of the corporate sector.

A second level of analysis considers discourse-as-discursive-practice, which refers to the heterogeneity of texts being constituted within the discourse (Fairclough, 1995). An intertextual approach helps one to understand how language can function within multiple texts and how meaning can be drawn from these artifacts. An example of discourse-as-discursive-practice is evident in the ways in which the web sites, print materials, and institutional policies reflect managerial discourses on diversity management. The third component is discourse-as-social practice, which importantly addresses the ideological and hegemonic processes through which relations of power can be reproduced. By studying social practices, I can accomplish the third component of Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model. This level is concerned with the relationship between the social context and the interaction (Fairclough, 1989).

I examined how diversity-related literature reflected ideologies and broader social meanings about how diversity functions in higher education. Critical discourse analysis can be used to map the forces that create institutional diversity discourses and

examine the reproductive effects of past and present practices. It allowed me to uncover the ways in which higher educational institutions use diversity to position subjects within relations of power. Fairclough's (1995) approach elucidates how social relationships are related to each other from their respective positions. I also considered how the institutional literature related to national discursive frameworks about diversity and multiculturalism.

### **Observation**

At both institutions, I was able to obtain voluntary positions that allowed me to conduct some participant observation of Black students. I also used these opportunities for recruitment of participants. At both institutions, I volunteered to participate in events sponsored by the campus student clubs or the main 'Intercultural Center'. This allowed me to interact with students and observe their social interactions. I followed Lofland et al.'s (2006) recommendation to record observational field notes on a daily basis during the data collection phase. The purpose of observational data collection was to observe social relationships such as faculty-student relationships, peer groups, cliques, subcultures, and hierarchies. This helped me to make sense of the Black students' experiences as they were recounted to me.

## **Institutional Profiles**

### **The Canadian University**

The Canadian university is a public research, doctoral granting institution that was originally as an extension of another larger university that was founded in the early 1800s. As of 2012, the undergraduate student population was just over 48,000 and the graduate student population is approximately 6,000. The university does not recognize fraternities or sororities.

Canadian universities do not gather statistics on race or ethnic identity of non-Aboriginal persons although several voluntary self-report surveys have been conducted in the past few decades. A voluntary self-report survey estimated that 40% of the student population identified as non-Aboriginal and non-Caucasian (visible minority). The university does not track admissions by race, and only administers voluntary surveys. By survey estimates provided by internal documents, the Black student population is approximately 3.5%.

Using data from the 2011-2012 Multi-Year Accountability Agreement submitted to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the Canadian University reported that the percentage of Aboriginal students was only 151 (0.4%) out of 40,763 undergraduate students . Aboriginals represent 2% of the Greater Toronto Area population and 4.3% of the Canadian population. The Black population in the city is approximately 9% of the Greater Toronto Area population and 2.9% of the total Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2011). Institutional data shows that

28.7% of the undergraduate student population in 2011-2012 were first generation students. The percentage and numbers of international students are recorded annually. International students comprise 6% of the total undergraduate population.

Table 3.5 International Students

In 2011-2012, *University* reported to TCU the following top 5 source countries for international students:

	Source Country	Number of International Students	International Students from Source Country as a Percentage of <i>University</i> Total Full-Time International Student Enrolment <sup>(*)</sup>
1.	China <sup>(*)</sup>	1,337 <sup>(*)</sup>	35.7% <sup>(*)</sup>
2.	India <sup>(*)</sup>	250 <sup>(*)</sup>	6.7% <sup>(*)</sup>
3.	Korea, South <sup>(*)</sup>	213 <sup>(*)</sup>	5.7% <sup>(*)</sup>
4.	Pakistan <sup>(*)</sup>	147 <sup>(*)</sup>	3.9% <sup>(*)</sup>
5.	United States <sup>(*)</sup>	139 <sup>(*)</sup>	3.7% <sup>(*)</sup>

Other internal data shows that 83% of the student population is from the greater Toronto area (GTA), 7% are from the rest of Ontario, and 10% from the rest of Canada or international. It is a commuter campus, with the majority of the students commuting in via public transit or car. An internal report also showed that the university had the lowest family income of its undergraduate students compared to other provincial institutions. The estimated family incomes of the Canadian University students are among the lowest in the province. In Canada, data from a 2010 Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) report shows that university teachers who self-report as Black constitute 1.6% of all university teachers, while comprising 2.2% of the overall academic labour force. See table 3.6 below:

Table 3.6 Visible Minority University Teachers

<b>Table 7 Visible Minority Identification* of Total Labour Force &amp; University Teachers, 2006 (% of total)</b>		
	<b>Total Labour Force</b>	<b>University Teachers</b>
Not a visible minority	84.6%	83.0%
South Asian	3.7%	3.3%
Chinese	3.9%	4.2%
Arab or West Asian	1.3%	2.8%
Black	2.2%	1.6%
Latin American	1.0%	0.9%
Japanese	0.3%	0.5%
Korean	0.4%	0.4%
Southeast Asian	0.7%	0.3%
Filipino	1.3%	0.2%
Other	0.5%	2.7%
<b>Total visible minority</b>	<b>15.3%</b>	<b>16.9%</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

\*Visible minority identification categories used here are taken directly from the Census.

Under the 1986 (amended in 1995) Federal Employment Equity Act, this university is required to produce an annual report with respect to the employment of four designated groups typically underrepresented in most organizational settings. The four groups are Visible Minorities, Women, Aboriginal Persons and Persons with Disabilities. Public organizations such as universities who receive goods and services over \$200,000 are required to report under the Federal Contractors Program (FCP).

The annual 2012 report included data mostly from full-time employees and excluded data from part-time academic faculty because the survey response rates in various departments ranged from 10% to 50%. A response rate of over 80% was required for inclusion in the Federal Contractors Program report. The CAUT (2010) report showed that visible minorities tended to be concentrated in part-time academic appointments. There was a 92% return rate for the 2012 Equity survey from all academic and non-academic staff.

The 2012 Equity Report found that visible minorities (non-Aboriginal, non-Caucasian) comprised 16.5% of the academic staff , and 28% of non-academic staff, and 24.6% of all staff in general. Based on the Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT) data, we can ascertain that the Black faculty would be less than three percent.

### **The American University**

The American university is a public research state university and is a doctoral granting institution. It is a member of the Association of American Universities and was founded in the mid-1800s. In 2012, the university had a total student population of 29, 117 of which 9,500 were graduate students. In 2012, the university reported that the undergraduate Black student population was 6.6%., 9% Asian, and 3% Latin American. A 2012 diversity report published on the university web site showed that the percentage of full-time faculty who were Asian/Pacific Islander was 13.2%, Black or African-American 4.3%, Latin American 1.9%, and American Indian or Alaska Native 0.5%. With the exception of Asian Americans, the faculty representation does not match the undergraduate demographics.

Table 3.7 Undergraduate Enrollment 2012

	Degree-seeking First-time First year	Degree-seeking Undergraduates	Total Undergraduates (degree and non-degree)
Nonresident aliens	431	3,165	3,285
Hispanic	259	1,283	1,314
Black or African American, non-Hispanic	211	1,307	1,346
White, non-Hispanic	1,746	9,587	9,774
American Indian or Alaskan Native, non-Hispanic	4	40	40
Asian, non-Hispanic	607	2,490	2,535
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic	4	15	15
Two or more races, non-Hispanic	97	399	401
Race/ethnicity unknown	294	1,079	1,121
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,653</b>	<b>19,365</b>	<b>19,831</b>

Data on race and retention were available for the American university. The four-year graduation rate for Black students was 20.4% in 2007 and rose to 25.3% by 2012. The five-year graduation rate for Black students was 42.9% in 2007 and 51.1% by 2012. For White students, the four-year graduation rate was 43.7% in 2007 and rose to 45% by 2012. The five-year graduation rate was 59.5% in 2007 and rose to 66.2% by 2012. Comparing data across all ethnic groups shows a significant gap in the graduation rates between Black students and other students from 2007 to 2012. Data from a 2012 report from the National Center for Education Statistics shows that 73% of White students who enroll in college will graduate within six years (Ross et al., 2012). For Black and Hispanic students, only 50% will graduate within six years (Ross et al, 2012).

In 2009, a survey of 1,000 undergraduate students at the American University was conducted by a professor in the American Studies department. He found that 100 percent of the Black students surveyed reported experiencing discrimination on

campus, 77 percent of Asian students, and 15% of the Latin American students. In a campus newspaper account of the study, the professor and the research team expressed surprise at the results and promised to conduct follow-up studies on the topic using qualitative interviews.

Table 3.8 Graduation rates for Black students 2007-2012

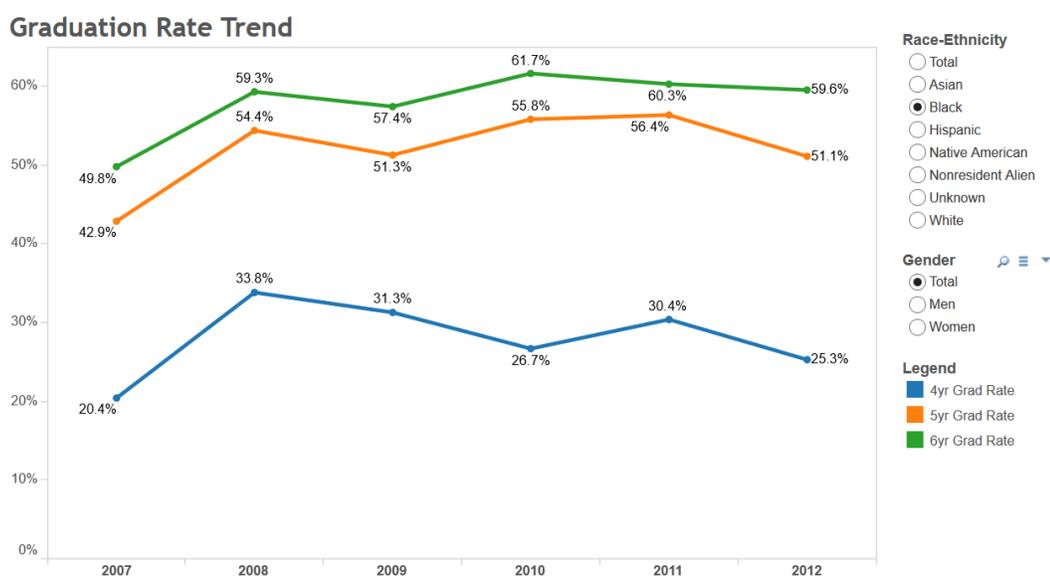


Table 3.9 Graduation Rate for White Students 2007-2012

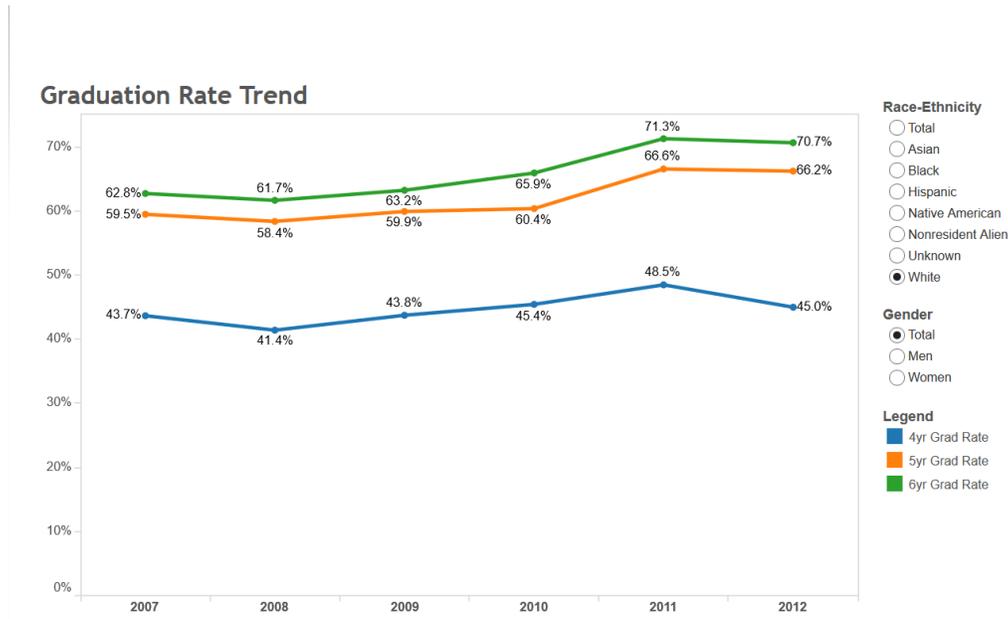
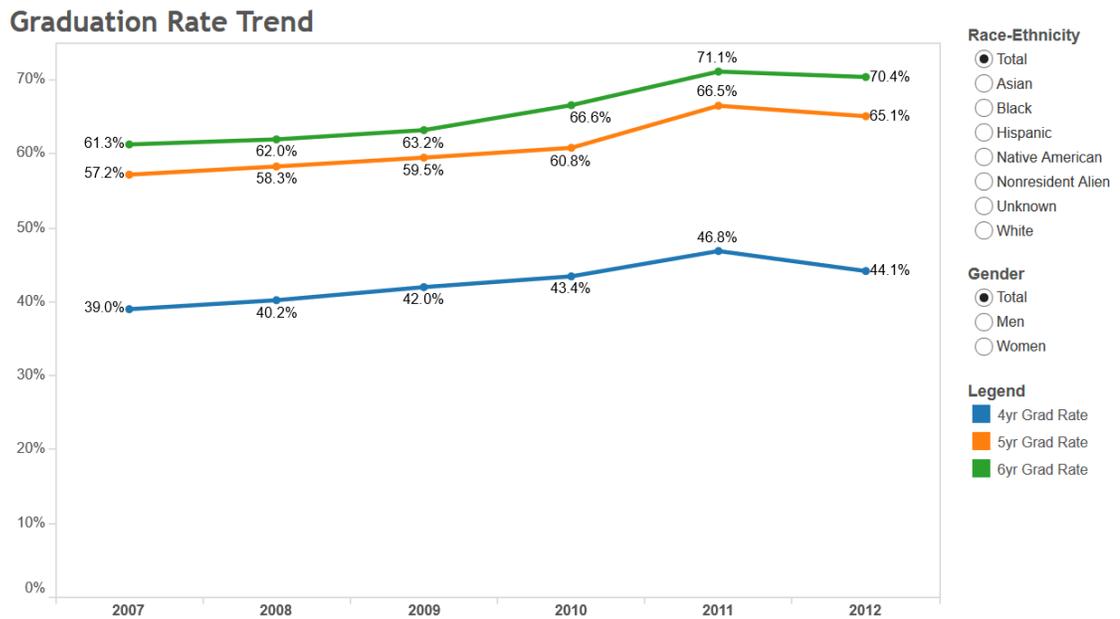


Table 3.10 Graduation Rate for All\_



## **Methods of Data Analysis**

The data analysis was primarily focused on texts and qualitative interview data. For general analysis, I utilized the cross-case analysis method described by Stake (2006). Common themes were identified across both cases and refined into what Stake (2006) describes as ‘Assertions’ which constitute one’s findings. As Stake (2006) argues, it is important not only to examine the similarity between cases but also the differences. I also sought to discover differences through the analysis of the data. The key function of cross-case analysis is to analyze each case and apply the findings to the initial research questions (Stake, 2006).

Using Fairclough’s (1995) three-dimensional framework for analysis, I analyzed the following texts in addition to interview data: diversity-related policy documents, diversity-related advertisements, diversity-related material on the institution’s web site, and campus newspapers. For the interview data, I utilized methods of thematic narrative analysis (Riessman, 2008). Riessman (2008) explains that thematic analysis differs from structural analysis in that the emphasis is on ‘the told’ rather than the manner of ‘telling.’ Nevertheless, I included field notes to capture some of the additional aspects of the interviews that would not have been captured through mere audio recording. With thematic analysis, there is less attention given to the subjective elements of speech production than the content of the speech (Riessman, 2008).

I do recognize as Riessman (2008) contends, that my interpretations were guided by my theoretical approach. I believe that these methods allowed me to generate rich data about the complexities of Black student experiences and the use of diversity-

related discursive practices at the university. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) argue that narrative values people's lived experiences.

Chase (2005) argues that counter narratives can emerge from stories told by visible minority group members who can challenge metanarratives of cultural deficit. The interview data was coded using the Atlas Ti software program. Data transcription and analysis began in September 2011 and continued to January 2013. The Atlas Ti Both software program permits the user to perform line-by-line coding of the data. These software programs also allow for the tracking of co-occurring codes and the creation of family of codes. By creating a family of codes, it allowed me to identify themes in the interview data.

Coding began with the first set of 10 transcribed interviews in order to develop theoretical categories for analysis (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001). After the first interview was transcribed, it was analyzed through line-by-line and coding with conceptual codes to identify incidents or facts that related to the central research questions.

This method was utilized in order to determine whether the interview questions required revision. Saldana (2009) outlines first and second cycle coding methods. First cycle coding methods are used to provide the framework for more refined codes during second cycle coding. The first coding method used in this study was descriptive coding. Descriptive codes summarize the content or action in brief phrases (see Table 3.11).

The second cycle of coding to be used was focused coding (see Table 3.12). Focused coding assigns categories to a selection of phrases that can be then used to identify themes (Saldana, 2009). According to Glaser (1978), the goal of the analyst is to generate an emergent set of categories that are relevant to the theory. To achieve the goal the analyst begins with open coding, which is coding the data line-by-line in every way possible until categories and eventually theory emerges. After the first interviews, subsequent interview data analyses completed by checking the codes against the codes of the first interview and amending or adding codes as necessary.

During the process of coding, I began the process of theoretical memo-making. Maxwell (2005) advocates for memo-making throughout the data gathering process. Glaser (1978) argued that the core stage in theory generation is the product of writing theoretical memos. Memos allow the researcher to further analyze the conceptual codes in relation to one another. The memos contain predictions about which categories would emerge, how codes were related to one another, and whether certain codes were duplicated. The codes were used to develop themes in the final analysis. After the data collection and analysis had been completed, the identified categories and themes were gathered and used to develop an outline for the first draft of the dissertation.

Table 3.11 First Cycle Descriptive Coding

Type of Coding	Assigned Code	Sample phrases or sentences coded
Descriptive (Saldana, 2003; 2009)	Adjustment	<p><i>When I came here that first week wasn't so bad</i>  <i>When I first got here</i>  <i>I knew I had to study but I didn't know how to study</i>  <i>I did really well my freshman years</i>  <i>When I started out I was ready to transfer but now I've adjusted to it</i></p>
	Black Identity	<p><i>I'm black but I've been told I have a pretty quote unquote white personality</i>  <i>I don't do Ebonics, I enunciate</i>  <i>I have an issue as a young one growing up, I was called an Oreo</i>  <i>I mean if they want to challenge my Blackness they can</i></p>
	Campus Segregation	<p><i>Let's see, it seems like the Asians have their own group, definitely they keep to themselves.</i>  <i>Most of the time, they keep to themselves. African-Americans like.</i>  <i>Asians talk to Asians in the Asian language. Blacks talk to Blacks, Latinos talk to Latinos.</i>  <i>People do kind of stick to their own groups.</i></p>
	Defining Diversity: Institutional	<p><i>They get students from all over the world</i>  <i>Let's see, I'm pretty sure [American U]like promotes the idea of diversity.</i></p>

		<p><i>They encourage things but not successfully</i></p> <p><i>Meeting their quota for each face</i></p> <p><i>Having a lot of different students</i></p> <p><i>They do define it by race a lot, and then I'd say, next would be by sexual preference.</i></p> <p><i>I think for [American U] it's about international relationships, becoming a global institution.</i></p>
	Defining Diversity: Self	<p><i>A group of people with differences</i></p> <p><i>What different people can actually do together</i></p> <p><i>It encompasses so many things</i></p> <p><i>Different people from different backgrounds</i></p> <p><i>Different cultures coming together and learning from each other</i></p>
	EOP Program	<p><i>I'm pretty sure people think I'm in the EOP program</i></p> <p><i>The majority of the black population's coming to the EOP program</i></p> <p><i>I have an EOP advisor and then I have a psych advisor for the psych program.</i></p>
	Experience with Black Profs	<p><i>That was the only African-American prof I had here</i></p> <p><i>I also like seeing a Black professor</i></p> <p><i>Yes I've had a few Black professors</i></p> <p><i>Only one guy comes to mind and he doesn't teach here anymore</i></p> <p><i>I had one Black professor in my junior yet. That's it.</i></p>

	Experience with White profs	<p><i>All I'm seeing is just White professors</i>  <i>I'm pretty distant with most of my professors</i>  <i>They're helpful but to a point</i>  <i>I had to bust my butt to get the grades that I needed and I received no help. All I got was 'Well, the material is this and do this and this.'</i></p>
	Experience with Institutional Media	<p><i>I have seen flyers and stuff in the Student Centre</i>  <i>Yeah like pamphlets and stuff</i>  <i>I've seen them around campus, like advertisements</i>  <i>I noticed the ads and me and my friends joke</i>  <i>If you go to the (American U) web page you always see diversity something</i></p>
	Financial Status	<p><i>It's generally underrepresented people who have problems with money</i>  <i>I have financial aid and I do work study</i>  <i>It's just not fair because like people like from other like backgrounds can't afford these things</i></p>
	Institutional Racism	<p><i>Somebody wrote the N word on the wall</i>  <i>I hate Black students they only make Cs.</i>  <i>The teachers think let's get this ghetto girl</i>  <i>They use us as a token</i>  <i>I'm not going to say the administration's racist but</i></p>

		<p><i>some people are just outright racist</i></p> <p><i>Because when you walk through the building you only see like two or three Black people</i></p>
	Interracial Dating	<p><i>Like the football players, all they date is white girls</i></p> <p><i>So I don't really mind interracial dating, if you ask my mum that's a whole another story</i></p> <p><i>It doesn't bother me when Caucasian women are with black males</i></p> <p><i>They see White girls as being exotic</i></p>
	Interracial Friendships	<p><i>I had roommates who weren't black it just helped me out.</i></p> <p><i>I'd say I have like a diverse group of friends.</i></p> <p><i>The funny thing about the white friends I got, it's mostly a common link between like either smoking or drinking.</i></p>
	Perceptions of Institutional Commitment to Diversity	<p><i>I think overall I guess the University does a decent job with the blacks, because I mean they want anyone to have like kind of a club.</i></p> <p><i>They're committed to diversity but not equal diversity</i></p> <p><i>I think they put up a good front</i></p>
	Personal Experience of Racism	<p><i>We were living in the dorms and this guy on the floor was a little bit, particularly racist.</i></p> <p><i>Mind you, I'm the only black female in the class</i></p>

		<i>and now you have enraged me!</i>
	Racial Identification	<i>I think first I am Caribbean American then I am black. I don't care if it's African American or black I just usually go by black I generally say African American</i>
	Racial Micro aggressions	<i>I feel like most white people are afraid to say anything to the blacks here. He was asking a lot of like racial things that was uncalled for</i>
	Sexual Identity	<i>I think homophobia is like one of those things that people are starting out to be a little shy about expressing When I'm out with my partner, who is male</i>
	Stereotypes	<i>For the African American community themselves I feel like more, more like stereotypes are placed on them. Like when they see me, they pretty much think that like I'm the stereotype like I would try to rob them, take their money They still think that you are a football player.</i>

Table 3.12 Second Cycle Descriptive Coding

Type of Coding	Assigned Category	Sample phrases or sentences coded
Focused (Saldana, 2003; 2009)	Classroom experiences	<p><i>The only Black person in that class</i></p> <p><i>From like 25 to 300 is definitely a change (class size)</i></p> <p><i>People in class staring at me</i></p> <p><i>You get the occasional looks and stares</i></p> <p><i>The professor probably thinks 'You don't need to be there'</i></p>
	Campus experiences	<p><i>You see all the Greeks and whites stick together</i></p> <p><i>I attended frosh week</i></p> <p><i>Campus events at the student center</i></p> <p><i>Campus security stopped me</i></p> <p><i>I don't know if the university really does that much to encourage like blending of cultures</i></p> <p><i>There's always something...a diversity event</i></p> <p><i>They're always having diversity something in the student center.</i></p>
	Constructions of Diversity	<p><i>What different people can actually do together</i></p> <p><i>Bringing people together</i></p> <p><i>Embraces diversity here</i></p> <p><i>Not as diverse as it could be</i></p>
	Identity	<p><i>I'm a New Yorker</i></p>

		<i>I'm a person of color who is trying really hard not to be another statistic.</i>
	Institutional Media	<i>So you do see diversity all throughout the pamphlets. I have seen pictures I think that there are posters that advertise what each institution, club or organization is about</i>
	Racism	<i>A lot of racial tension here There's like two persons, particularly, one who—I really like to say this but I think he was just racist</i>
	Relationships	<i>I guess I'm a little disappointed that like I'm not more immersed within people that look like me It's about international relationships During my first semester, I had two white roommates</i>

## **Validity**

Validity is an important concern for any research project within the social sciences. Triangulation through the use of multiple methods that include individual interviews, discourse analysis and administrative interviews will enhance the validity of my findings. Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest that validity remains a contentious issue among various interpretive paradigms. Post-modern theorists may argue that truth cannot be determined through any particular method whereas positivists argue that there is a determinable, objective truth. I will appraise the validity of this study using what Denzin and Lincoln (2003) refer to as 'validity as authenticity.' Through

authenticity, a researcher can focus on the process and outcomes of inquiry. The authenticity criteria include fairness, educative authenticity, and catalytic authenticity. By fairness, this means that the perspectives of all stakeholders and participants should be reflected in the text. By educational authenticity, the researchers refer to a raised level of awareness about the issue for the participants and those who surround them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). Catalytic authenticity refers to the ability of any given inquiry to prompt action on the part of the research participants. This may be social or political action prompted through participation in the research study. It is hoped that the findings of this study will include these tenets.

I planned to be on the alert for what Maxwell (2005) refers to as “competing explanations and discrepant data (p.126).” This means that I conducted my data analysis in a method that sought out alternative explanations for the observed phenomena and to give voice to data that disconfirms the themes identified in the data analysis. To mitigate the confirmation bias in my study based on my adopted theoretical framework, I was careful to analyze disconfirming cases in chapter six.

My validity measures also involved participant review and feedback. I selected a sample of my original participants to share the preliminary findings with for their feedback. I also emailed each participant a copy of their transcribed interview for feedback and noted if any clarification was necessary. Newkirk (1996) claims that researchers should allow the participant the right of co-interpretation, despite the fact that it may conflict with the researcher’s opinion. This allows researchers to challenge the relations of power during the research process. Another form of validity check that

I chose was to present the preliminary findings at several related conferences. I presented preliminary findings at the 2012 Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) in St. Louis, MO, U.S.A. In 2014 I presented the final results at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Conference in Philadelphia, PA, U.S.A. Through the conference presentations, I was able to receive feedback about the validity of my findings and received support for the arguments I developed from the findings.

Lastly, the role of the researcher needs to be scrutinized. Guba and Lincoln (1981) maintain that reflexivity is the process of reflecting critically on the self. They assert that reflexivity forces us to reflect upon our choice of research problem, the research we initiate, and our multiple identities within the research setting. While reflexivity complicates the research process, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), it also allows for a more dynamic examination of the findings.

## **Conclusion**

This project contributes to existing research in three broad areas. This study has extended the literature on Black student experiences in higher education. Few studies have compared the U.S. and Canadian social contexts. Although there is a great deal of literature on Black student experiences and campus racial climates, this study extends the existing research by critically examining how students articulate their experiences in response to diversity discourses.

This study also connected organizational discourse to student experiences through two rich methods of analysis. My study demonstrated how institutional messages can influence the perceptions of organizational members. The third area of relevance is policy analysis in higher education. My study critically examined the linkages between policy and practice, a fundamental organizational problem. The following chapter will present a critical discourse analysis of diversity-related policies and selected media.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DIVERSITY-RELATED MEDIA**

One of the research questions in chapter one asked ‘How are diversity discourses manifested in university policy statements, web sites, brochures, and posters?’ The textual and visual analysis in this chapter was an attempt to respond to that question. It also helped to provide some insights about how both universities have conceptualized diversity. The textual and visual analysis showed that both universities conceptualized diversity as differences in visible social identities. All media drew from the language of promotional discourses and both universities were explicit about promoting the diversity of its student body as a competitive differentiator. The institutional emphasis was on the diversity of the student population and the image of at least one African-American or African-Canadian appeared in most media samples reviewed. Lastly, the textual analysis of documents showed that managerial diversity discourses were fully integrated in brochures, web sites, and policy statements.

Most universities and colleges in North America have published formal statements about diversity (Ahmed, 2012; Anderson, G., 2006; Ayers, 2005; Chan, 2005; Henry & Tator, 2009; Iverson, 2007; Westerman, 2010). These statements appear in print documents and on university web sites. Many contend that the purpose of a diversity statement is to demonstrate the institution’s commitment to social inclusion (Ahmed, 2012; Bartkus and Glassman, 2008; Carnevale & Stone, 1994; Davis, 2002; Elmes & Connelley, 1997; Hays-Thomas, 2004), while some contend that such statements serve as public displays of good corporate citizenship (Ahmed,

2012; Mayo, 1999; Tong, 2002; Wade, 2004). Formal diversity statements are accompanied by diversity-related media which appear in posters, web site content, brochures and pamphlets.

Higher educational institutions are also particular sites of capitalist reproduction (Aronowitz, 2000; Ayers, 2005; Giroux, 2001; Kezar, 2004). The influence of capitalism and neoliberal ideology is evident in the approach that universities take when addressing diversity. Modern institutions of higher learning are increasingly structured along a capitalist model of governance (Bassett, 2006; Brown & Clignet, 2000; Morely, 2003). This system of governance influences how diversity policies and practices are implemented within an institution. Herring and Henderson (2011) write that diversity discourses arose as a neoliberal response to affirmative action. Diversity rhetoric conveys racial inclusion in a manner that is politically more neutral that offsets radical voices. This rhetoric has been used to broaden the consideration of groups to include those without historical disadvantage (Edelman et al, 2001, cited in Herring and Henderson, 2011).

Edelman, Riggs, and Mara-Drita (2001) argue that diversity rhetoric has become quite pervasive in organizational management discourse. In multiple organizational settings, the leadership expresses the values and virtues of 'diversity' by publicly claiming to 'value' or 'embrace' diversity. Throughout this chapter, I will be examining the ways that diversity in higher education can be linked to capitalist reproduction. I also explore the ways in which these discourses serve as a form of 'hidden curriculum.' Jackson (1990) described the 'hidden curriculum' as a form of

tacit, unspoken set of rules, norms, and values that were not explicitly communicated in academic settings. I wish to posit that the diversity-related media found in higher educational institutions can function as a form of 'hidden curriculum.' These diversity-related media perform the implicit function of socializing organizational members into accepting its claims of inclusivity.

In this chapter, I draw on Fairclough's (2010) and Gee's (2009) theories of critical discourse analysis. I can only claim to draw on critical discourse analysis because it is a form of analysis rooted in sociolinguistics. Fairclough (1995;2010) defines discourse as the use of language embedded within social practices. Critical discourse analysis is about ideology and the relations of power that underlie language usage (Fairclough, 2010). Fairclough (1995; 2010) provides an expansive definition of critical discourse analysis that includes the elements of the dialectical, the relational, and the transdisciplinary.

Critical discourse analysis maintains a focus on complex and layered social relations (Fairclough 1995; 2010). These social relationships may include power relationships between objects, other individuals, or institutions (Fairclough, 1995; 2010). By dialectical Fairclough (1995; 2010) asserts that objects and individuals within institutions are in conversation with one another. The element of the relational corresponds to a set of internal and external relationships of power. Lastly, the transdisciplinary nature of discourse analysis means that there are many other discourses embedded within a single discourse that comes from such disciplines as history, politics, economics, and sociology among others.

Gee (1999) explains that discourses can be primary and secondary. Primary discourses are influenced by our formative social identities that are reinforced through socialization in the family. Secondary discourses arise as we are socialized into institutions external to our family. Fairclough (2010) asserts that the main focus of critical discourse analysis is the study of social relations. Fairclough (2010) contends that the world is discursively constructed but it is through power relations that we can determine which discourses have which degree of effect on society. Critical discourse analysis also assumes that there is a real ‘world’ and the position adopted is one of ‘critical realism.’ (Fairclough, 1995).

In this chapter, I draw on Fairclough’s (1995; 2010) approach to critical discourse analysis (CDA). Critical discourse analysis can be a critical tool for the study of written text. It can allow me to study how organizational diversity in higher education has been constructed through language and how institutional power has shaped this language. The three dimensional framework includes an examination of text, discourse, and social practices. Fairclough’s (1995; 2010) method is appropriate for this study because it focuses on linguistic analysis, intertextuality, and the study of social practices. These elements can be gleaned through an examination of the diversity-related media I have sampled. I selected a sample of policy documents, posters, web site content, brochures and pamphlets for analysis at both universities.

In keeping with Fairclough’s (1995) three dimensional approach to the study of discourse, the first task was to study the text of each sample. Fairclough (2010) suggests that there are two components to textual analysis. The first component is the

linguistic, which comprises the vocabulary and the ways that words are organized. Within linguistic analysis there exists a multimodal analysis that includes semiotics, visual images, sound, smell, and bodily movement. The second form of analysis is to study the interdiscursive component. This includes an analysis of the rich variety of both social and institutional discourses that are entrenched within a particular discourse. Critical discourse analysis is also a social critique of language usage within a particular context.

For the sampled diversity media artifacts, I used a computer software program to do word frequency counts and phrasal frequency counts. I also analyzed metaphors and the exclusion of words commonly referred to when discussing diversity in contemporary institutional life. This constituted the lexical ways in which the social actors of the university institution are constructed through textual representation. Gee (1999) notes that ‘small d’ discourses represent linguistic usage that institutional members use to establish and maintain membership within a group.

The second dimension of Fairclough’s (1995; 2010) approach was to study the intertextuality of discourses. An intertextual approach helps one to understand how language can function within multiple texts and how meaning can be drawn from these artifacts. I compared the texts of the diversity media to the managerial discourse literature from the corporate sector.

The third dimension of Fairclough’s (1995; 2010) approach was to examine broader social practices. This correlates with what Gee (1999) refers to as ‘big D’ discourses which integrate language with other societal discourses. When considering

social practices, ideology is an important element. Ideological discursive formations (IDF) are speech communities with their own ideological norms (Fairclough, 2010). When an ideological discursive formation becomes dominant, it then naturalizes ideologies.

Fairclough (2010) discusses naturalization in relation to Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony. Hegemony is the dominant ideology which reflects the values of the ruling class in a particular society. Hegemonic discourses become part of the everyday ideas about institutional norms. Dominant ideological discursive formations (IDFs) are characterized by an ability to naturalize ideologies (Fairclough, 1995; 2010). One major function of critical discourse analysis is to elucidate the normalization. The social institution of the university is a speech community as well as an ideological community. Institutions also construct individual members both ideologically and discursively (Fairclough, 1995; 2010). I studied how the diversity-related media reflect the ideologies and broader social meanings about diversity in U.S. and Canadian higher education.

### **Analysis of Diversity-Related Media**

Forty of the forty-two participants in this study reported that they had seen diversity-related media on campus or prior to matriculation. For this study, diversity-related media from 2009-2013 were sampled. The rationale for the time period is that it represented the media available during the period each student would have been enrolled in the program. One sample of the following four types of media was analyzed in detail: admissions brochures, web sites, posters, and diversity policy

documents. It was beyond the scope of my research project to code and analyze every sample taken over that period, so one representative example was selected. Each of the samples reproduced here are in the public domain. The images can be found either online or in the university library archives.

Overall, the U.S. University had a richer variety and more comprehensive diversity-related media than the Canadian university. This posed challenges for data collection since I attempted to obtain samples from each of the years of analysis for each form of media. My method for the presentation of findings here is to first use Fairclough's (2010) method to analyze a sample of each form of diversity-related media and then to summarize the overall findings for the U.S. and Canadian context. In order to protect the anonymity of the university, I have provided summary descriptions of text for the web sites, posters, and policy documents.

### **CDA: Admissions Brochures**

The majority (26) of the participants recalled seeing diversity-related pamphlets and brochures that were mailed to their residences upon acceptance to the university. Fourteen were U.S. students and 12 were Canadian. Through the admissions department at each campus, I was able to access a sample of admissions brochures sent to each admitted student from 2009-2013. There are two types of brochures typically produced—admissions brochures and recruitment brochures. I elected to study the admissions brochures since these were what the participants in the study claimed to have reviewed prior to entering the university. In some cases, I was able to obtain a hard copy of the brochure, and in other instances I was provided with an

electronic copy of the admissions brochures. In addition, various departments also produced their own admissions brochures for specialized academic programs. At the U.S. university, I was told that freelance writers were contracted to write the admissions and recruitment brochures.

Following up on this, I found the web site of a freelancer who displayed samples of the admissions brochures on her business site. The freelance graphic artists and writers who create the brochures use stock images in some instances. A stock image is a photo taken by a photographer that can be used for multiple purposes such as magazines, newsletters, and other documents.

As I learned from one of the diversity administrators, some departments elect to use real students in their promotional media, but most are created by freelance graphic artists and writers. One representative sample of each type of media will be analyzed using Fairclough's (2010) method for the critical discourse analysis of text. One finding was that the admissions brochures were very similar from year to year. Each contained content that was slightly revised and supplemented by different images. In order to ensure the anonymity of the university, the content of the media will be described in instances where the university logo and branding appeared to identify the institution.

*Figure 4.1. Admissions brochure from the Canadian University*



The above five page, fold-out brochure included an equal proportion of text and images. The cover page depicted the text ‘Welcome to [Canadian University]’ with the university logo prominently displayed in the top right-hand corner. Near the bottom was a photo of two females and one male walking on the campus grounds. The female to the far left appeared to be White. The female beside her appeared to be South Asian and the male appeared to be Asian. Page two depicts an image of the university student campus center with the words ‘Welcome to [Canadian University]’ at the top of the page. The remainder of the page contains the following text:

- i) [Canadian University] is Canada’s leading interdisciplinary teaching and research
- ii) university, offering a modern academic experience at both the undergraduate and

- iii) graduate levels in Toronto — Canada’s financial hub and most international city.
- iv) [Canadian University’s [name deleted] campus is a self-contained community and a
- v) global centre for research and information... [Canadian University’s] vibrant, safe
- vi) communities achieve a perfect balance of academic and extracurricular activities,
- vii) resulting in a welcoming environment that beckons students from all over the world.

On the right side of the page two, the title read: ‘[Canadian University] Offers the Best of Canada’ and lists factual information about the university. The factual information included size, number of campuses, and the number of graduate and undergraduate students. The subtitle on the page was ‘Research and Innovation’ and the text described notable research activities worldwide. It described student opportunities for research participation and overseas research experiences. There are two images on the page. One showed three males wearing white lab coats inside a laboratory. The male in the middle appeared to be of South Asian descent and the other two were White males. On page three, the title read: ‘You’re Career Starts at [Canadian University].’ Beneath the title were descriptions of career services, internship options, and international internship experiences. The right side of the page

was titled ‘Academic Strengths.’ This section included a description of the degree programs offered, libraries, academic and athletic facilities, and research facilities.

The last page focused on the variety of student services offered. There was an image on each side of the page showing a diverse group of students either engaged in conversation on the campus lawn or standing in front of a building. On the left side of the page was the title ‘Fostering Student Success’ and contained information about scholarships, bursaries, and counselling services. On the right side it read: ‘Diversity on Campus’ with information about religious spaces on campus, the diversity of its student population, and the number of campus groups. The subtitle on the page read: ‘[Canadian University] values diversity and is committed to promoting a culture of mutual respect and inclusivity on campus.’ The back page of the brochure contains only the university contact information.

### **Text**

Fairclough (2010) notes that an institution projects an identity through textual representation. The text that comprises a document is considered by Fairclough (2010) to constitute a discursive event. According to Fairclough’s (2010) explication, the university projects an identity that is personalized and self-promotional. Instead of ‘we’ the name of the university is repeated in several paragraphs of self-promotional discourse. In the numbered excerpt above from the first page, lines 1 through 4 are self-promotional statements. Students are only mentioned in line 7 with the statement that the above conditions present at the university create an environment that ‘beckons students from all over the world.’

The remainder of the brochure is also replete with promotional discourses about the success of the university in research and innovation. This document not only included the university logo on each page, but the name of the university was mentioned 24 times in total (see Table 4.1). Using an online tool for phrasal frequency, I found that the most commonly used phrase was the '[Canadian University] is committed to' which appeared six times. Self-referents such as the above and the next most common 'on campus' position the university as the central focus. The self-promotional discourse can also be evidenced through the text in the brochure about 'valuing' diversity and inclusivity on campus.

The images that appeared in the document depicted groups of racially diverse students with the minority students shown in the center or the foreground. For the page about research innovation, only males were shown in the laboratory, with a South Asian male in the foreground. No images of faculty are included in the brochure. No students with visible disabilities are included either. For each image, no more than one representative of each racial group is included, with the exception of White students.

Table 4.1 Word and phrasal frequency analysis

Word or phrase	Frequency count
The [Canadian University] is committed to	6
On campus	5
International students	3

Top employers	3
<b>Words</b>	
[Canadian University]	24
Students	12
Worldwide	3
Community	3
Welcoming	2
Global	2

### **Discursive Practice**

Fairclough (2010) contends that institutional discourses such as the ones present in this brochure sample include elements of intertextuality. Intertextuality refers to the insertion of text from other discursive practices into another merged text (Fairclough, 1995). The above excerpt illustrates how multiple texts can comprise a single discursive event. The language in the brochure draws on several other genres of language and institutional ‘speech communities.’ (Fairclough, 2010). Fairclough (2010) defines a genre as the language associated with a certain social activity. The three genres identified include advertising, economic discourses and managerial diversity discourses. The entire document is written as a promotional discourse and

draws on the language of advertising by utilizing vocabulary such as ‘leading’ which is commonly used in advertising to make claims about an organization in relation to other organizations.

The language in the brochure also draws on economics and managerial discourse in line 3 when describing the location as a financial ‘hub.’ The sub-title ‘Research and Innovation’ is another appropriation of corporate language. The other discourse genre is from corporate diversity management. As discussed in chapter two, managerial diversity discourses in the corporate sector tend to overuse phrases involving the ‘valuing’ or ‘embracing’ of diversity (Edelman, Riggs, and Mara-Drita, 2001).

### **Social Practice**

Fairclough (2010) notes that institutional discourses are both constituted by and reinforced by social practices. In the example described, the ideological influence of globalization is evidenced throughout the brochure. Universities in Canada and the United States market themselves globally and position themselves in a competitive market for students (Kezar, 2004). In line 5, the word ‘global’ appears, along with ‘international’ in line 3, and ‘world’ in the final line. As noted in later chapters, attracting international students fits into an economic imperative partly because of the higher fees paid by international students.

At the Canadian university, there were multilingual recruitment brochures targeted at the international students. I obtained copies of the versions titled U.S., Africa, the Caribbean, India, and China. In each of the cases, only the front page

differed significantly. The front page contained an image of a White female student for the U.S. brochure, a Black male student for the African and Caribbean brochures, a South Asian female for the Indian brochure and a Chinese male for the Chinese brochure. In most instances only the images were altered and the text was similarly reproduced for each brochure.

The other influence is the ideology of the market and capitalism. Taken as a whole, the brochure assures students that the university places them at a competitive global advantage to gain the skills necessary to 'compete' in the global marketplace. The careers section of the brochure emphasizes the human capital dimension and its value in society. The brochure illustrates the ideological discursive formations external to the institution that are associated with everyday, taken-for-granted discourses within the institution.

### **Overall findings for Images in the Brochures**

The ten brochures sampled contained between fifteen and thirty-three images. The majority of the brochures contained at least four images of a university building alone with no people. In one instance the main campus building was portrayed and the images of the students were deliberately blurred out so that the reader's eye would focus on the building. All ten of the brochures included at least five images of multicultural groups of young adults. These young adults were engaged in three main activities: walking together, sitting together, or standing together in a group. In some cases it was difficult to determine the race/ethnicity of the young people portrayed in the brochures. For example Native American or Latin American individuals may

appear to be White. My racial breakdown of the ten brochures was based on my inspection of the images.

At the Canadian university there were 96 White students, 72 South Asian/Middle Eastern students, 25 Asian, and 21 Black. For the U.S. University, I counted 135 White students, 84 African-American, 36 Asians, and 24 Latin Americans. One interesting observation was that when a single student was depicted in an image, it was more likely to be an ethnic minority. Of the 27 single images of young people depicted in the brochures at both universities, 19 appeared to be Black, South Asian, or Latin American. Notably absent from the 10 brochures examined were photos of 'mature' students over the age of 30, students with physical disabilities, or students who appeared to be visibly gay, lesbian, or gender non-conforming. Another interesting observation was that of the few images of professors or instructional staff, the vast majority were White. There were four photos of Asian professors and only three photos of Black/African-American professors. Several brochures included a welcome by the Dean that was accompanied by a photo. Nine of the ten Deans included in the brochures were White. When a young person was portrayed in a role of 'helper' they were always White. By 'helper' I refer to a photo of a White student in a helping role such as teacher of young children, assisting the elderly, or performing service work abroad in developing countries.

The group images convey a sense of racial harmony to the observer. If one can consider it a 'hidden curriculum', it could potentially be used as one method to socialize students into accepting a culture of presumed inclusivity. Based on

demographics, the brochures were correct in portraying White students in the majority position. The demographic representation of the brochures was inaccurate for the visible minorities.

For example, the Black/African American population at both U.S. and Canadian universities was less than seven per cent. An obvious effort was made to ensure that they were represented in most of the brochures. What may be ignored is the response that minority students may have to this type of representation. For example, all departmental brochures tended to depict Black students in higher ratios than their actual representation on campus. As will be discussed in chapter five, this portrayal was interpreted by some of the Black students as an attempt to mislead them, although most of the students acknowledged that they were not genuinely misled by the images. It was the *attempt* to mislead that they found problematic.

### **U.S. and Canadian differences**

The Canadian university was significantly more likely portray South Asians or Middle Eastern students in their images. At the U.S. University, only two images depicted Middle Eastern students wearing a hijab (head scarf). Seven images of the hijab were found in the Canadian brochures. South Asian Canadians from India, Pakistan or Bangladesh number approximately 1.3 million and comprise about 4 per cent of the Canadian population but 12.3 % of the population of the city where the university is located (Statistics Canada, 2011). In July 2014 there was a campus hate incident directed at members of the South Asian community at this campus. An anti-immigrant hate group distributed flyers depicting 1968 class photos (almost all White)

and a campus photo of 2014 students (many South Asians and Asians). This incident is discussed in chapter seven. Another finding was that the U.S. brochures contained more graphic images than the Canadian brochures and generally had a higher page count.

### **CDA: Web sites**

Web sites are another important source of institutional diversity discourses. Although almost every university student interviewed claimed that they had visited the campus web site in order to obtain admissions information, only a small number of participants (four) recalled the specific web site content and images. All participants who reported this attended the U.S. university. The U.S. university had more comprehensive and cohesive information about diversity policies and practices on its web site than the Canadian university.

One snapshot of the home page/ welcome page for the past 5 years for each institution was captured using the internet archive.org web site. The home page was selected because it represents the 'public face' of the university and would likely be the first page link prospective and current students would access. At the U.S. university, the administration claimed that the major changes to the web page were made on approximately a quarterly basis, but that current news and events were updated daily.

### **Sample 4.2 U.S. University Home Page-2012**

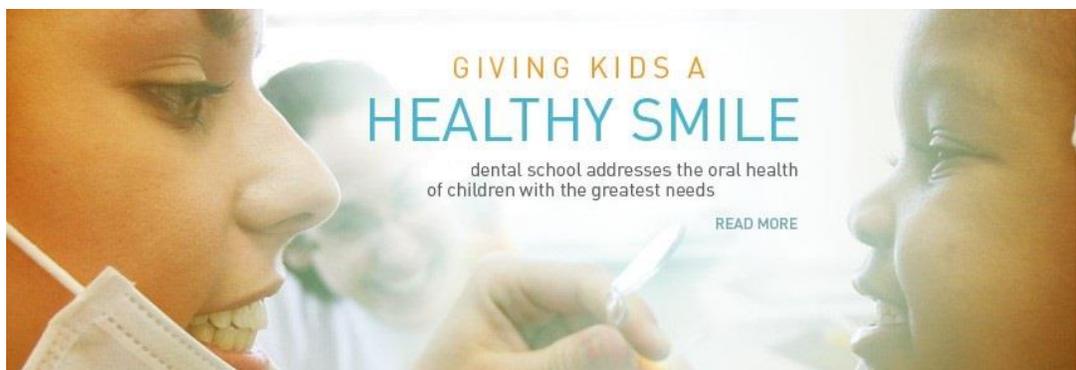
Figure.4.2 U.S. University Home Page 2012\_Flash 1



Figure. 4.3 U.S. University Home Page 2012\_Flash 2



Figure. 4.4 U.S. University Home Page 2012\_Flash 3



The first text that appeared on the web page read ‘Welcome to the University of [Name Withheld].’ The top banner featured links to the categories of academics,

research, global reach, campus life, and admissions. The central image on the home page featured an African-American male professor of visual studies with a display of his new graphic novel. There is a link to the campus newspaper that reported the story. The image was one of five Adobe flash images that rotated in sequence. The second image featured an African female international student with the caption reading ‘My first [U.S. University Name] winter.’ The sub-caption mentioned that students from all over the world will be experiencing their first winter that year. The third flash image showed a White dental student performing a procedure on an African-American child.

The text was about the dental school and read that it helps children with the ‘greatest needs.’ The next flash image depicted two White architecture students who constructed an experimental building. The following flash image included only text about some findings about New Year's resolutions made by the researchers at the university. The concluding flash image featured two White male professors with the words ‘Legends of science’ as a caption with a link to the campus newspaper about the story. The image of the professors has been excluded because it would readily identify the institution.

Below the central image on the web page was a set of links for prospective students, parents, and visitors. The content links below that were designated for research news and campus news. The images were of the university buildings. Below the title ‘Research News’ was a brief summary of an international plant research project. The second research project briefly described a White House scientific initiative about biotechnology and manufacturing. Under campus news, there was a

brief summary about the latest *U.S. News and World Report* Ranking for the university.

At the bottom of the page, the content links under the heading 'Get to know [U.S. University]' included links for history, campus maps, regional information, and connections to social media like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. On the home page, there was a separate link for 'Diversity' and it included an official statement of diversity along with the image of a Black female appearing to direct or lead a group of five students (see Fig. 4.5). Four of the students appear to be White and one may be Asian or Latino. From her physical position of sitting, it is unclear whether she is a classmate or professor. The caption below the image read 'Our Commitment to Equity.'

## Text

Web page content represents a very deliberate effort on the part of the university to communicate its values, ideals, and norms. The text in on the home page fits Fairclough's (2010) description of projecting a personal identity that is self-promotional. After searching for word and phrasal frequency for the home page alone, the most commonly used words were the name of the university and the word 'research.' The words used throughout the web page emphasized its position as a major public research university. Instead of 'we' the acronym for the name of the university was used throughout. Several occurrences of the pronoun 'us' was used instead of the name of the university, as in 'Connect with Us' for the social media link.

The university is personalized throughout as an 'us.' 'Get to know [U.S. University] is also another personalizing discourse.

The five categories featured in the top banner were consistently displayed as categories from 2011 to 2014. The banner categories of 'academics', 'research', and 'global reach' illustrate this. Of the five flash images, three featured individuals of African descent and the remaining images were of White individuals. No other ethnic or racial groups were depicted. The first was a professor of visual studies, the second was an international student from an African country and the third was an African-American child who was the presumed patient of the White female dental student. The images that accompanied White individuals showed them participating as variously a dentist, an architect, and a scientist. The focus of the promotional media was on scientific and research contributions, which was associated with neither of the images of the African-Americans. The female African-American child was associated with being of low-income because of the banner text about her being 'needy.' The text on the web page focused on the university more and less focus was placed on the students.

#### Discourse practice

Discursively, the home page is drawing on several genres of communication as outlined by Fairclough (2010). As defined earlier in this chapter, genres are discourses associated with a particular social activity. As with the admissions brochures, discourses of advertising media were integrated throughout. This was illustrated by word choices describing the university as a 'premier' and 'leading' research institution.

Taken as a whole, the entire home page is an advertisement for the university, which is the objective function of the home page.

The more latent or implicit associations conveyed through language are designed to differentiate the university from its 'competitors' in the education marketplace. The other genre that appears throughout is language associated with research and development practices (R &D). The terms 'innovation', 'research vision', and 'creative activity' and are words associated with research practices. The Diversity link with the text 'Our Commitment to Equity' also promotes and differentiates the university brand. The discourse practice in the web sites integrated the genres of advertising and research and development.

### Social practices

Fairclough (2010) argued that the orders of discourse represent the entire set of discursive practices and the relationships between those discourses. The findings in this study concur with Fairclough's (2010) observation that universities have adopted managerial discourses associated with the private corporate sector. The managerial discourses are privileged with respect to other discourses and are accorded a higher status in the hierarchy of discourses. Absent from the home page was language associated with social justice, human rights, or politics. Consistent with the brochures, the university also placed itself within the broader context of globalization through the use of language. The words on the top banner of the home page position 'global reach' as having equal status as 'admissions' or 'academics.'

## **Overall findings for the analysis of the home pages from the Canadian and U.S. University**

Home pages from 2009-2013 were randomly selected using the internet archival tool archive.org. The Canadian university's home page from 2009-2013 featured far fewer images in general. For the period sampled, one central image was used and captions were used to illustrate how the image was related to several disciplines. The image was almost always an object. For example, underneath the image of a set of earphones read the following captions: 'An anthropologist sees the latest trend', 'A behavioral scientist sees privacy', and a 'marketer sees piracy.' Beneath that appeared the text 'Welcome to the interdisciplinary university.' The content was text-driven and the consistent banner headings from 2009-2013 appeared as: News, 'About [Canadian University]', 'President's Message, Take a Tour, Directory, [Canadian University] Organization, Faculties, and Research. Research was included in the last position for all web pages found, although most of the news items in the 'news' section were about research activities. The discourse in the Canadian university home pages also highlighted its research functions but addressed its interdisciplinary focus much more.

The U.S. University pages from 2009-2013 were very similar to the sample analyzed. Pages from 2009-2010 had denser text content than the later years of 2011-2013, which featured larger images. Similar to the brochures, there was a tendency to consistently depict African-Americans or Black-Canadians. The pages from 2009-2013 included many images of diverse people, although African-Americans were consistently included in most group images and many single images of students only.

Images appeared most often of Whites, followed by African-Americans, Latina/os, and Asians in that order.

The actual demographic picture of both universities showed that African-Americans or African-Canadians were fewer than 7% of the student population but that this was not reflected accurately in the promotional media. It appeared that visual representations of 'equity' and 'diversity' were communicated through the liberal use of Black images. The language in the home pages from 2009-2013 was also centered on the university as a research institution.

*Figure 4.5 U.S. University web site*

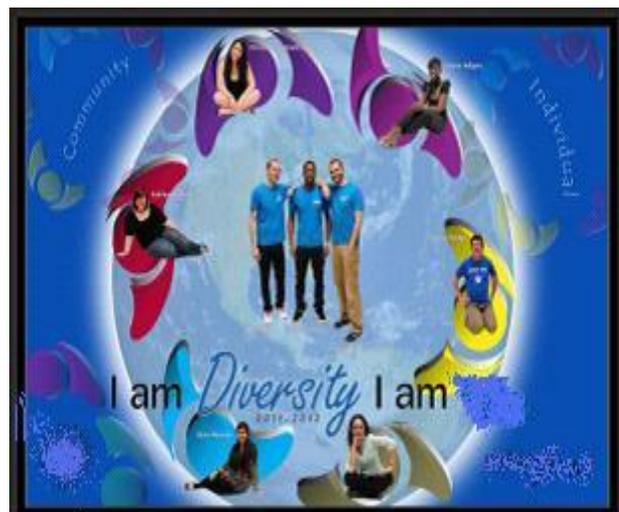


**Our Commitment to Equity**

## **CDA: Posters**

Six of the U.S. Participants and four of the Canadian student participants talked about posters they had seen on campus that promoted campus diversity. At each campus, data was gathered by taking digital photographs of posters at both campuses. The photos of posters were taken over a 6 month period of during the interview data collection. At the U.S. university, I took photographs of 11 posters that met my defined criteria. At the Canadian university, I took photographs of 8 posters. My primary criteria for sampling posters was that they were to have been produced by the university itself and not students. The second criteria was that they were related to promoting campus diversity in some way. There were many posters on both campuses, but the vast majority of them I found were created by student groups.

*Figure 4.6 U.S. University poster*



The example above was representative of the type of poster produced by the U.S. institution. Identifying names were removed using the paintbrush image editor included with the Windows operating systems. The poster was produced by the university office responsible for Student Affairs, which appeared in a logo that I later removed from the image. The text on the image reads 'I am Diversity. I am [U.S. University acronym].' The word Diversity appears in a light blue font in a distinct cursive script. The background is dark blue with a light blue sphere that appears to represent a globe. The central image inside the globe is of three standing males wearing blue t-shirts with one African-American male in the center. He is flanked by what appears to be two White males whose shoulders touch each other. Surrounding the central image are six individual images of five females and one male. Of the five females, one appears to be African-American, one appears to be Latina, and the other three appear to be White. The sole male is a White male. Accompanying each image are colored swirls that are purple, blue, red, yellow, light blue, and white. In the upper left and right corners read the words 'Individual' and 'Community'.

#### Text

Similar to the brochures and web sites, the text in the poster is self-promotional. The language usage personifies the university with the slogan 'I am Diversity. I am [U.S. University].' The pronoun usage 'I am' is intended to imply that the university itself is synonymous with diversity. Through the graphic and textual representation in the poster, one institutional conceptualization of diversity appears to focus on ascriptive differences of race, ethnicity, and gender. No images of individuals with

physical disabilities appear in the poster. Out of the nine images of individuals, two of the nine appear to be African-American.

Six of the images appear to be White. The colors that appear behind the images of the single individuals could be symbolic of the LGBTQ rainbow flag but this association has not been explicitly made. The only other text that appears on the poster are the words 'individual' and 'community' which are presented in the upper left and right hand corners. This might convey that the individual is connected to the community. Many organizations invoke the discursive use of the term 'community' in their formal statements and policies. It may signal to individual organizational members that they also have membership in a larger collective entity.

#### Discourse Practice

The genres that are integrated within the text come from advertising discourses and the discourses of community building. Advertising media features attention-grabbing slogans or headlines that are used to promote products or ideas. The text personifying the university is presented as the central theme or idea. The central theme becomes the portrayal of the university as an entity containing 'diversity'. This is conveyed through the meaning of the text and the size of the font used in the message. The discourse of community-building is also alluded to in the text of the poster.

The definition of community has been elusive. As Delanty (2003) writes, the idea of community lies somewhere between the local and the universal. Cohen (1985) makes the assertion that the entire idea of community is symbolic and discursive. The discourses about community become part of the language used in universities and form what Fairclough (2010) calls a speech community. Delanty (2003) argues that community is shaped by the cultural discourses and involves a shared moral ideology. There is the ideology that the individual should see themselves as a member of the community, which in this instance is the university. Within organizations Delanty (2003) also cautions that community is constructed through discourse and may not correspond to reality. As will be explored in later chapters, this is the case at both the U.S. and the Canadian university.

### Social Practice

This poster is an example of the broader social practices of corporate emulation and corporate differentiation. Dugger (1989) argued that universities, like corporations, emulate each other's practices and policies in order to reduce the competition. Diversity policies and practices are examples of activities that are widely emulated between universities. The university also sees itself as a competitive differentiator. The university is presumed to be competing in a marketplace with other universities to attract a diverse student population.

By presenting itself as being synonymous with ‘diversity’ the university is attempting to use the diversity of the student body for competitive gain. Within what Fairclough (2010) calls the ‘orders of discourse’ are the set of external relations that are involved with diversity. As discussed in the following chapter, the financial imperatives of the university take priority over the goals of diversity management.

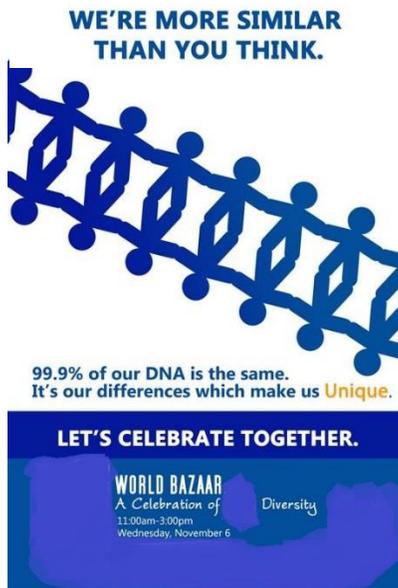
### **Overall findings from the analysis of posters at the Canadian and U.S. University**

As noted earlier, eleven posters from the U.S. university and eight posters from the Canadian university were reviewed for the language and images used. One similarity between the Canadian and U.S. posters were that they did not use photographic images in most of their posters but illustrations that ‘represented’ diversity in some way. The other similarity was that when photographs were used, both universities tended to place racial minorities of either African-American/Canadian or South Asian origins to the foreground of the images. Seven of the U.S. posters and four of the Canadian posters identified did not use photographs of people in the posters. For the posters with no photographic images, the most commonly used substitutes were illustrations of linked hands or silhouettes of stick people with linked arms. The globe image was also used in four of the posters either surrounded by the hands or the silhouettes. One poster from the U.S. university used the image of a cupcake with white icing and multicolored sprinkles to promote a Native American event. Although it may not have been their intention, it actually represented the white dominant group with a sprinkling of color (minorities) in a way that could be quite revealing for those who may have interpreted it that way.

When photographs of people did appear in the poster, the similarities between the two institutions were that both universities tended to place racial minorities of either African-American/Canadian or South Asian origins to the foreground of the images. In most posters where a variety of races/ethnicities appeared to be represented, it was the person with the darker skin tone who appeared as a central focal point of the poster.

There were several differences between the Canadian and U.S. posters. The two main differences were in the use of language and the departments that produced the posters. The U.S. university had more posters that advertised diversity for its own sake without being connected to a specific event or academic program. For the Canadian university, posters with photographs of racial minorities were used to promote certain departmental programs. A common image featured a visible minority male or female with descriptions about the program offerings. The Canadian university also had posters that were connected to upcoming events that had some connection or interest to a diverse student body. The Canadian posters featured fewer images and more text in comparison to the U.S. posters sampled. One of the U.S. posters included the message 'We're more similar than you think. 99.9% of our DNA is the same. It's our differences that make us UNIQUE' (see Fig. 4.7). The poster depicted a DNA strand with the prominent text 'Let's Celebrate Together.' This type of celebratory discourse is found in the managerial diversity literature about 'celebrating' or 'embracing' diversity. There were no similar posters found at the Canadian university.

Figure.4.7 U.S. University Poster 2



The other main difference was that virtually all the U.S. sampled posters were produced by one department housed within Student Affairs. The logo appeared on ten of the eleven posters sampled. This suggests that the ‘diversity’ promotion function has been relegated to one particular department. At the Canadian university, the posters were produced by a variety of departments like ones focused on human rights, gender equity, academic units, or the human resources department.

### **CDA: Diversity Policy Documents**

Diversity policies were not mentioned by the students in their narratives, but were mentioned by the twelve Diversity Administrators interviewed as part of this study. In order to study the institutional discourse communities and ideologies, it was critical to examine diversity policy documents at both institutions. In a policy analysis of diversity discourse in Canadian higher education, Chan (2005) found that diversity

policies could be categorized into three functional areas: defining and prescriptive, establishing principles and values, and encouraging specific attitudes. Chan (2005) notes that diversity policies are often assumed to infer the good intentions of the institution and demonstrate a commitment to institutional change.

Edelman et al. (2001) argue that the managerial notion of diversity shifts the focus from legal prohibitions against discrimination and supplants it with a notion of diversity as a measure of organizational success. Hays-Thomas (2004) also argues that the terminology associated with 'valuing diversity' make reference to the idea that "differences are (or can be) a bottom line asset to organizations" (p.8). Thus, differences in race can be conceptualized as a commodity or bottom line asset of the organization.

There were three organizational levels of diversity policy documents found at both the Canadian and U.S. universities. The first level were policies at the level of university governance, the second level of policies were located in the equity unit of the human resources department and the final level included separate campus centres for diversity or human rights that addressed primarily the needs of students. The latter were typically governed by the Department of Student Affairs.

In Canada the system of governance is bicameral which means that the university is governed by both a Board of Governors and the Senate. At the U.S. university the governing body is the Board of Trustees. At the Canadian university, the Board of Governors and the Senate issued a joint statement entitled 'Policy against Racism' which was approved in 1995 and has not been revised since. The statement

contains four sentences and very clearly supports anti-racism efforts. The first sentence talks about affirming the racial and ethno-cultural diversity of the university, the second sentence affirms the university's commitment to anti-harassment, the third sentence specifically mentions promoting 'anti-racism' and the fourth sentence outlines the sanctions for anyone violating the above.

Several Canadian scholars in the area of anti-racism have noted that the 1980s and 1990s was a period of time in which anti-racism was more explicitly included in Canadian curriculum and educational policy (Bannerji, 2000; Dei, 1996; Henry and Tator, 1994; Henry and Tator, 2009; Lee, 1985; 1994). At the U.S. university, the Board of Trustees was a signatory on the policy documents produced by Human Resources. There were no separate diversity statements issued by the highest level of governance. Both universities had an equal number of comprehensive policies at the level of Human Resources. Within Human Resources was a unit dedicated to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) at both universities. The titles of the departmental unit varied slightly between the two institutions. At the third level, the campus centres for either human rights or diversity at both campuses each adopted their own diversity statements.

Since both universities have documented affirmative action plans produced by their human resources departments, I decided to compare both documents. Reproducing the text of the policy documents would identify the institutions, so the results of the sample analysis will include only a content summary.

#### **Sample 4.4 Summary Description of Canadian Affirmative Action Policy**

## **Document**

Copies of the affirmative action policy document were available on the university web site under the Equity unit of the Human Resources department. The four page policy statement contains four major sections. The first section states that each candidate must meet the minimum criteria for the appointment. The section emphasizes that the goal of the university is to promote academic and professional excellence. The two following subsections specify criteria for affirmative action hiring practices for applicants from one of the four designated groups: women, Aboriginals, visible minorities and persons with disabilities.

In this section, particular emphasis is made about the percentage of female members in each unit and the different rules that may apply for departments with more or fewer females. The second section outlines the provisions for the affirmative action committees. The third section provides guidelines for the departments to conform to the policies. The fourth section mandates that the affirmative action committee conduct workshops and produce publications to inform academic departments about the policy.

### **Sample 4.5 Summary Description of U.S. University Affirmative Action Policy**

## **Document**

Copies of the Affirmative Action policy were obtained from the Human Resources policy library. The document was produced in 2010 and revised in 2012. It is administered under the jurisdiction of the office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.

Under the title of the eight-page document is the statement describing the institution as an ‘affirmative action/equal opportunity’ employer. The first page outlines the university’s commitment to diverse and justification for an affirmative action policy. It also specifies the method of recruitment for applicants.

The second and third pages state which departments the policy is applicable to and defines the terms related to affirmative action. Pages four and five outline the responsibilities for the various departments with regard to the administration of the affirmative action policy. Pages six and seven provide guidelines for posting positions. The final page includes contact information for relevant departments.

#### Text, Social, and Discourse Practices

For the Canadian university, the text used was impersonal and legal. The language used for the targeted groups for affirmative action is from the federal Employment Equity Act (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1996). Under this act, federal contractors such as universities must produce annual reports about the status of four designated groups: women, visible minorities, Aboriginals, and disabled persons. There is no mandate for quotas or regulations for how these groups should be recruited and retained. The affirmative action committee is also required to produce reports on the short listed candidates. The language in the policy focuses on the imperatives to document recruitment efforts. The policy does not mention any efforts to retain the members of designated groups.

Similar to the U.S. university, efforts were made to ensure that the applicants met the qualifications outlined in the job posting. The policy stated that the ‘principal

criterion for appointment....is academic and professional excellence.’ Word and phrasal frequency software showed that the most frequently used words were ‘affirmative, ‘action’, and ‘committee.’ The most commonly used phrases were ‘affirmative action committee’, ‘racial minorities’, ‘tenure stream’, and ‘for appointment.’

For the U.S. university, the language usage was also legal and impersonal. The policy text mentions that diversity and equal opportunity will ‘enhance its ability to fulfill the mission of education, research, and public service.’ The term ‘qualified’ was used as an adjective whenever the term ‘applicant’ or ‘candidate’ was used. One of the main anti-affirmative action arguments from opponents has been that the candidates are less qualified (Bowen and Bok, 1998; Herring and Henderson, 2012; Rai and Critzer, 2000; Wood, 2003). Perhaps in response, the policy writers have ensured that the word ‘qualified’ appeared throughout. The document presents the university as the authority and the related departments under their direction with respect to this policy. The policy defines affirmative action as proactive steps to increase the presence of minority groups and women on campus. The statement also includes veterans as designated group members, in contrast to the Canadian university.

The most frequently used words were the words ‘university’ and the name of the university. The first twenty-five most frequently used words refer to the university before including any words about people. The next frequently used word was ‘recruitment.’ Similar to the Canadian policy, no mention is made of retention efforts for these designated groups. Some of the top ten most frequently used phrases were

‘recruitment policy’, ‘university human resources’, ‘equal employment opportunity’, and ‘diversity and inclusion.’ The words ‘racism’ or ‘anti-racism’ did not appear in the policies.

The discourse practices drawn on for these two policies were legal and managerial. Affirmative action policies are legal documents. The language usage in both the Canadian and U.S. policies were from the legal domain. The structure of both documents with numbered articles and subsections were similar to legal documents. The use of the words ‘shall’, ‘parties’, and ‘designate’ are words commonly found in legal contracts. The policies also draw on managerial diversity discourses in both examples. Phrases such as ‘commitment to diversity’ and ‘promoting equal opportunity’ appear throughout but legal discourses were most prominent in both documents.

As a social practice, both universities are public research universities who have stated through their policies that their primary goal is to further their research initiatives. The affirmative action policies focus on elements of human capital with an emphasis on formal credentials, documentation of work histories, and academic productivity. Affirmative action is a secondary or tertiary goal with respect to the above stated goal of research activity.

## **Conclusion**

The main research question that this chapter attempted to answer was ‘How are diversity discourses manifested in university policy statements, web sites, brochures, and posters?’ The findings were that diversity discourses drew heavily on managerial

and legal discourses for the affirmative action policies. Managerial diversity discourses were also drawn on for the web site and admissions brochures.

Overall, diversity was used to promote both universities and was used as a competitive differentiator. The institutional definition of diversity from the media examples sampled was based on aspects of social difference that were visible such as race, gender, ability, and ethnicity. The visual representation of racial minorities was concentrated at the level of the undergraduate student. Fewer images or textual representations portrayed the racial minorities as faculty members or university administrators. The web sites, brochures, and posters were replete with promotional language and images that presented an image of racial harmony. Black images were frequently used to convey the idea of student diversity, perhaps due to the salience of darker skin tones as a visual representation. Analysis of the text showed that the primary objective of both universities was to promote research and development goals. In order to further examine the institutional conceptualizations of diversity, the next chapter will focus on Black student responses to these media.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: BLACK STUDENT RESPONSES TO DIVERSITY-RELATED MEDIA**

*...It's all, 'Oh, we're so diverse and these are the statistics' and, you see like, all these black children mixed in, on the covers. Like, you definitely planned this picture, because this doesn't happen. (Jaleesa, Senior, 21, U.S. University)*

This chapter represents an attempt to respond to the research question ‘How do Black students articulate their responses to diversity-related media?’ This chapter presents an analysis of the Black student narratives about diversity-related media and their own constructions of diversity discourses.

Utilizing the intersecting conceptual frameworks outlined in chapter one, I

connect the themes presented in the Black student narratives to the theories. The main findings in this chapter were that students actively constructed counter-hegemonic discourses that challenged the dominant perceptions about them and their identities, the U.S. and Canadian students had similar experiences on campus, most students did not perceive that their institution was sincerely committed to diversity, and the student conceptualizations of diversity were different from the institutional conceptualizations.

First, I explore their varied racial identifications. It was important for this study to understand how Black identities may play a role in their responses to diversity-related media and their own discursive constructions of diversity. Following this, participants were asked to describe their responses to institutional media such as web sites, program brochures, or posters. Students were also asked to provide their own conceptualizations of what diversity meant to them and how it related to their lived experiences on campus.

I argue that institutional diversity discourses neutralize race and reify color-blind racial ideology. The diversity practices that arise from such discourses do not address the exclusion that Black students report at predominantly white institutions (PWIs).

The diversity discourses evidenced by the various forms of media also normalize language within the institution. Even those students who reject the institutional discourses are very aware of its normalizing function. Such discourses may become totalizing in that they limit and control the permissible discourses that students can engage with. Despite this, several students were able to demonstrate their agency through the use of counter-discourses that challenged and critiqued the institutional diversity discourses.

## **Black Identity**

One potential limitation of a study such as this one, would be to present an essentialized Black identity. This is especially important since the two institutions are in different countries. Recruitment posters advertised for students who self-identified as Black. This was reinforced through semi-structured interviews where participants were asked how they identified themselves racially. Of the 21 U.S. participants, 19 identified as African-American, 1 as Haitian-American, and 1 as Caribbean-American. Demographic data obtained from each participant showed that of the U.S. sample, 18 students were born in the United States and of those 6 had parents who were foreign-born.

For the Canadian participants, none identified as African-American, 4 identified as Black Canadians, 5 as Jamaican-Canadians, 1 as Canadian-Jamaican, 6 African-Canadians, 4 Caribbean Canadians, and 1 Indigenous African-Canadian. The varied identifications reflect the socio-political histories of both national contexts.

In the United States, there has been a history of legal and social changes to the system of racial classification through which privileges and sanctions have been accorded (Hunter and Joseph, 2010). The historical ‘one-drop’ rule of hypodescent meant that individuals with any known Black ancestry should identify solely as Black (Brunsma and Rockquemore, 2002). In contemporary American racial classification individuals with bi-racial (Black/White) parentage are still identified as Black in many contexts since racial identification is ascribed through phenotypical features.

The Canadian multicultural model of pluralism encourages first and second-generation immigrants to retain their cultural identities (Berry, 2001; Driedger and

Halli, 2000; Kymlicka, 1995). The national policy of integration as outlined in Canada's official Multiculturalism Act of 1988, encourages the adoption of hyphenated national identities such as Jamaican-Canadian, Somali-Canadian, or simply African-Canadian. A study by Boatswain and Lalonde (2000) on racial identification in Canada found that most Canadians of African descent preferred Black, followed by African-Canadian, Caribbean-Canadian, and simply Canadian.

Recent research by Litchmore, Safdar, and O'Doherty (2015) has challenged the conceptualization of static Black identities. The authors interviewed 22 participants between 13-18 years old. The participants were Canadians of African and Caribbean descent. The authors found that Black identities were very fluid and situational. Through everyday discourses with their peers, their Black identities appeared contradictory and dynamic.

It should also be noted that of all the participants in the sample, 20 out of 21 participants had parents who were both born outside Canada. Seven of the participants were Canadian-born and 14 were immigrants. Data from Statistics Canada (2011) shows that 20.6% of the total population was foreign-born. Sixty-one percent of those who identify as 'visible minority' according to the Canadian census definitions belong to the ethnic groups of South Asian, Chinese, and Black.

One third of the U.S. and Canadian participants elaborated at length about how their pursuit of higher education at predominately white institutions challenged their perceptions about their own Black identities and how their identities may be perceived

by others. Their narratives showed evidence that they were aware of the racial stereotypes about deficits in academic achievement (Aronson and Inzlicht, 2004; Perry, Steele, and Hilliard, 2003).

An example of this type of internal conflict is illustrated by Sean's narrative. At the time of interview, Sean was a 21 year old junior who is an engineering major. He planned to get a Masters degree in Electrical Engineering upon graduation. Sean was originally from New York City and described his friends back home. He talked about his graduating high school class. He estimated that about 25% of his classmates went away to colleges and the rest remained in the city. Of those who didn't graduate, he reflected on the fact that they must have a 'rough life.' Sean is a fairly reserved, quiet Black male who perceives that others feel that his personality isn't 'Black.'

As far as people looking at me like, people of my own group looking at me strange, I think it might be because of that as well as the fact that I'm not like, like I'm Black but I've been told I have a pretty quote unquote White personality, I don't know what that means. But I guess it's just because of the fact like that I actually go into the classroom, do work, like I don't skip classes, you know, I take work very seriously, I'd rather stay in just to finish an assignment, than to go out and party. I hate partying. [Sean]

Sean illustrates this conflict by describing the 'people of my own group' who look at him strangely as peers who might be judging the strength of his Black identification. Those 'people' are other Blacks who label him. Part of identity is ascribed by the labels others attach to an individual and Sean's quote shows this clearly. He is labelled as having a 'White personality' and then explains this by providing examples of behaviors that contrast with stereotypical expectations for a Black male.

In her study of low-income African-American youth, Carter (2005) argued

that the students did not equate excelling at school with Whiteness, but that “...Expressions like “acting white” also signaled various dynamics about social power and control among students *within* their ethnic, racial, and gendered communities”(p. 5). In Sean’s excerpt we can see that he is struggling to deal with the elements of social control within his peer group. Carter (2005) and Harper (2006) also make important observations about gendered socialization practices that place particular cultural pressures on Black males to perform their identities in prescribed manners. The research literature shows that youth Black identities are fluid, changing, and contested. In one context Sean may affirm his racial identity and in other context, his academic identity may be salient.

The ‘Acting White’ hypothesis was originally proposed by John Ogbu who developed a cultural-ecological framework to account for African-American academic failure. Ogbu (1987) argued that African Americans as involuntary migrants to the U.S. have developed an oppositional culture that equates Whiteness with academic achievement. Voluntary migrants, such as Black immigrants did not have such a cultural orientation (Ogbu, 1987;Ogbu and Gibson, 1991).

Some recent scholarly work from academics born in the African continent have written about the relative academic success of African immigrants to the U.S. when compared to African-Americans (Alex-Assensoh, 2009; Manyibe, Manyibe, and Otiso, 2013; Okonofua, 2013). In 2007, journalist Clarence Page wrote an article entitled *Black Immigrants: An Invisible Model Minority*, drawing reference to some of this research. What is problematic about such approaches to ethnic variation in academic achievement is that they may ignore critical elements that account for

differences such as family structure and immigration policies that serve as selection factors.

Controlling for family structure, income, and social class, Bennett and Lutz (2009) found no such net advantage in academic achievement for African immigrants.

Various African-American scholars have challenged the ‘Acting White’ hypothesis for being culturally oversimplified and ignoring historical struggles by African-Americans who have fought for access to quality education (Carter, 2005; Foster, 2005; Harper, 2006; McNamara and O’Connor, 2006; Willie, 2003).

In Sean’s excerpt it appears that he is rejecting the idea that the performance of Whiteness is synonymous with academic excellence. What is interesting is that the discourse of ‘Acting White’ arose in several of the student narratives, suggesting that this idea still holds some currency in their peer interactions, however it may be interpreted by the students.

Aaliyah, a 19 year old female sophomore from Albany, New York, talked about her strict upbringing and attendance at a predominantly White high school. Aaliyah was a biology major who hoped to attend medical school in the future. She spoke about her upbringing around speaking the formal English language and how this may have alienated her from some of her Black peers. Perry, Steele, and Hilliard (2003) note that Black students are aware that speaking African American vernacular English may reflect poorly on them in academic settings. African American vernacular English has become associated with social class in interesting ways that intersect. One’s spoken speech may serve as a marker of social class, depending on the context. Aaliyah elaborates on her perspective here:

It wasn't acceptable in the house to just say, "Oh, Yo." Like... anything like that. No. You... I can't even say like "Hey, mom" because my mom would say "hey" is for horses you know? And that's just the way I was raised and then I have an issue as a young one like growing up, because I was called an Oreo. And it's obnoxious and it used to bother me a lot, because it was like that was really during a time like I wanted to fit in and I just couldn't.[Aaliyah]

Aaliyah seemed quite pained as she recalled her difficult time trying to fit in during her adolescence. My field notes indicated that her facial expression appeared to be sad and her posture slumped. One element of thematic analysis is to attend to *how* things are said (Riessman, 2008). As in Sean's narrative, Aaliyah described the challenges of facing cultural pressures to fit into normalized peer discourses and behaviours. The term 'Oreo' refers to a Black individual who is 'Black on the outside and White on the inside.' It is generally interpreted to mean that the Black person demonstrates cultural performances of their identity that are associated with the White dominant society. Within Black peer groups it can be more painful than being called the 'N-word' from a White person. Her body language and tone of voice conveyed this hurt. Allport (1954) contended that human beings identify themselves as belonging to an in-group based on their racial or ethnic origins. Out-group members are regarded with less homogeneity. For Aaliyah, her in-group status as a Black peer was being threatened with accusations of being an 'Oreo.'

The racial socialization provided by her mother connects to what Delpit (1995) refers to as the culture of power in the academic system. Her mother recognized that her children would be attending school in a culture of power that did not value African American vernacular English so she prepared her children to face this reality. Aaliyah

is very much aware that she can be perceived as an 'Oreo' but described the fact that she protected herself from peer criticism by being very wary of those who might befriend her. She described herself as having 'high standards' for friendship and that it was done with the aim of self-protection.

The Black Canadian participants also faced challenges to their racial identities but often discussed this in comparison to not only White normative culture, but also Caribbean cultural norms. Almost half of the Canadian participants listed some Caribbean hyphenation when they were asked to racially identify. Lisa, a 21 year old third-year Business student who hoped to pursue her Masters degree in Education, talked about how her multicultural peer group addressed cultural and racial stereotypes amongst themselves:

I'm Grenadian Antiguan, my parents, anyways but I'm born in Canada, but then there'll be a Jamaican over there, there'll be a Spanish girlfriend. The Dominican over here, like, there will be an Asian girl from Japan over there. There's too many different people and we are not even aware of their backgrounds or where they come from or their situations and then we become stereotypical, so we look at them like, "oh, she must be good at math, she's Asian." Like, she must be ignorant because she's Jamaican." Like, even within our friends, my group of friends, we crack on each other so much. The Africans will get on the Jamaica's, like well, "you guys are ignorant and loud" and then you know what I mean" [Lisa]

Lisa identifies formally as Caribbean-Canadian, but here refers to herself as Grenadian Antiguan but born in Canada. It is quite common for Black Canadians to identify with the national origin of their parents (Litchmore, Safdar, and O'Doherty, 2015). The above excerpt accords with the findings of Litchmore et al. (2015) who argue that Black Canadian identities are discursively constructed, fluid, and

contextual. In the above excerpt Lisa talks about the ethnic diversity of her friends and peers. Lisa also addresses the fact that ethnic groups are aware of each other's stereotypes and that this can be invoked in social interactions. When Lisa says 'We crack on each other,' she is referring to teasing that occurs between Black Canadian ethnicities. In this passage, we see how Black identities are reinforced and contested through everyday discourses.

The literature on critical multiculturalism in Canada might explain this as a result of the national construction of a Canadian as White so that Blacks and other racialized minorities may never be considered 'real' Canadians (Bannerji, 2000). Bannerji (2000) has criticized Canadian multiculturalism for its discursive construction of visible minority immigrants and Canadian-born visible minorities as representing the periphery of authentic Canadian citizenship.

Another narrative that provides another insight into this phenomena is that of Jasmine, a 23 year old female fourth year Legal Studies student. Jasmine was born in Canada, yet insisted on attaching Jamaican to her self-identification. Here is an excerpt from her interview transcript:

R: Canadian Jamaican, that's how I prefer, Canadian Jamaican.

I: Oh Canadian first and then Jamaican?

R: Yeah, yeah

I: And why wouldn't you say Jamaican- Canadian?

R: Yeah. I wouldn't say Jamaican Canadian only because I was born here.

I: So you prefer Canadian- Jamaican

R: Yeah, yeah

I: And why would you have Jamaica as part of that, your ethnic identity?

R: I never used to before but taking some courses in international development, understanding like the politics and the conditions of Jamaica and having an interest in it and that's the only reason that I added Jamaica on.  
[Jasmine]

Jasmine talks about how her political awareness through learning in higher education has led her to adopt the Jamaican label to her self-identification even though she was not born in Jamaica. The adoption of Canadian-Jamaican was a departure from the typical 'Jamaican-Canadian' label so this is why her response was probed.

The final example of the conflict between one's racial identity and attending a predominantly White university in Canada, was documented well by Dwight. A 21 year old third year undergraduate in Kinesiology described at length how his physical appearance might cause him to become stigmatized.

He was born in Toronto, Canada, but grew up in the Jane and Finch area which is the closest in the Canadian context to an area of concentrated urban poverty in the U.S. Education scholar Peter McLaren wrote a book called *Cries from the Corridor* about his years as an elementary teacher in Jane and Finch during the 1970s. He referred to the area as a 'suburban ghetto.' The Jane and Finch area is predominantly Black with a population of Caribbean origin who are low income. Dwight talks about how he has felt compelled to change his physical appearance to 'fit in' with the university setting that he now found himself in.

So in high school, I had braids, I had all of that. I noticed instantly the change when I cut my braids off – just the general... like when you open the door for someone when you have braids, it's like, "Oh? You're opening the door for me?" But that, it's just a natural negative connotation attached to Black males

with braids or light-skinned males with braids. They have to be gang-affiliated or something. But then again, it's a connotation or stereotypes that we support. So people with braids cause – causing commotion, people with braids stealing, people with braids robbing people, people with braids murdering, that kind of stuff. And then slowly, people started noticing that and cutting the hair. So that's the university, have my hair cut. [Dwight]

Dwight's narrative addresses the factual basis around the racial profiling of young Black males in Toronto. Racial profiling has been the topic of many newspaper articles and research reports in the past decade (African-Canadian Legal Clinic, 2012). Indeed it has been stated that Metro Toronto police officers may regard Black males with dreadlocks or cornrowed hair with suspicion (African-Canadian Legal Clinic, 2012). From 2014-2015, the issue of 'carding' whereby Black males are stopped by police officers and asked for identification and justification as to their whereabouts was still being discussed in the daily newspapers (Toronto Star, July 28, 2014).

Black males are targeted by the Metro Toronto police because of stereotypical associations with violent crime and gang membership. Dwight's narrative demonstrates his awareness of the negative perceptions of certain Black hairstyles. Dwight talks about the differences in how he is perceived by others when he had braids and when he does not. He also mentions about 'university' and having his hair cut to remove the braids. By removing the braids, he seemed to perceive that he would be less likely to be perceived as a criminal by others, presumably the White dominant society. This narrative, like many others show the internal struggles about the performance of one's identity that the students were attempting to resolve.

## **Black Male Gender Identity**

Of the 16 male participants in both countries, 13 of the Black male participants in both Canada and the U.S. identified their Black male identity as a potential barrier to campus integration and acceptance. Black female participants rarely mentioned their gender identities as a barrier to campus integration unless they were discussing the issue of dating and relationships. during the course of the interviews. Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) found that Black males on campus were subject to racial micro aggressions within the campus environment that included hyper surveillance on the part of security personnel. The student narratives showed that the Black males were very aware of the negative stereotypes associated with their racial identities and had prepared themselves for how this may affect their experiences on campus.

Trevor, a 19 year old Business Management sophomore identified himself as being from an economically disadvantaged area of Rochester, New York. He emphasized several times in the interview that being from the 'East side' defined his social class identity. He experienced racism and segregation in his high school so he felt that the experiences at university were nothing out of the ordinary.

I mean you get the occasional looks and stares because they usually can tell like who is from a suburban area and who is not so I mean of course you get, a few people do get scared when you get on the elevator they would get off the elevator where you are at and that kind of thing but nothing we aren't used to.  
[Trevor]

It was interesting that Trevor mentioned how that was nothing we 'aren't used to' implying that he was well accustomed to being perceived as a threatening Black male. When prompted to elaborate, he explained that he was referring to the elevators on campus. He also indicated above that the style of dress, language, and demeanor could

signify which Black students were suburban and which were from 'the city.' As indicated Dwight's narrative from the previous section, for Black males, the visual presentation of one's Black identity can shape your personal experiences.

Sean, the 21 year old Engineering student mentioned earlier, also discussed how his Black male identity has contributed to his sense of exclusion in classroom settings.

He says:

They see me as this African-American male who, you know when I tell them or when they see me, I'll come back to that actually... Like when they see me, they pretty much think that like I'm the stereotype like I would try to rob them, take their money in the dark and let's see, take their, basically steal stuff if they leave it around, you know, people just don't sit next to me. I had this one experience in a computer science lecture, freshman year again, you know, we were working in a group or whatever, the professor told us to get in groups of four, so you know there were three next to me, and you know, literally I was getting ready to move over to work in that group with them and then they just got up like quick fast when they saw me coming and they ran to the back. So I was just like, oh wow. So yeah I ended up working by myself. [Sean]

There are several issues to unpack that are related to the above excerpt. The first is about self-perception about racial stereotypes. In the above narrative, Sean reveals that he is very much aware of the negative social implications of his racial identity. Here he refers to White students who may view him as a potential threat to their physical or financial well-being. His recounting of the lecture experience showed that he was trying to make sense of the actions of the students as well as the professor's failure to acknowledge the ostracism he faced from his classmates. His own analysis of the event was prefaced by his explication about how the negative stereotypes about African-American males may affect how he will be perceived by members of the dominant culture and other visible minorities. One might also consider

classroom experiences of exclusion as something that Sean addressed.

As discussed in the literature review section, academic exclusion occurs when Black students are ostracized by their classmates (Fries-Britt and Turner, 2002; Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso, 2000). In the above narrative excerpt Sean observed that his classmates avoided working with him. Negative stereotypes about the academic potential of Black students may affect them in classroom settings where group work is required. The incident of exclusion from group work described by Sean could be considered a form of racial micro aggression (Pierce, 1995; Smith, Allen, and Darnley, 2007). The final issue is the professor's failure to create a racially positive classroom space. The problem could have easily been avoided had the professor elected to use random group assignment or another methods of group assignment that did not leave the possibility for racialized exclusion to occur.

### **Sexual Identity**

Only two of the 42 participants identified as being currently or previously involved in a same-sex relationship. An analysis of both narratives showed that their sexual identities were as important to them as their racial identities.

Michael, a 21-year old Junior, is a psychology major. Michael had a partner who is a White male and he talked about how his sexual identity enabled him to foster relationships outside his race. By participating in LGBTQ events on campus, he was able to widen his social circle. He was aware that his sexuality was presumed to be heterosexual, even within the small Black community on campus. Michael discussed

the fact that his mother still did not approve of his relationship and acknowledged that homosexuality was still a taboo in the Black community. He did believe that the campus was a relatively safe space for him to express his sexuality without fear of violence.

Because you know like the general rules that went like the more education you get the kind of more liberated you become. I don't know if that's like a perfect trend but in a place where you know people are getting their education no one wants to be seen as like stupid or ignorant, so I think people are like more shy about you know showing their blatant ignorance. So that hasn't been like a problem like no one—there hasn't been any hate crime towards me and my partner or pretty much any crime towards me actually for that matter which is you know another thing. [Michael]

Michael believed that the ideals behind a liberal education provided some buffer against those who would engage in verbal or physical aggression towards him or his partner. He felt safe on campus with his partner and did not experience any overt threats or violence. Similar to acts of overt racism, physical racial violence is rare on most campuses. Social norms suppress most overt expressions of racism, so racism tends to exist in a subtle, covert form which may achieve the same effect as overt expressions.

At the Canadian university, one female identified as preferring same-sex partners. Jennifer, a 20 year-old third year Theatre major, was the only participant who identified as a Black Indigenous Canadian. She described how her family's presence in Canada dated back five generations through their arrival via the Underground Railroad in the 1800s. For Jennifer, she experienced very little conflict between her racial and sexual identity. Her parents were accepting of her sexual orientation and her mother even set her up on a date with a co-workers daughter on one occasion. She did discuss

how challenging it was to find partners on the campus but was socially integrated into the fine arts community on campus which was very diverse. As a commuter student who lived far off campus, she had to make an effort to get socially involved.

I: Are your parents accepting of you, like your sexual identity, are they accepting?

R Yeah, they don't mind. Well, my mom is like if you bring home Michelle Obama, it doesn't bother her. [Jennifer]

Neither participant in the study reported that they had experienced alienation as a result of their sexual orientation. For them, being a sexual minority facilitated their participation in more diverse social communities on campus. Their narratives offer insights into the importance of an intersectional analysis of race, gender, and sexuality.

### **Social Class Identity**

Participants were asked to identify their social class upbringing. Carnevale and Stroh (2013) reported that access to higher education in the U.S. has become increasingly stratified by social class. Astin and Osegura (2004) found that American higher education now more stratified by socioeconomic status than 30 years ago. The researchers analyzed data from the annual Cooperative Institutional Research Program's (CIRP) entering Freshman Survey, which includes about 400,000 freshmen from more than 700 institutions. From 1985 to 2000, there has been a steady increase (46% to 55%) in the representation of high income students at the most selective institutions while representation of the lowest income students has only increased from 9% to 13%. Astin and Osegura (2004) conclude that the American higher education

system is moving toward increased stratification by SES despite efforts such as affirmative action and state financial aid programs.

Of the 21 U.S. participants, 11 identified as lower class, 8 as middle class, and 2 as upper middle class. Participants were not provided with income level guidelines provided by government documents, but were merely asked to self-identify based on their own perception of their social class upbringing.

Almost all of the low income participants at the U.S. University were part of an EOP or Educational Opportunity Program. The Educational Opportunity Program provided counselling support, financial assistance, and study skills training for the participants. One positive aspect was the summer orientation program that admitted students had to attend. In the summer program, they formed peer relationships that would serve as a form of social support. The criteria for the 2012 program states that their total family income may not exceed \$ 42,600 for a 4-person household, \$49, 900 for a 5-person household or \$ 57, 200 for a 6-person household. For the Canadian participants, 15 identified as middle class, 1 as upper middle class, and only 5 as lower class.

In Canada, there very few equal opportunity programs for students. Lower income students must finance their education through personal government loans. The Ontario Student Assistance Plan or OSAP is one such plan. Lower income students face additional challenges because they may be reluctant to incur a debt load to attend university. Most low income students attend community colleges, which are generally more affordable. Many high school counsellors also advise low income students to attend community colleges instead of universities.

Most of the U.S. Students were very aware of how their social class identities shaped their experiences. Several students reported that there were social class divisions between Black students who were part of the EOP and those who were not. Being a member of the EOP was an immediate signifier that someone was from a lower class background, and there were Black students who wanted to distance themselves from that stigma. Some participants also mentioned that because they were Black professors assumed sometimes erroneously that they were enrolled in the EOP.

Rosa was a 22 year old senior with a double major in Legal/African-American Studies who came from a large family in the Bronx with many financial struggles. She was the first in her family to attend college. She had six brothers and three sisters. Two of her brothers died in gang violence so she had four surviving brothers. Rosa was aware of the stigma of the EOP but believed correctly that she would suffer no such stigma in the long run.

They can have the perception that I am less than them, because at the end of the day with some paper we're all in the same university, on my degree does not say EOP... I mean a program that helps me, benefits me and helps me financially and academically to support? So, I'm sorry that you didn't get in, so you are mad about it but I got in, I'm getting more money than you financially because I'm getting help and the only reason why I am in EOP is because of my parents' financial income. I'm in EOP, you're in regular. We still get the same degree at the end of the day. I'm graduating with honors, you're probably not. So, what makes you so different from me? [Rosa]

In the excerpt above, Rosa very passionately exclaimed that the stigma she encountered from others would become irrelevant because she would earn the same degree. In the first sentence, she acknowledges that others may have the perception that she is 'less than', indicating a recognition of the stigmatized status of the EOP

membership. While telling her narrative, her animated style of delivery revealed that she had encountered actual or perceived opposition from others.

In her narrative, she is ‘talking back’ to those who challenge the legitimacy of her student status. She is responding to those who did not get accepted and blame students such as herself. She is also responding to those who resent her for securing additional financial aid through the program. She emphasized that she was graduating with honors so that the potential stigma would even further diminished. Rosa’s response is an act of counter-storytelling that challenges ideas about deficit and dysfunction that many have about students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

As Bowman and Smith (2002) have found, Black students can be affected by what they term reactionary racism, which is the resentment that White students may have against Blacks who they believe are receiving an unfair advantage. Membership in the EOP program and the associated stigma, may significantly affect the Black student experiences at the university studied.

Trevor, a 19 year old Business sophomore had a great deal to say about how the EOP program provided him with opportunities. He stated that he would not be in college were it not for the opportunity provided through this program. Yet, he believes that he is still stigmatized by his lower class identification.

They don’t want to see me, that’s going to be because they don’t want to meet Trevor, they want to meet Trevor, they want Carlton [Laughter] you know they want to, they want the, you know the silver spoon child, the protégée, they don’t want the average man. [Trevor]

Like other student narratives, Trevor referred to the dominant culture on campus as ‘they’ and ‘talked back’ to them as he reflected on his social class identity.

He argued that ‘they’ don't want his presence on campus and made a popular culture reference to the Carlton Banks character. He made several references to this character in his narrative. Carlton Banks is a television character from the 1990s television series about a wealthy Black family called *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air* starring Will Smith. Carlton Banks was the wealthy cousin of the Fresh Prince of Bel Air character portrayed by Smith. The Carlton character was born wealthy, socially identified with the White upper class dominant culture, and was continually mocked for his lack of connection to his own 'Blackness.'

The character of Carlton was an iconic character for many African American viewers of the television show since he represented the idea of the ‘Oreo’. Since the television series aired only until 1996, we can assume that Trevor must have seen the show in re-run syndication. Incidentally, re-runs of this TV series still aired in Canada in the year 2015.

The Carlton character depicted a culturally assimilated Black man who through his wealth and privilege, had lost contact with his Black identity. Trevor perceived that the university valued the upper class Black identity such as this one over the lower class Black identity. Yet it is clear from his overall narrative that he valued his personal connection with his culture and social class identity.

In contrast, Chante is a Black female who grew up in the affluent New York suburb of Westchester. Chante is the daughter of two middle class professional parents. She was a 20 year old Communications major who aspired to go to law school. During the interview, she mentioned that her social class sometimes placed her in conflict with other Black students on campus.

I'm not – I mean I just try and like and look at like people. Our social classes may like clash but...Maybe sometimes like I feel... I've definitely heard people go like, 'oh like you're not Black enough and stuff,' because they want to stereotype me and stuff and put...They want to like put me in a category and be like, 'Oh all Black people have to be like ghetto or like,' – you know like low class and stuff like loud and all that. They are like no, I can't like rock music; I can't be like into art and stuff or like you know? [Chante]

In Chante's narrative she is responding to both her Black peers and the dominant White culture. Chante's narrative is a particularly important one because it illustrates internal pressures from within the Black community to conform to perceived norms as well as her resistance to stereotyping by members of the dominant White culture. Researchers have found that many Black students face within-group cultural pressures to conform not as an oppositional stance against White dominance but as a legitimate concern about cultural survival (Carter, 2005; McNamara and O'Connor, 2006).

First Chante talked about trying to see people as individuals with different personalities. She acknowledged that there might be a 'clash' of social classes and expressed her frustration with perceived social norms about Blackness which may stifle her own expressions of identity. Her narrative indicates that she resists the enforcement of racial stereotypes by either Black peers as well as the members of the dominant White society. She cites 'rock music' and 'art' as two examples of interests that are not associated with African American cultural norms.

The analysis of the previous narratives illustrated the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and sexual identity. It also demonstrated how Black students created counter-hegemonic discourses that challenged perceptions in-group and out-group perceptions about them. It is critical to understand that Black students in

predominantly White institutions of higher education bring multiple intersecting identities and histories with them. Each of these identities shapes their lived experiences on campus, although race may be the most salient for some.

Intersectionality theories hold that many dimensions of our social identities can have different saliences in different social contexts. Dei (1996) considers integrative anti-racism to position race as critical to the analysis, but that race also intersects with many different types of oppression such as gender, class, and sexual orientation. Intersectionality theorists contend that race is one of several interlocking oppressions and that gender, class, and sexuality cannot be separated from one's identity (Collins, 2000; Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality recognizes that social identities are overlapping and can contribute to experiences of oppression. Intersectionality provides a wider theoretical approach to examine their experiences in the social contexts where the dominant culture is White, heterosexual, and middle-class. Not only do the intersections operate on multiple levels of oppression but also shape individual agency and resistance. In the Canadian context, Dei (1999) articulated a critical integrative framework that examines the intersections of race, gender, class, sexuality and social oppression. Intersectionality does not negate the salience of race as a significant social category that confers privilege and stigma.

### **Responses to Institutional Diversity-Related Media**

The main research question for this project was to investigate how Black students responded to diversity-related media produced by the universities they attended. As discussed in chapter four, these media include web sites, posters, brochures,

newsletters, and policy documents produced by the university. Giroux (2001) has written extensively about how higher educational institutions are connected to larger social structures, particularly those that reflect capitalist interests. Institutional diversity discourses in universities have been strongly influenced by diversity discourses in the corporate sector (Aronowitz, 2000; Gandz, 2001; Hays-Thomas, 2004; Rau and Hyland, 2003). The diversity-related media viewed by the participants fall into two of Bonilla-Silva's (2014) four frames of color-blind racism. The first frame is abstract liberalism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014).

The portrayal of equal social opportunities, democratic student and campus government, and individual choice was represented by these forms of media. The second frame is the minimization of racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). This is manifested in neutral language that does not include the words 'race' or 'racism' by instead uses neutral language to depict racial and ethnic diversity.

Of the 42 participants interviewed, 40 recalled having seen a variety of diversity-related media after enrolling at the university. The other two participants reported that they had not seen any or perhaps did not notice any. Thirty-four of the forty students believed that the diversity-related images that they saw prior to matriculation were misleading.

Twenty-six of the forty participants who recalled seeing diversity-related media talked about brochures and pamphlets, ten of the participants mentioned seeing posters on campus, and four participants had actively searched web sites. Most of the student participants were active users of social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, but none reported that they attempted to obtain information about the

school using social media. Very few students had searched the university web site for diversity-related information *after* gaining admission. Searching university web sites typically occurred prior to the application process when students were deciding which institutions to apply to. It is not known whether students actively searched for diversity-related information on social media. The participants spoke most often about admissions brochures and pamphlets that were mailed directly to their places of residence.

Black students at both the U.S. and Canadian universities reported that the representations of Black students that appeared in the university-produced media did not depict the actual demographic representation of Black students. The majority of the Black students reported that they were often one of few Black students in their classes. The promotional images tended to show numbers of Black students in all campus spaces and departments. For example, brochures produced by some academic departments such as Engineering and Biology would show Black students on the cover, when students taking such subjects rarely saw other Black students. The data from the U.S. university showed that 6.6% of the total undergraduate population was Black and the estimate from the Canadian university was 3.5%. These depictions might have been part of the university's attempt to demonstrate good organizational practices in relation to diversity efforts (Hart, 2010).

On the other hand, the public framing of the institution as diverse necessitates the addition of bodies of color in the promotional material. Ahmed (2012) recognizes this as an institutional strategy whereby bodies of color are used to represent 'diversity'. This also indicates that diversity is perceived by the institution as concentrated at the

level of the student, and that it is predicated on numerical diversity as represented by various racial groups. It is critical to note that no depictions of ‘diverse’ professors were identified within the promotional literature sampled.

Giroux (2001) maintains that educational institutions serve as cultural sites that reproduce relations of domination and resistance. Resistance theorists such as Giroux (2001) also consider the agency of the individual actors and reject the idea of rigid determinism. Giroux (2001) offers a dialectical critique of the way that the hidden curricula can open space for resistance because of its contradictory nature. This is precisely what is evident in the analysis of the student narratives. This is precisely what is evident in the analysis of the student narratives. The students recognized the institutionalization of practices that led to the distribution of diversity-related media and were able to articulate the contradictions they experienced.

#### Pamphlets and Brochures

The majority (26) of the participants recalled seeing diversity-related pamphlets and brochures. Rau and Hyland (2003) found that diversity-related pamphlets had a positive influence on the prospective students’ perceptions of institutional inclusion. Bartkus and Glassman (2008) contend that such literature may form an important aspect of impression management for the institution. The pamphlets would be sent to their home residence upon admission and is the first contact the institution may have had with the students. Almost all of the twenty-six participants (20) gave responses that were critical of the pamphlets they saw.

Michael, the 21-year old Junior and psychology major at the U.S. University,

recalled the admissions pamphlet he received prior to arriving on campus as having elements of tokenism.

Remembering back, there was definitely you know— Yeah there was definitely you know—I feel like everyone on the pamphlet is a token. There's two White people, there's three Asians, you know one or two Brown faces. I feel like everyone, everybody on the pamphlet is a token and they are definitely not representative of the demographic here because it's—as far as the population goes, three out of every five people is Caucasian, only one is African American and two are Asian and two are from India. So you know that's not we see on the pamphlets. We kind of—they kind of try to make it seem like it's even in some way. I think it was like—I want to say its misleading because it is definitely diverse but definitely the token is almost going on there. [Michael]

Michael begins by making the statement that the all the races depicted on the pamphlet were tokens. Whether or not his recall is accurate, he counted two White people, three Asians, and one or two brown faces. He argues that the images are not accurate depictions of the campus demographics. Then he proceeds to provide the accurate demographic as far as he perceived it. His point about the numbers is that the African-American representation has been intentionally manipulated to look like it is higher percentage. The pamphlet may make it appear as if African-Americans constitute one fifth or one sixth of the campus population when it really is only 6.6%.

A more realistic depiction would show the real percentages in larger group sizes in the advertisements, such as one Black student for every ten students shown. Ahmed's (2012) point about bodies of color being used to represent diversity in a critical element in understanding why this happens. As Michael observed, the images were tokenistic. Tokenism is part of what Bonilla-Silva (2014) terms abstract liberalism. The existence of the token member of a certain minority group is meant to convey the principles of meritocracy and equality of opportunity. The institution can

appear to be providing equal opportunity by showcasing diverse bodies.

Vonette, a 25-year old junior from Canada was an international student from Kenya who already had some post-secondary education but needed to upgrade her skills upon migration to Canada. Vonette, unlike most of the international students interviewed, was critical of the tokenistic aspects of the brochures and pamphlets.

When asked if she believed that the images she saw were realistic, she replied:

No, not really. I mean like if they send – what they send you, there'll always be like one person who is like...you know [laughter] university or whatever, like those materials they first send you when you apply. Yeah so there's always maybe one person [laughter] I remember seeing that. It's like – one colored person or whatever and then you know, it's yeah – I've seen that at least in every – I remember twice now, I've seen that, from my first university and college too, they had that, so. [Vonette]

Vonette was laughing throughout her response and made eye contact and gestures that underscored what she was describing. She recognized the tendency to use Black or Brown people of color to represent diversity. She was able to connect her perceptions about the pamphlets with her previous post-secondary experiences in Canada.

At the U.S. university sampled, one 19 year old Biology major named Aaliyah remarked matter-of-factly about her initial disappointment with the recruitment material she received.

But then looking at [U.S.University], you know, “Oh, we're very diverse.” And then looking at their pamphlets, you know, you saw like enough Black people... But then I got here and it's more of a diversity amongst the Asian countries that are present. [Aaliyah]

When Aaliyah replies in a manner of speech that mimics the institutional

discourse by repeating ‘Oh, we’re very diverse,’ she is demonstrating an understanding of the self-promotional aspect of institutional diversity discourses. She then highlights the contradictions within the celebratory discourses by citing the example of the pamphlets. Her observation was that the pamphlets depicted ‘enough’ Black people. This meant that she believed that the Black population was sufficient to achieve what was a ‘critical mass’ from her perspective. Then she makes the observation that the ‘diverse’ bodies were in fact not Black but Asian. When analyzing her narrative, I found the theory outlined by Bakhtin (1981) to be helpful in illustrating how students struggled to make sense of the multiple discourses they were encountering. Bakhtin (1981) asserts that dialogic narratives are in communication with multiple discourses. Bakhtin (cited in Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, and Cain, 1998), presented several theories for understanding how the language utilized by subjects consists of many social languages.

Language is connected to ideology and previous lived experiences. Dialogism is about the variety of methods through which the speaker incorporates the language of others (Skinner, Valsiner, and Holland, 2001). Utterances contain the voice of the speaking person while simultaneously layering the voice of the social language (Skinner et al., 2001). Aaliyah’s mimicry in her narrative excerpt shows that she is aware of the dominant institutional diversity discourses and is able to contrast them with her own observations.

Another student at the U.S. University, remarked that most Black students were viewed as oddities in their classrooms, despite the depictions of widespread diversity. Milan, a 20 year old Sophomore who is an English major talked about how he and his

friend were perceived in classes. Through his narrative, we can identify what Said (1978) describes as Othering. Othering can be found within discursive structures that mark certain individuals as being different from the normative population in a given physical or social location. Institutional discourses may construct minorities as the Other through a dialectical relationship with the normative white college student population. In the statement below, we can see Whiteness as a normative social identity.

You know, another friend of mine, he's in English. I mean there's a lot more African-American people in English than there are in technical things for some reason I don't know, and he's still one of the few African-Americans in his class and like people look at him funny sometimes, too. Like even one time he asked me to sit in on a class to look at how, you know, this one girl was staring at him. And she was staring at him funny, like a specimen or something, you know. It's crazy. [Milan]

In the above excerpt, Milan made the observation that although more African-Americans enroll in the Humanities, that Black students were still rarities in the classroom setting. What Milan described was a form of perceived exclusion that may occur within classroom settings. Being stared at in a classroom can be regarded as a racial micro aggression (Pierce, 1995; Smith, Allen, and Danley, 2007; Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso 2000). It is a subtle, non-verbal cue that one's presence is being questioned or unwanted. What is unknown from the narrative excerpt is the reason *why* the White female (presumably) was staring or in which manner she was staring. We do not know if her facial expression was one of mere curiosity or revulsion.

The critical element is how Milan and his friend negatively interpreted the staring. The experience of these students contrast with the 'equal' diversity portrayed in the promotional materials. The friend's retelling addresses the idea of the visitor or

intruder in the racial space of the classroom. The minority student may be positioned as the perpetual visitor or stranger who must be welcomed by the institution, as articulated by Ahmed (2009). The example provides an illustration about the normalization of Whiteness in academic spaces.

Jaleesa is a 21 year old senior at the U.S. university who recalled receiving brochures about the university.

Absolutely. The ones that they send out to each high school everywhere, before I was even in college. It's all, 'Oh, we're so diverse and these are the statistics' and, you see like, all these Black children mixed in, on the covers. Like, you definitely planned this picture, because this doesn't happen. So, I saw them all the time. [Jaleesa]

Jaleesa strongly affirmed that she had seen the brochures. She described seeing 'all these Black children mixed in, on the covers' which indicated that she attended to the images of Black students in the pamphlets and brochures. In the next line, Jaleesa is responding directly to the university by saying 'Like, you definitely planned this picture, because this doesn't happen.' Jaleesa, like many others confirmed that the Black representations of images were unrealistic. Jaleesa had a very critical view that was characteristic of her entire in-depth interview. Jaleesa discussed her pre-high school recruitment by the university. She participated in the university's diversity programs on campus before she became disillusioned by what she saw as the contradictions. Jaleesa regarded the pictures on the brochures as a deliberate attempt to mislead. Above, she also mocked the institutional discourses by repeating 'Oh, we're so diverse.'

Within her narrative she shows an awareness of the genre of institutional diversity

discourses and the manner in which those diversity discourses draw reference to the numerical diversity of the undergraduate student population. A dialogic or performative analysis of her narrative excerpt would also focus on the many layers of context such as who she is responding to and where she is socially and physically located (Riessman, 2008). Through dialogue, she is co-constructing her narrative between the interviewer, the institution, and herself (Riessman, 2008).

Six of the participants were far less critical of the images they saw on the pamphlets and brochures. Dahney, an Ethiopian-born international student attending the Canadian University, viewed the images in the admissions materials in a positive manner.

As will be discussed later in the analysis of these narratives, African immigrant students in both Canada and the United States tended to have a different perspective than the other Black participants in this study. There are many psychological and socio-cultural theories that might account for these differences. Some have come from a geographic location where they did not have the experience of being a racial minority. In addition, their primary social identities might be ethnic or religious.

Upon migration, they bring these different histories and perspectives with them. Arriving in Canada or the U.S. and finding a highly racialized context might be challenging. In contrast to U.S. models of assimilation advanced by Portes and Zhou (1993), Berry's (2001) theory of immigrant acculturation was developed in the Canadian context to account for ethnic identity retention among immigrants.

Berry (2001) argued that the acculturation process contrasts with assimilation since the individual very actively and deliberately chooses which elements of their

ethnic culture to retain and which elements to adapt for the Canadian context. Cultural hybridity is maintained. The immigrant may choose to ‘integrate’ their ethnic identity rather than assimilate. His theory accords well with the Canadian model of multiculturalism which encourages hyphenated ethnic identities. Dahney expressed her thoughts about the material:

Well, I know like the booklets they give you, there’s people, like the students on the front page are different, I guess, races. Yeah. I think it’s an accurate representation of like the students that go to [Canadian University], because there are very different types of people at [Canadian University], very different. Like I know that my friends that go to other universities, they don’t experience as much diversity as I do at [Canadian University]. [Dahney]

Placing the above excerpt within the context of her entire narrative, campus diversity was a very new experience for her. Dahney had only been in Canada for two years and had several friends from her home country who attended various universities. Dahney compared her experiences with her friends at other universities, but it is not known if the universities were all in Canada. She noted that the students on the front page appeared to be racially diverse and on campus she saw ‘different’ types of people.

Foreign students were not the only ones to see the pamphlets and brochures in unproblematic terms. Dane, a 20 year old junior at the U.S. University, was less critical of the promotional media he saw.

Yeah I’ve seen a lot of them. I don’t know, just like some of the resident’s halls, like advertisements. Just like when I was applying here, just like the pamphlets they sent you when you are going to go here. Like talking about the different programs and things, like they put all different types of people in there. So I think it’s a good thing. [Dane]

Dane recalled seeing a lot of the promotional media. He likened them to advertisements that are encountered on a daily basis. He regarded them as positive and did not appear to be too critical about whether the representations he saw were accurate. Dane said that ‘I think it’s a good thing’ in response to the racial and ethnic differences depicted in the advertisements.

An important contextual fact for his interview was that Dane was raised by a single mother who was a graduate of the U.S. university. He recalled that “She [his mother] had me when actually she was going here so she would take me to classes with her...” So Dane grew up with a positive regard toward the university and this may have shaped his perspective. Dane’s example provides an illustration of the variety of responses to the media that were obtained. There were a range of interpretations that were influenced by individual identities and histories.

A dialogic or performance analysis could be another way to analyze the texts of those who appeared to view the media positively. A performance analysis would interrogate who the words are spoken to and for which purpose (Riessman, 2008). Another possibility for analysis involves the performative nature of the interview situation. Goffman (1959) wrote about performativity in everyday interactions and how people compose impressions of themselves. As a means of surviving and navigating the university a student may ‘perform’ the role of the good student who is satisfied, does not complain, and is compliant. Those factors are related to the model minority myth, which some have reconceptualized to include certain African immigrant populations who ‘succeed’ academically (Alex-Assensoh, 2009; Okonofua, 2013; Page, 2007).

## Posters

Ten of the forty participants commented on posters they had seen around the campuses at the Canadian and U.S. universities. Approximately fifty percent of the posters were created or supported by existing campus groups or clubs. The remaining posters were produced by the university itself. The two sources become an issue when we consider the student narratives about institutional support and commitment to diversity. The student-created posters represent efforts to encourage students to join their organization or to advertise upcoming campus events. This is an example of institutionally-sanctioned media that is typically supported through the institutional function of Student Affairs. The university-created posters represent efforts to advertise the academic programs or promote upcoming campus events. Such diversity promotional efforts focus on numerical diversity of the undergraduate student population (Ahmed, 2009; Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, and Allen, 1998).

The majority of the participants who recalled seeing posters (six) were at the Canadian University. Each of them was critical in their own way of the posters they had seen. The students constructed their own counter-hegemonic discourses in response to the media they had seen. Some of the participants critiqued the images in a manner that showed that they were mocking the university's attempts. Desiree, a 20 year old junior at the U.S. University was an example of this approach.

...at this school but I noticed that the first time I stepped on the campus but like, they definitely, I notice on all of their ads and stuff, me and my friends joke, joke around a lot, we are a funny bunch and we notice we are like oh you know they totally grab the one Asian person, one white person and one black person just to be in the spot with [U.S. U] t-shirts are [Laughter]. ... but at [U.S. University] it's like, there is a lot, there is like, let's see, if I had to, like if I had write a list and on top would be the most population of a certain type of

people and I would have to go down, I would say Caucasian first, mostly from Long Island sadly enough [Laughter]. [Desiree]

Desiree acknowledged that her friends did not take the presence of the posters very seriously and mocked the representations depicted in the posters. It would seem that many of Desiree's friends were cognizant of the fact that the posters did not represent the reality on campus. In her second line she recounted the way that they humorously speculated about the images might have been created by purposefully selecting certain students on campus to photograph. At the end of her narrative excerpt, Desiree presented a counter argument about the racial and regional demographical representation that she has observed. Desiree contends that the majority of students on campus are of Caucasian origin and that those from Long Island, New York comprise the majority of the student population.

Sean, a 21 year old junior at the U.S. university mentioned earlier, made the important observation that the posters and flyers were concentrated geographically in certain areas of the campus.

I have seen some flyers and stuff, like but it's mainly like in the student union. That's where, you know, all the, the major activities center or whatever it is you would say, so pretty much they just put it like in a few select places.  
[Sean]

Sean points out that the diversity-related posters appear in certain 'select' areas of the campus. Based on several campus visits, it was observed that the majority of the diversity-related posters and flyers appeared in the campus student center, and specifically concentrated in the proximity of the campus multicultural center.

At the Canadian University, Millie, a 21 year old Kinesiology major had to

pause a while to reflect on whether the images were accurate depictions in her mind.

Millie: Well, they have pictures. Usually when you have pictures of a couple of students, you have a Black person there and a couple of White people there. Sometimes they have there the Brown and the Asian, right? [Millie]

I: And do you think that reflects the campus accurately?

Millie: Accurately? Well, yeah. Yeah. The pictures do but then when you actually look into it and you see how many people actually – the kind of ethnicity that are associated with that, whatever the advertisement was advertising, you realize that it's not as diverse as you would have thought based on them. Yeah.[Millie]

At first, Millie appears to accept the idea that the pictures must be reflective of the demographic makeup of the campus, then clarifies her statement by adding that if you ‘look into it’ you would notice that this wasn’t the case. In her narrative excerpt, it is apparent that she is struggling with the discourses and thinking in the moment. One can see the competing discourses within her narrative excerpt. In one sense she is engaging with the institutional message and in another sense she is challenging it. Millie’s narrative shows how she is struggling to form her interpretation.

At the Canadian university, Shanice, a 27 year old graduate student had a fairly extensive critique of the posters and pamphlets. Although she was born in Jamaica, she had lived in Canada for over seven years and had drawn on her educational experiences for her consideration of the promotional media. Shanice was a student of critical geography and was very aware of the institutional practices around diversity. She was very active on campus in social justice related clubs. Hers is one example of how a student’s academic and social history may influence their perception and interpretation.

Pamphlets, posters—I mean when they have the multicultural day, that's one. They have posters all over the place. In the school newspaper...they advertise it too. I know my union when they have—I think they have a Trans-day and so that's pretty much advertised over list serves. They talk about violence against people of different orientations that kind of thing and they advertise—yeah they do advertise that pretty widely on campus. What else? Then when the different clubs on campus—because you have different nationalities, different groups, they have their own clubs and associations. So when they have their events they advertise, but in terms of university itself specifically, this institution, it's hard to talk about this institution itself because the institution kind of provides the resources for other people to take care of diversity. I am not sure—they are allowing, they are facilitating it but the institution itself it's hard to talk about that because there are other people, there are specific organizations, specific groups that are dealing with the diversity issue and maybe not the university itself. [Shanice]

The narrative excerpt by Shanice illustrated that she was reflecting very carefully about the types of posters produced, the locations they would appear, as well as the occasions on which they were appear. Shanice spoke about posters being 'all over the place' and made a critical observation that most of the diversity initiatives have arisen out of student activities. The institutional support is indirect in that funds are allocated through Student Affairs departments for campus groups. This could be regarded as a positive form of support for student identities. Another interpretation could be that the university is taking a passive approach to student diversity by allowing the groups to do the work themselves. This finding supports existing research that student campus groups are a key form of support for underrepresented minorities and other social identities that might be marginalized on campus (Anderson, J., 2002; Davis, 2002; Ridzi and McIntosh, 2006).

Jennifer was a 20 year old junior in the Theatre program who was the only participant to mention disability issues and the lack of disabled individuals being

portrayed in posters.

A lot of times there are like “Join the club” or “Join this club”. The health club is what we usually have. Students of various races around like posters for people running for student council and stuff and all different kinds of races and different groups of people. Although, I do think they could probably have more disabled people like in posters and various things specifically wheel chair users. I think so because there are so many inaccessible places in campus. I knew that campus has tried a little bit more and there is like a college that is really like designed. Of course, it’s the farthest college on campus but I feel like there could be more because I feel like using a wheel chair on the campus and they would probably be annoyed. But I feel like it would be worse in [name deleted] because there are huge buildings. Let’s not put a rant here, way to go guys.[Jennifer]

By reading the above narrative selection, one can see that Jennifer affirmed the importance of posters that depict diversity in all forms. Jennifer observed that the posters appeared to portray many different races but that there was the notable absence of students with disabilities being represented. Jennifer also criticizes the design of the campus and how wheelchair access might pose a challenge for many students. In my analysis of the diversity posters collected for the previous chapter, I found only three examples of a student with a physical disability being portrayed in the campus diversity media. Two were U.S. and the other Canadian. Representations of disabled persons were generally found only in material produced by campus offices specifically serving the needs of students with disabilities. Her ableist critique of the university reminds us of the complexities involved with the depiction of student diversity on campus. One might also consider how the intersectionality of race and disability might further marginalize the underrepresented students.

One of the most critical responses from the Canadian students interviewed, came from a 26-year old Masters student in sociology named Phyllis. Phyllis was born to

Jamaican immigrant parents and wanted to pursue doctoral work in the sociology of education. In her narrative, she talked about her negative feelings about the streaming of Black students to lower academic levels and believed that she could pursue public policy work in that area. Below, Phyllis discussed the need for a critical perspective about what exactly diversity ‘means.’

Yeah. You know, because for example—okay, sometimes, I’ll see billboards, and they’ll have a range of people from different racial groups and say, “We honor diversity.” But I look at that and say, “How is that really diversity?” What we’re talking about is color difference. We might be talking about ethnic difference, but really what you’re talking about is color difference, because those people who work for organizations, for example, might all share the same ideologies, they might all share the same concerns, they might all look at things very similarly, and in that way, they’re not diverse. [Phyllis]

Phyllis recalled seeing billboards with a depiction of various ethnicities with a statement about the institutions' valuing of diversity. Phyllis argues that these differences are based on racial differences, not necessarily ideological differences. As discussed earlier, Ahmed (2012) noted the tendency to use ‘bodies of color’ to represent diversity. Here Phyllis is broadening the definition of diversity to include ideology. Her narrative also addresses the institutional norms that produce similar ways of thinking. Critical approaches to diversity would address the ideological forms as well. Razack, Smith, and Thobani (2010) argued that it is insufficient for organizations to be racially representative of the population if the ideologies within an institution remain unchanged.

### **Web sites**

Only four of the participants recalled seeing diversity-related promotional media on the university web site. Urciuoli’s (2009) analysis of three university web sites

determined that racial markedness was positioned within a neutral, neoliberal frame that replaced race with culture. In most usages identified in the study, culture was a term that co-occurred with diversity on the web sites. This perspective aligns with Bonilla-Silva's (2014) argument about the tendency to replace race with culture when institutions address diversity.

Jaleesa, the U.S. student who was actively involved with the campus diversity recruitment efforts, mentioned the web site specifically.

They always want to have, like, if you to the [U.S. University] homepage, there's always something. A diversity event, they're always having diversity something in the union. They have the special intercultural diversity departments. So, wherever you go, you're going to see diversity this, diversity that. There are tons of clubs about different ethnic backgrounds and things like that, so. [Jaleesa]

A repeated theme in Jaleesa's narrative is that the university is continually touting its diversity efforts. Her remark 'diversity this, diversity that' speaks to the idea of repeated reinforcement. Here again is another example of Bakhtin's (1981) heteroglossia. She is both critiquing the institutional discourses as she incorporates it into her narrative. She discussed the web site as being one of many of the diversity-related promotional activities that that the university engaged in.

At the Canadian university, Stephen, a 36 year old doctoral student recalled that there was more online material than when he was an undergraduate.

Yeah. You have – I mean in terms of just now it seems to be more about online stuff when I was an undergrad it was more hard copy material. And so you had the obligatory nice to diversity in terms of the students sitting in front of a fountain one of them is Asian and one of them is White. One of them is Indian one of them is Black, another one is racially ambiguous and none of them are Aboriginals because who are Aboriginals anyway? I mean, that's another thing about the discourse of diversity. I think that there seems to pass over a lot of the Aboriginal experience and I think there are a lot of Aboriginals in particular

who would laugh at this whole idea of diversity. Won't talk about them, we'll talk about decolonization. Right? [Stephen]

Stephen's narrative describes one of the central landmarks on the main campus, which is a fountain. Stephen either recalls or subjectively imagines a typical image featuring students of different racial backgrounds. Stephen is the first to note the absence of Aboriginal or Native Canadian students in the images. He also makes the very important argument that the diversity discourses neglect the colonization of the Aboriginal Canadians. This is very significant since Canada's colonization of Native Canadians has resulted in their near absence on university campuses. Instead of an ongoing discourse about redress for the colonization of Canada's Aboriginal peoples, there is a discourse about diversity, which is a relatively benign discourse. Key to the framework of color-blind racism is to present an ahistorical representation that neglects to mention any historical inequalities that have resulted in present-day inequalities (Bonilla-Silva, 2014).

### **Perception of Institutional Commitment**

When asked if they perceived that their institutions were committed to diversity, the responses were categorized as *unqualified acceptance*, *mixed skepticism*, or *outright rejection*.

For the U.S. participants, six out of the twenty-one reported that they believed that their institutions were sincere in their commitment. The other fifteen students had responses that ranged from outright rejection of the institutional messages to a skepticism about the messages.

Eight of the twenty-one Canadian students believed that the messages indicated a

sincere commitment to diversity on the part of the institution. The other thirteen students in the sample represented a mix of skepticism and rejection. Allen (1998) contends that Black students in higher education bring with them what he terms a 'Black skepticism' through which students compare their lived experiences to the institutional messages they may receive.

Once again, data analysis would appear to suggest that of the fourteen participants who claimed to believe that their institution was committed to diversity, they were mostly of immigrant origin. Of the eight Canadians whose responses were categorized as *unqualified acceptance*, six were born in African countries and two were born in the Caribbean. Of the U.S. participants, three were born outside the U.S. and two had parents who were Caribbean immigrants. There was only one U.S. participant of American origin whose response was categorized as *unqualified acceptance*.

The perception on the part of some of the students that their institutions were committed to diversity reflects the hidden curriculum of the various visual and textual elements of diversity-related promotional media and the campus environment. Margolis, Soldatenko, Gair, and Acker (2001) argue that higher education is a hidden curriculum of dominant ideologies. The dominant ideology framed by abstract liberalism (Bonilla-Silva, 2014) is that the university is committed to social equality in all its forms.

The first set of narratives were classified as *unqualified acceptance*. Dane, a 20 year old junior at the U.S. University whose parents were born in the U.S., was an electrical engineering major who grew up in the same city the university was located in. Dane sounded quite hopeful about the institution's commitment to diversity. Dane

was described earlier as the son of an alumni who recalled being taken to the campus as a child. His positive regard for the university was influenced by his single parent mother, whose degree provided her with the means to raise her children.

I think so. I would say so but it's just that when I came here its -- well first of all I commute from home and so it's like when I...it's like friendly and I like see a lot of people that are friends and stuff but we all have our respective groups of friends but it's like when I'm commuting it's like, I don't know, I feel a tiny bit isolated....I think so. Like it shows that like they are willing to accept people and put them in the higher up places and show that it's not about them. Like it's not about -- like necessarily like you know, separating things, it's about bringing together people. [Dane]

As a commuter student, Dane spoke about a sense of disconnection from the normal student life. For commuter students like Dane, their engagement with the university may be more limited than those who reside on campus. Then Dane proceeds to describe that the diversity-related media he saw demonstrated that the school was willing to accept people, meaning the racialized 'others'. His statement about "it's not about them" indicates that he is framing the institution as consisting of a core 'them', meaning the White dominant culture. He concludes by stating that these two groups can be brought together.

Dane's narrative excerpt illustrates the idea of tacit knowledge conveyed through institutional discourses that frame 'us' vs. 'them.' As discussed in the literature review, othering discourses are present within the framework of multiculturalism that positions racialized individuals as visitors or newcomers (Bannerji, 2000).

At the Canadian University, Lisa was a 21 year old Business Administration student in her final year of study. Lisa was born in the Caribbean island of Grenada and arrived in Canada as a child.

Definitely. There's a lot, the thing about [Canadian U], I feel like there is so many groups and so many different, like things going on, so you'll see like a poster written may be in Chinese or then you'll see another poster about like a party in, like, that's an urban party, like you know, more of Black, African Negro, African-American focused type of party. You'll see all these different things throughout the school. [Lisa]

Lisa emphasized the importance of student activities in her explanation of why the institution was committed to diversity. She mentioned the existence of campus groups and multilingual posters. She also uses terminology that expresses the variety of Black identities present on the campus. It should be noted that as students have mentioned in their narratives, most of these clubs and activities have been done on the initiative of students and the institution merely permits them to operate. Such clubs help to support positive Black identities in the campus environment (Smith, Allen, and Danley, 2007; Stikes, 1984; Willie, 2003). These types of student activities come under the governance of the Student Affairs offices and as some have noted later on, there are discrepancies in funding and other issues.

Pierre, a 21 year old junior in Business Management at the Canadian University made frequent comparisons to other migration-related experiences. Pierre had been in Canada only two years and was a foreign student. Originally from Cameroon, Pierre had experienced schooling in South Africa and compared his new experience to the past.

Generally I feel like in Toronto or Canada, basically I believe Canada like there is a lot of diversity. Everyone was from somewhere else from some different background and they had different culture so I believe as opposed to South Africa for example I was there for about three years and there is diversity but there is no interaction between the different cultures. As in Black people will remain together as well as White people would do the same they have done. There would even be a race they call colored which are mixed half Black half

White and they always stick together so when I came here it was a drastic change. I wasn't—I have never really like seen an environment like that so I believe there is a lot of diversity in [Canadian U] and it's working. [Pierre]

First, Pierre talked about the diversity in Toronto and Canada in general. Pierre found that his Canadian exposure of diversity contrasted sharply to his experiences of schooling in a post-apartheid South Africa. His narrative addresses the complex issue of how race may be socially constructed in other geographic regions when he identified the race of 'coloreds.'

As noted earlier in the section about racial formation theories, stratification by race is one method of organizing an entire society (Cox, 1948). South Africa is one society that organizes privilege and power almost entirely by racial classification. Pierre mentioned that there was very little interaction between the different racial groupings.

He also mentioned the racial classification of the colored 'race' in South Africa. His recent schooling experience took place in a highly racialized context. Pierre claimed that the diversity he experienced at the Canadian University was a novel experience for him so it is not surprising that he would regard this as positive. When asked if he believed that the university's commitment to diversity was sincere, he responded:

I believe they do look into it into making sure they accept students from different cultures. They don't really discriminate. And they actually help foreign students. They make them comfortable. They have all these institutions and there is an Indian association and African association as well as there is this atmosphere they create to make people comfortable and there is a lot of diversity because people interact with each other pretty well. [Pierre]

In his first sentence, Pierre explained that the university demonstrated a

commitment to diversity by accepting students from different cultures. His statement ‘they don’t really discriminate’ refers to the admission of diverse students and also reflects his idealization of this new racial context with no formal segregation. In the next sentence, he mentioned the financial aid available to foreign students. His multiple references to ‘they’ as the institution contrasts with the ‘them’ as foreign students. Pierre used the word ‘comfortable’ twice in his brief passage.

Pierre focuses his analysis on numerical diversity of the student body and the presence of student clubs. Based on his observations, Pierre also believed that the interactions between students were fairly harmonious.

The next set of narrative excerpts were categorized as *mixed skepticism*. Participants observed that there was a contradiction between the discourse and the practice of diversity at their university. Desiree, was a 20 year old junior whose major was still undeclared at the time of interview. When asked about the university’s commitment to diversity, she paused a minute to reflect before responding:

I never actually really thought about it before but yeah I think it is cool, definitely I will say the school definitely has a commitment to diversity and I have seen like up there range of diversity but my professors most of them are Caucasian I have noticed. But like there are like you know, there are two Native American professors that I remember that I talked about and I am sure there is, there definitely are some Latino ones and like that’s definitely a commitment to diversity here, no doubt about that.  
[Desiree]

Desiree recounted above that she ‘never actually thought about it’, suggesting that she had not had the opportunity to think about it before, at least consciously. She affirms that the institution has a commitment to diversity in her opinion, yet makes the observation that most of her professors have been Caucasian. She takes note of the two

Native American and speculates that there are Latino professors.

She framed the commitment to diversity to include faculty members, which contrasted with the institutional focus on undergraduate student diversity. Based on that information, she once again affirms that the institution is committed to diversity. Several studies of Black student experiences at PWIs found that students were disappointed to find that there were few minority faculty members (Acland and Azmi, 1998; Allen, 1998; Fries-Britt and Turner, 2002; Willie, 2003).

Aaliyah is a 19 year old sophomore at the U.S. University whose narrative excerpt illustrated the contradictions in narratives categorized as mixed skepticism.

I think [U.S. U] tries to be diverse. I mean that's one of the biggest things that [U.S. U] pushes about themselves that they're very diverse. That's one of the things I took into consideration coming here although when I got here the diversity that I expected was not what I saw. ...Not the most accurate. It's a...there's a decent amount of it, yeah. But it's a little jaded. [Aaliyah]

Aaliyah asserts that the university 'tries' to be diverse. She observes above that the institution 'pushes' the idea of their diversity which implies that she perceives that it is heavily promoted. Aaliyah was one of the few who acknowledged that the messages played a role in her decision to matriculate. Her above narrative shows her disappointment that the diversity was not what she expected but that there was *some* diversity. One can assume that she is referring to student, not faculty diversity.

Adeola, a 35 year old Canadian graduate student in an Environmental Studies program initially presented a viewpoint that the diversity-related media were accurate depictions of a diverse campus then qualifies her response after some consideration.

I think that they definitely put it out there to the public that yes we welcome students of all kinds and you know we have programs in ESL here and we have a religious... like a prayer room for people who choose to do so. We have these facilities in place so yes, we're diverse. And [Canadian University] is also seen as an extremely diverse school in general, I think in comparison to most schools, yeah.

I: So what's your perception about [Canadian U's] commitment to diversity, how committed do you think they are they to diversity?

R: How committed? I think they are committed to presenting diversity in a certain way. Again I've never taken a course with someone who is blind, I've never had a professor who had a physical disability, so there are certain ways that diversity is embraced and then there are certain ways you just don't see it at all. [Adeola]

Adeola recognizes that the institution has presented a public face of support for diversity with her statement that 'they put it out there to the public'. She invokes the institutional discourses in the first statement with 'yes, we welcome students of all kinds.' Within her narrative excerpt, she is repeating and responding to the institutional discourses that she is aware of. Her use of 'we' several times as in '

We have these facilities' and 'we're diverse' indicates that she is constructing her narrative in conversation with these other larger institutional discourses. Her statement also focuses on various student accommodations such as prayer rooms that the institution has supported. It should be noted that those provisions are a legal requirement based on the Ontario Human Rights legislation. When probed further, Adeola pointed out that broader aspects of diversity are not represented on campus such as faculty with visible disabilities. She made the observation that there are 'certain ways that diversity is embraced and then there are certain ways you just don't

see it at all.’

Rosa, a 22 year old Legal studies and African-American studies senior at the U.S. University, presented a critique of how we might perceive institutional diversity. Rosa was introduced earlier as the first in her family to both graduate high school and attend university. Rosa came from a racially segregated community in the Bronx, New York.

They’re committed to diversity but not *equal* diversity, basically. I think, like, I think it’s, basically [U.S. U] is a diverse institute which, I totally disagree with that, because diverse institute that means you have everything equal, like 20%, 20%, 25% and then like another 22%, you don’t have 30 – 10 – 3 and then 40. So, technically you’re not equally diverse, you have every ethnicity and race, but doesn’t mean you are equally because that means, like I have, two Black students, 30 white, 40 Asian and 10 Indians, but I’m still going to be diverse but I’m not equally diverse. That’s the difference between diverse and equally diverse. Everybody could be diverse, they could just throw one of each in, Sorry. [Rosa]

Rosa made the argument that diversity should mean *equal representation* of the racial and ethnic groups. Rosa also challenged the institutional *claims* about what constitutes diversity. So that to make the claim of diversity that there should be an equal amount of each ethnic or racial group. It is perhaps not realistic to expect that a predominantly White university would have equal numbers of all races, but Rosa made an important point about how diversity can be a term that can describe any mixed grouping that the institution may create. Her statement at the end about ‘Everyone could be diverse, they could just throw one of each in’ addresses the issue of how diversity claims could be made by an institution. Her conclusion of the word ‘sorry’ at the end of her statement indicates her skeptical response to the institutional claims of diversity.

Once again, Stephen, a 36 year old doctoral student at the Canadian University, offered an analysis based on his perspective and expertise in sociology.

I think the university – yeah. So it's sort of like a conception of diversity that's framed in institutionally passive terms. You know, it's because I think you can sort out like sort of an active commitment to diversity and you can have sort of like a passive acceptance of diversity. And I think it's the University that sort of falls under the latter category. [Stephen]

Stephen made the distinction between passive and active engagement with diversity. Stephen made the observation that the diversity discourses at the Canadian University were framed in passive terms rather than active. This involves responding to diversity-related issues rather than being proactive about them. Bonilla-Silva (2014) points to the frame of minimization of racism as a central frame of color-blind racial ideology. Institutions may fail to respond to racism or act only in response to a racial incident. Stephen made the important observation about active engagement as a commitment to diversity rather than the passivity he perceives. This is close to perceptions of 'tolerance' and the official multicultural discourses in Canada which frames the immigrants and racialized as the 'other' to which the dominant White citizens must 'tolerate' or even 'celebrate.'

Another Graduate student at the U.S. University presented an analysis that was skeptical and revealed what she perceived to be the institutional position. Christine, a 27 year old doctoral candidate in sociology was able to articulate both the manifest and latent definitions of diversity.

Okay. You know, there's the manifest definition of diversity, but I think the [latent] definition of diversity for U.S. university is international relations. I think that's number one, diversity. Yeah, I think international is a big thing, especially with some [teaching policies] being announced by the President.

[Christine]

Christine's analysis touches on two areas that have been discussed by several scholars, which are globalization and neoliberalism in higher education (Ayers, 2005; Connelly, 2008; Giroux, 2001; Kezar, 2004; Spring, 2009). Several administrators interviewed for this study mentioned that the university was actively trying to recruit more international students and was highlighting the diversity of the campus body as an inducement. The globalization of higher education has meant that institutions position themselves in relation to a global market to attract international students. The students typically pay much higher fees and generate revenue for the institution. The neoliberal emphasis on international trade relations also places individual students within an institution as potential future trading partners. The broad application of neoliberal aims means that any discipline can be deemed to benefit from internationalization.

The final category of responses were outright rejections of the idea that there was a sincere institutional commitment to diversity. Jaleesa was a 21 year old senior studying Management who planned to apply to law school. Jaleesa showed an awareness of how the university positioned diversity and drew on her personal experiences with campus activism. Her political activism on campus on behalf of Black campus groups shaped her language of critique in this passage:

I think they put up a good front. They publicly, you know, for the regular people...Yeah, [U.S.U] is so diverse. Cause, I used to be a part of like a student recruitment team so, I did a lot of recruiting in the local...and, they're always 'Tell them how diverse [U.S.U] is, tell them about all the different clubs and things like that. But, when you really get involved on a more student active level, like I'm a part of the Black student union, there's always a racial divide. It's always a problem with racism and diversity and who gets what around

here, so. I think, on a broader level, yeah, they're committed to their diversity programs, but with the real inner workings of it, no. [Jaleesa]

With her final 'no', Jaleesa very quick to doubt the sincerity of the institutional commitment to diversity by stating that they 'put up a good front.' She mimics the institutional discourse by stating that 'Yeah, U.S. U is so diverse' so she is able to incorporate the institutional language within her own counter-hegemonic discourse.

She mentioned her participation as a member of a diversity recruitment initiative that went out to local high schools. In her interview narrative, she discussed the fact that she was a former recruiter for the underrepresented minorities in local high school. Her views changed upon becoming active in Black student groups and realizing that race played a role in the administration's response to the student group. Her argument was that the Black student groups were not treated equitably when it came to funding and space allocations. So she recognized that on a broad level the institution *appeared* to be committed to diversity practices but that there were problems with the 'inner workings' of it. Her critique of the 'inner workings' refers specifically to her involvement with the Black student group which left her with a negative impression.

### **Constructions of Diversity**

While I argued that institutional diversity discourses shape Black students' responses to diversity practices, one can also regard many of the student narratives as critical counter-discourses to the institutional narratives (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). Through thematic coding, I have identified three categories of self-constructions of

diversity that emerged. The first is an *institutional* construction, in which the student's response mirrors that of the institution. About one quarter 12/42 of the participants talked about diversity precisely the way it was depicted in the diversity-related media they had seen.

The second type of diversity self-construction is a *social justice or human rights* construction of diversity. Over half, 22/42 of the students interviewed described diversity in human rights terms or social justice terms. Specifically, that definitions of diversity should include some element of social justice or rights-based component. An example would be that definitions of diversity involve legal rights to protection against discrimination. Other conceptualizations included the idea that diversity involves social justice aims of equity as well as equality. The students believed that the institutional definitions of diversity could also minimize the more salient aspects of social identity such as race or gender since they believed that differences existed in more a hierarchy than parallel form. For example, they conceptualized race as an aspect of diversity that was more salient than social class, which some believed was a less visible social identity.

The last group of students' responses were coded as *diversity as paradox* (8/42). These students presented an expanded definition of diversity which drew out the paradoxical elements of the institutional diversity discourses. No significant gender differences in conceptualizations of diversity were found.

Chyanne was a 24 year old Masters student in Environmental Sociology at the Canadian University whose self-construction of diversity was framed in institutional language.

Well...you know whether it's having a mix of people from different walks of life, different places, different cultures, ethnicities. That's usually what comes to my mind when I think of diversity. There's other ways for people to be diverse just like I guess the mass use of the word diversity, it's usually I affiliate it with the word racial and ethnicity. That's it. [Chyanne]

Chyanne's self-conceptualization includes the numerical diversity of race and ethnicity that is well documented in institutional discourses. The parallel placement of ethnicity, race, and any other social identity is what typically characterizes an institutional construction. Above, Chyanne shows an awareness of the 'mass use the word diversity' and appears to recognize that her definition is similar to the popular usage of the term. Above, there is no attempt on her part to criticize or challenge the institutional or 'mass' definition.

Thierry is a 20-year old Haitian-born Exercise Physiology major at the U.S. University. Thierry had transferred from a community college program and planned to become a medical doctor. Thierry spoke at length in his narrative about the diversity at the U.S. University.

Different walks of life, people from different cultures, different countries different continents. I think that's what a diverse culture is. And I really do think like [U.S. U] does have that. If I'm mistaken I think like [U.S. U] is like one of the top ten schools for international students so...[Thierry]

Thierry's similarity to institutional discourses is evidenced by his comments about the international student body. This is one of the integral ways in which the institution, while conceptualizing diversity as numerical, is bolstered by the diversity of the international student population. Thierry also talked about diversity as difference, like the institutional discourses.

Another immigrant from an African country, Asta, was a 19 year old sophomore

from Burundi who also attended the Canadian University. Asta did not have very much to offer in terms of a self-construction, defaulting to the institutional definitions she would have been exposed to.

Yeah but I don't know it's hard to explain it I think... I don't know [laughter] like I don't know different things...yeah different people, different culture [ever]. [Asta]

Phyllis was a 26 year old graduate student in Sociology at the Canadian University at the time of interview. Phyllis' self-construction was notable because she began with a critical approach and then accepted the institutional discourse.

It's hard for me to define it, only because, I mean, I find that diversity is often used politically in a way that's really annoying, because "diversity" really just means "difference." But the way the term has been institutionalized, it has come to mean "ethnic, racial difference." So it really depends on who—I mean, if I were to define it, I would define it the right way, which means "different." But if I'm talking about defining it in the area of Education and how it's being used, even by businesses or different organizations, I would say, diversity refers to ethnic and racial difference. Yeah, that's what I would say diversity stands for. [Phyllis]

Phyllis expressed initial criticism of the institutionalization of diversity that frames it as an ethnic, cultural, and racial difference. Phyllis accepted the definition of diversity as difference. She acknowledged in her narrative the range of diversity discourses in other disciplines and organizations. From her narrative, it is clear that Phyllis was struggling with her interpretation and making sense of the ideas as she was speaking.

At the U.S. University, Christine, a 27 year old doctoral student in the Faculty of Education expanded her self-conceptualization of diversity to encompass many differences and the implications of such differences.

I'm not as refined as Dr[name withheld]...but for me, it encompasses so many things, you know, you're talking about race, ethnicity, gender, sex, business, [motto] – you know, how do you choose to conduct yourself? Diversity in terms of temperament, personality, you know, whether you're able-bodied or not – everything. You know, for me ... I know for some people, it's more so race, sex and gender. But for me, it's so much more than that, diversity of personality – everything. So, to me, diversity is just everything that makes up a person and how it can differ from one to another. Diversity can even include things that we don't talk about so much, as like body type, you know, which is not as discussed as much but ... like one culture values another body type versus another. How does that conflict and affect business relations ... so, everything. [Christine]

Christine chooses to include personality dimensions and body type as part of her self-conceptualization. She includes aspects of social identity that may be invisible. Lastly, she considers the implications and frames them in the language of neoliberalism by speculating about the 'business relations.'

This flattening of the concept of diversity by the university serves the needs of the 'audit' culture of accountability that is part of university governance (Kezar, 2004; Morely, 2003). Differences that can be measured through demographic surveys serve the procedural bureaucratic knowledge that is valued by the institution.

The next group of participants, representing the largest group, offered self-constructions of diversity that incorporated elements of social justice or human rights. These conceptualizations went beyond numerical diversity and addressed the need to adopt practices that would enable everyone to fulfill their potential.

Millie, the 21 year old Kinesiology major introduced earlier, began with a self-conceptualization of diversity that in the beginning appears to mirror the institutional discourses, but later adds the idea about equal opportunity.

Oh yeah, because I was thought about that. A mixture of different races and

ethnicities living together socially without racial constraints and also equal opportunities for everyone. [Millie]

Dane, a 20 year old junior majoring in Electrical Engineering at the U.S. University, expressed his feelings about the limited institutional constructions of diversity.

I don't just think that it's a matter of making like putting a bunch of kids of different skins and colors in a room, because there is no intrinsic like work to that really. It's about like the different ideas and what each of them can bring to the table and what they can actually change through diversity. It's not just about like mixing people together it's like what they can do. [Dane]

Above, Dane argues that numerical diversity is limited and relatively easy to implement from the standpoint of the university. He moves beyond the level of discourse to action and social change. In his statement he is able to critique the hegemonic norms that regard diversity as difference without social change.

Lastly, some participants constructed a meaning of diversity that addressed the paradoxical elements of the institutional diversity discourses. Sahara was a 24 year old Masters student enrolled in a Health Services program. Her self-conceptualization of diversity pointed out some of the paradoxical elements of its popular usage.

I think... I don't think of diversity as necessarily like a whole bunch of people having to be... but it's multicultural awareness and kind of a commitment to understanding it, so I feel like as long as an individual is aware and sensitive to the needs and they don't assume and have that one sided story of a different culture or ethnic background then that's diversity. [Sahara]

Sahara observed that defining diversity merely as the inclusion of different people in a particular organization was not sufficient if there is no subjective awareness of the what those differences mean. Sahara made an important observation that there must be a commitment to *understanding* the implications that such

differences may bring. The flattening of diversity to include all social differences and to assume that they have equal social implications may be problematic. As Ahmed (2012) noted, merely adding bodies of color without understanding the implications for organizational change is one of the paradoxical elements of how diversity is framed within institutions.

### **Conclusion: Differences and Similarities between the U.S. and Canadian Students**

The majority of the U.S. and Canadian participants did not differ greatly in their responses to the diversity-related media, self-constructions of diversity, or perceptions of institutional commitment to diversity. The one major difference between the two sets of participants was related to national origin.

Of the U.S. sample, only two of the students were immigrants while 10 of the Canadian students were immigrants. Of the U.S. sample, four students were born to immigrant parents while in the Canadian sample virtually all parents were born outside Canada. Only one Black Canadian student had parents and grandparents who were also born in Canada. Related to this was the fact that there were a wide range of racial identifications that included hyphenated identities.

In particular, it was the Black immigrants from African countries whose narratives indicated that they had a sense of appreciation for the racial and ethnic diversity they

experienced on campus. Black immigrants from African countries did not report many incidents of discrimination or racism in their narratives. Many of them came from racially if not, ethnically homogenous contexts so any diversity was likely to be overestimated based on their historical lived experiences.

Omi and Winant (1994) argue that in the U.S. Context that race is integral to the social stratification of society. Upon arrival in Canada or the U.S., Black immigrants are racialized through social processes which ascribe characteristics to them based on skin color. African scholars in this subject area have noted that African immigrants may actively resist their racialization by adopting an identity focused on their ethnicities or religions (Alex-Assensoh, 2009; Okonofua, 2013). The African immigrants are able to form a comparison between their experiences in the new country with their experiences from their home countries. The majority are coming from majority Black countries where the primary identification may be based on ethnicity or language. There may be limited access to tertiary education in their countries. There are also fewer or no student clubs or other activities. For African immigrants, the Canadian or U.S. context might be seen in positive terms for those reasons. For first and second generation Caribbean immigrants, there are very different historical and social relations involving colonialism that may have shaped their perspectives. For this group, there was a tendency to be more critical of the institutional messages and they reported racial micro-aggressions more readily.

With the exception of Black males from the African continent, Black males in Canada and the U.S. reported more experiences of racial micro-aggressions, stereotyping, and racism. Whether it was a matter that the Black males felt more

comfortable reporting such experiences than Black females did, or whether they did so because the university setting made them more aware of their racial identity and alert to such experiences.

Graduate students by far had the most nuanced analysis. Maturation effects were evident since many of the graduate students were older (ranging from age 25 to age 36) They typically were engaged in academic work requiring critical thinking and had spent time thinking about how race influenced their position as graduate students in a predominately white institution.

The objective functions of institutional diversity discourses are to frame their institutions as inclusive spaces for a variety of reasons ranging from legal compliance to institutional emulation, as will be discussed in chapter seven. Undergraduate student diversity may be seen as a competitive differentiator designed to attract international students. Black students are positioned as ‘visitors’ who are ‘welcomed’ by the institution and by implication are expected to feel gratitude. The following chapter will present in-depth participant profiles that offer contradictions to the institutional discourses of inclusion.

## CHAPTER SIX: NARRATIVES OF CONTRADICTION

*Some people actually told me that I was the first Black friend that they met. They grew up in like these small settings and stuff and they probably haven't ever seen, you know, many, if any, African-Americans or people of color for that matter and then they came here. So it's just like shocking off of them. So I don't know if there's many things the institution can do, but you know, encouraging diversity which they're already doing, but you know, some people, you know, realize that not everybody is a stereotype, but some people don't, so... (Sean, male, junior, U.S. university).*

### **Narratives of Exclusion within the 'Inclusive' campus**

In this chapter, we focus on selected narratives of Black student experiences that contradict the institutional narrative of inclusivity. Of the 42 Black students interviewed, 34 of them reported some personal experience of either racial micro aggressions, discriminatory treatment by professors or peers, or overt expressions of racism. Of the eight who did not report any direct experience of racism, two of the eight recalled an experience happening to a Black friend or a student they knew personally.

At the conclusion of the chapter, I consider students' responses to campus hate crimes. Through each narrative I will analyze their experiences through the theoretical frameworks of Bonilla-Silva's (2014) color-blind racism and counter-discourses (Solórzano and Yosso; hooks, 1995).

### **A Contrary Case: No Racism Here**

A small minority of participants (six) reported that they had experienced no direct forms of racism or racial micro aggressions during their period of academic study. Neither had they witnessed anything that they would describe as racism. Using color-blind racism as a theoretical framework meant that I was especially attuned to race-related discourses and its associated coded language. In order to mitigate the potential for a confirmation bias, I was careful not to suggest to the participants whether their experiences should be interpreted as racism if they did not identify them as such. Their denials should not be excluded from consideration as a part of the data because these students raise interesting questions that complicate the Black experience. Their experiences also show how the intersectionality of social identities may play a role in one's perception about race and racism.

Social histories and immigrant status may also be a factor, which will be discussed in this section. The other possibility might be that since race and racism are such painful and sensitive topics for most individuals that they may not have felt comfortable disclosing this to me as the interviewer.

At the Canadian university, the students who claimed never to have experienced any form of racism directed towards them on campus were Malcolm (born in

Zimbabwe), Asta (born in Burundi) and Dahney (born in Ethiopia). At the U.S. university, there was Chante (born in the U.S.), Donald (born in Haiti), and Amir (born in Tanzania).

There are several competing explanations for racialized people who deny personal experiences of racism. Some of the theories come from sociology, developmental psychology, and social psychology.

The first may involve African identity since four were born in African countries. African researchers have contended that African immigrants tend to have more of a subjective awareness about their ethnic and religious identities than racial (Alex-Assensoh, 2009; Okonofua, 2013). They may not conceptualize 'race' and its social construction in the same ways that people from other geographic contexts may. They might possibly experience racial micro aggressions and interpret those experiences differently.

The other factor may be related to social class. Chante in the U.S. sample was born to upper middle class parents and grew up in a White neighborhood. She learned to navigate White cultural spaces from an early age and may have developed different coping mechanisms to deal with being Black in that context.

In her interview, Chante revealed that she was dating a White male student and stated that she believed in a color-blind approach to dating and relationships. Most of the African students were from at least middle class backgrounds in their home countries. Bennett and Lutz (2009) in their study of African-born students found that they tended to come from families with higher incomes. The authors of the study contend that immigrant selection factors may play a role in which social classes of

Africans are able to easily migrate.

From the area of social psychology we could interpret their response as a psychological coping response to racism. One theory that has been challenged by several Canadian and U.S. researchers is Fordham's (1988) theory about 'racelessness.' Fordham (1988) argued that some Blacks adopted a strategy of assimilation to the dominant culture and chose not to identify themselves in racial terms. Fordham (1988) argued that for some, this helped them to achieve academically by downplaying their Black identities. Fordham (1988) observed that this came at a considerable social cost such as anxiety and stress. One African Canadian researcher decided to study Fordham's (1988) theory in the Canadian context. Smith and Lalonde (2002) studied 'racelessness' in the Canadian context. In their study of 107 Black Canadian students, the researchers found no clear relationship between academic achievement and racial identity.

African American researchers such as Carter (2005) and McNamara and O'Connor (2006) have challenged Fordham's (1988) findings. Carter (2005) maintains that racial and ethnic cultural orientations are positively related to academic success because they help the individual to have a sense of belonging and also provide them with support for coping with racism.

The six students in this study may have experienced racial micro aggressions but have interpreted them differently. In the case of the African students, they may have come from national contexts where overt forms of inter-ethnic violence are high, so they may not recognize subtle racial micro aggressions.

As discussed in chapter two, racial micro aggressions are covert or implicit acts of racial bias that have a cumulative effect on the individual (Pierce, 1995). Racial micro aggressions operate in the absence of overt threat or overt racial bias. Under the logic of color-blind racism, only the most overt acts of racism, such as those involving racial epithets or overt name-calling might be identified as racism. The effect of color-blind ideology is to narrowly limit how racism may be identified.

Developmental psychologists would argue that since the participants are in the stage of late adolescence (aged 19-24), that they are still in the process of forming their racial identities. Early racial identity development theorists asserted that racial identification progresses in a series of contextually dependent stages (Cross, 1978). Central to Cross' (1978) theory is that one must have an 'encounter' incident that may prompt a person to confront one's racial identity. It is through this encounter that the individual begins to explore the meaning of their racial or ethnic identity. For the African American born students, the 'encounter' with their race and its implications may occur prior to adolescence. For the African immigrants, this may not have occurred during their formative years in their home country and may occur after migrating to a new country. Sellers et al (1998) elaborated on the work of Cross (1978) by developing a Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity using a 20-item scale.

Other psychological mechanisms include the personal/group discrimination discrepancy, which is the tendency on the part of disadvantaged racial groups to rate group-level discrimination as higher than discrimination that is personally experienced (Taylor, Ruggiero, and Louis (1996). Taylor, Ruggiero, and Louis (1996) describe this

phenomenon as a psychological coping mechanism that may result from complex cognitive, situational and motivational factors.

Lastly, Blacks who are marginalized in a society may adopt a variety of methods in order to survive in a highly racialized context. So their interpretations may be a deliberate strategy of survival. They may have learned to ignore or re-interpret incidents of racism in order to survive.

One of the participants who prompted the above theoretical exploration was a 25 year old Economics major named Malcolm who was attending the Canadian university. Malcolm was born in Zimbabwe and had been in Canada for four years on a student visa. At the time of interview, Malcolm planned to stay and work in Canada until retirement age at which point he intended to return to Zimbabwe. Malcolm enjoys living in Canada but his primary ethnic identity is Zimbabwean. As he explained this, he mentioned that “We like this place, but it’s not my home.” The ‘we’ he was referring to are the Zimbabwean immigrants to Canada. He talked about their ethnic pride and how they see themselves primarily as Zimbabwean regardless of their place of citizenship. This accords with findings by Okonofua (2013) who contended that African immigrants see themselves primarily in terms of ethnic or national origin rather than race.

When questions about his perceptions of diversity and campus race relations were asked in the interview, Malcolm complained about how Black Canadians perceived racism:

What I notice about Blacks who has been here for a long time, they see the racism. They see it in anything. The first days that I got here I was like let me go somewhere and then the guy would be like oh, no, I’m busy, come back in two

hours. And then I'm walking out the person with me was like oh, that guy was just racist. And I'm just looking at him like are you serious? Did you see the papers on his desk? They see it everywhere. Some – like I'm not saying it's not there, but I would tell the person don't listen too much to what other people tell you. If you see it for yourself here, fine. But don't look for it, otherwise it's going to hold you back. [Malcolm, Canadian university].

It is interesting that Malcolm observed that Blacks who have lived in Canada for a long time or are Canadian-born are more likely to identify certain incidents as racism. He says 'they see it in everything.' Nowhere in his interview does Malcolm speculate as to *why* the other Black male believed what he did but remained firm with his *own* perspective.

In the above scenario he described his early days in his campus dorm and inviting a White student to go out. The other Black male in the scenario identified the incident as racism but Malcolm allowed for the possibility that the student was too busy. He made observations such as 'Did you see the papers on his desk?' to point that out. Malcolm disputes his peer's analysis and while he concedes that racism may indeed have been a factor, he says 'Don't look for it, otherwise it's going to hold you back.' In Malcolm's narrative we see that he has developed his own sense of racial awareness.

What is unknown is how this would possibly change over time, as he himself observed in the case of Blacks who had been in Canada 'for a long time.' He mentioned that racism was something that one should identify on one's own and not be influenced by the interpretation of others. The statement giving the most insight into Malcolm's perspective, occurred when he said 'Don't look for it.' Malcolm was struggling to adapt to a new culture and forming a new identity and so to survive

might look for contextual factors that *disconfirm* rather than *confirm* racism.

There are several theoretical approaches to understanding the differences in perspectives between Malcolm and the other Black man in the situation he described. Each of them brought different histories and experiences to the situation which shaped their interpretation. Consider the work of Goffman (1963) on stigma. A stigma is a characteristic that is deeply discrediting. Goffman argued that those with stigmatized identities may develop a sensitivity about their stigma, which may shape their perception of other's behavior towards them. Being Black in the Canadian context would constitute having a stigmatized identity.

It may be that Malcolm had not been in Canada long enough and that his views about racism may change over time. This finding could only be confirmed if Malcolm were to be interviewed in a longitudinal study.

Canadian acculturation theorist Berry (2001) developed a theory of an integrationist acculturation strategy. This involves balancing one's own ethnic culture with the dominant. Throughout Malcolm's interview, he seemed to be trying to balance his strong ethnic identity as a Zimbabwean, with his new Canadian culture. Berry's (2001) acculturation theory contrasts with the U.S. theory of assimilation outlined by Portes and Zhou (1993). In the U.S. context, Carter's (2005) concept of the 'cultural straddler' was one who tried to achieve a balance between their racial culture and the dominant culture. This theory most closely aligns with Berry's (2001) acculturation theory. Malcolm variously referred to his identity as Zimbabwean and also as Canadian throughout his two-hour interview.

Below is a narrative from Desiree, a 20 year old junior at the U.S. university who

had recently transferred from a nursing program. She realized that this meant that she would probably have to graduate in five or six years instead of four as she planned. Both her parents were born on the Caribbean island of Grenada and she grew up in Brooklyn, New York.

Desiree's narrative excerpt is an example of the personal/group discrimination discrepancy described by Taylor, Ruggiero, and Louis (1996). When asked about her personal experiences of racism on campus, she had to struggle for a while to compose a response. Her facial expression became reflective and she spoke very softly in her response:

They probably do, they could do it all the time. I don't know, I tend to look for the best in people, you know I think, I am sure people have but it's probably I haven't seen it because I am not looking for it. But I am sure they have, I'm sure they have. Actually I think also some minorities do when walk into a class especially a small one... [Desiree, U.S. university].

Desiree explains that she 'tends to look for the best in people,' which is a positive strategy for coping with social interactions. She acknowledges that there may be racism directed at herself but that she may not be aware of it. Her statement that she is 'not looking for it' (meaning racism or discrimination) was similar to Malcolm's narrative. The latter part of her statement shows that she is aware that it other Blacks and other minorities may be discriminated against on the campus.

Her perspective supports the findings on Black immigrants. Desiree grew up in a Caribbean-born two-parent household. Her mother was a nurse and her father a teacher. In her interview, she mentioned that her parents stressed education to her and her siblings and that there was "No way I wasn't going to get a good education"

(personal communication, Desiree). Her parents were part of a wave of Caribbean immigrants who settled in New York in the 1970s. Waters (1999) has explained that these immigrants brought with them cultural capital that proved to be instrumental in their social integration into American life. Both Malcolm and Desiree's narratives illuminate the various ways that individuals experience their Black identities and cope with racism.

### **Institutional Racism- Sean, U.S. University**

Of all the interview participants, Sean was the one whose experiences most exemplified the how institutional racism may operate within a university. Institutional racism can appear in the norms, policies, and practices of an organization (Ahmed, 2012; Henry and Tator, 2009). Institutional racism can also be manifested in attitudes and behaviours that result in discrimination against institutional members or clientele (Ahmed, 2012). Ahmed (2012) further adds that the definition of institutional racism recognizes that the collective actions of an organization rather than the individual actions of a 'few bad apples.'

Sean was a 21 year old U.S. born male junior attending the U.S. university. He was majoring in computer engineering and chose to attend the U.S. university because of its highly ranked engineering program. After graduation, he hoped to pursue a Masters degree in engineering and become a computer hardware engineer for a large corporation. He came from a two-parent household with a mother, stepfather and two

siblings. He describes his biological father as a source of support as well. Of his graduating class, which he described as being 'really small' half of his peers went to college and half didn't. For those who didn't graduate at all, he speculated that they must be having a 'rough' time with low wage employment at fast-food establishments. From junior high school throughout high school Sean was one of the top students in his class.

He explained that he could have graduated a year earlier but that his mother did not want him to do so. He became the valedictorian of his high school graduating class. Sean had a challenging time adjusting academically his first year because as he explained, he felt that although he was a top student in his high school, he was not adequately prepared in relation to his peers from prep schools, private schools, and other higher ranked high schools. Upon entering the university, he realized that his high school did not offer him the breadth of courses required to provide him with an adequate background preparation. He was able to persist with the support and encouragement of his mother. As a junior, he claims that it is still challenging for him and maintains a 2.8 overall GPA. His low GPA he attributes to one year of emotional difficulty after an experience of discrimination on campus that left him in jeopardy of dropping out.

In his sophomore year, he was falsely accused of theft on campus. He would later be exonerated when the evidence came to light, but the incident had a horrible impact on his mental and physical well-being. He was working as a Resident Advisor, a position that comes with certain privileges on campus and financial benefits. He and White male fellow RA were cleaning up in the dining area when the White male

decided to play a prank and steal a hand sanitizer dispensing machine. Since Sean was with the White male RA at the time of the incident, both were punished, but Sean far more severely:

Now, about a few days later I got a call from like my supervisor, well not even my supervisor, like the area director for all the south campus residence halls. I got a call from him that he wanted to speak and this kid, because the dining hall had me and him on camera involved in this incident. So pretty much it came down to they quote unquote had me on camera taking it and had, in other words, they had the situation in reverse, they had me on camera taking it and, you know, the white male, you know, like he was there. So pretty much, what ended up happening was the white male ended up getting put on probation, right. And basically probation is just like where if you screw up, you miss a program... you miss a duty or something. As for me, I wasn't as lucky. Since they had me on camera, you know, I ended up losing the job and I had to move out in the middle of the semester, I lost the room with my own bathroom that I take very seriously by the way, you know, I lost the job pretty much. You get the free room, I had to pay for the single room rate for the rest of the semester. Yeah, it was just like a hassle. Like if you look at my grading curves, like how my grades were. Like pretty much first semester I was here, like freshman year I had a 3.75, you know, made the dean's list. The second semester, freshman year, wasn't as good as that but it went down slightly, it was about 3.3. That semester my G.P.A. just like plummeted due to the fact that I has so much going with that, pretty much I was, I had to keep going to appeals and stuff like for the job until I argued my point that it wasn't me, so I told them to show me the video, they still haven't showed me this video, there probably even isn't a video actually. But so that ended up messing up my G.P.A. very badly, that's another reason that it took me an extra semester to get into engineering and it should have...[Sean, U.S. university].

After filing appeals, Sean was only exonerated when two White female students attested to the fact that they did not see him take the hand sanitizer dispensing machine but that the White male student was the one who had taken it. The White females had to make formal signed statements as well as appear at the Tribunal. Without the corroboration from 'White' students, it is likely that Sean may have had to drop out.

Ahmed (2012) notes that institutional racism can be regarded as a succession of actions on the part of the organization that result in systemic discrimination. In the

above incident, Sean experiences several stages in the process that progressively result in his ostracism and subsequent dismissal. The incident is immediately escalated to the area director. It is unknown how and when the punishment for the White student was determined. That the other student received differential punishment was part of a sequence of actions that resulted in inequality. Ahmed (2012) claims that institutional can also be seen as a series of intentional actions rather than benign reactions. So as a result of this incident, Sean lost his job, housing, tuition credit, and his good GPA. Given the nature of the charge, the punishment would appear to be severe.

Interviewer: What about your, so how did your mother support you throughout all this? Like your mom and your dad, how did they... because I'm sure you shared with them what happened.

Participant: Yeah.

Interviewer: How did they help you out with it?

Participant: Well, my dad wanted to kill someone.

Interviewer: I'm sure

Participant: My mom, she wanted to kill someone.

In *Killing Rage*, hooks (1995) expresses this precise sentiment. The rage that the victim of racism feels but does not act on. Critics such as David Horowitz (2006) have argued that hooks (1995) is advocating violence and reiterating negative racial stereotypes about Blacks and violence, but instead her call is to express the visceral internal rage one experiences as a victim of racism.

Bonilla-Silva (2014) explains that the frames for color-blind racism function as

pathways to the interpretation of phenomena. At no point in Shane's description of the incident did the administration raise the possibility that racism may have influenced his initial false charge. The differential punishment meted out to the White male alleged accomplice was never questioned by anyone in authority. Under abstract liberalism frame, the liberal argument could be made that since both males were punished that the equality of outcome was fair. The institutional practices were reflective of the cultural racism Bonilla Silva (2014) described. Sean was easily seen as a perpetrator.

Stereotyping is another troubling issue. Shane, facing the stereotype associated with his Black male status becomes an easy 'error' in attributing the theft to. Research indicates that his hyperawareness of the stereotyping he experienced may negatively affect his academic performance (Perry, Steele, and Hilliard, 2003). The discourse on race was silenced in this incident because of the actions of the institution and the lack of mechanisms for Sean to seek redress or restitution.

### **Racial Micro aggressions- Stephen, Canadian University**

Stephen, a 36 year old Ph.D. student in Sociology at the Canadian university presented by far the most sophisticated analysis of his experiences. This was obviously a result of his strong academic preparation and published scholarly articles on the topic of Black males and policing. He is the Canadian-born son of immigrants from the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. He chose to attend the Canadian university because he attended as an undergraduate and was familiar with the school. He believed that the Canadian university was more welcoming to Black students compared to other

universities in Northern Ontario which had more racially homogenous populations.

He planned to complete a Masters in Communications at the Canadian university but ended up attending another university in Ottawa, Ontario. Stephen encountered a professor who did research work in the area of race and policing and decided to focus on that area of academic work. He returned to the Canadian university in order to work with his current dissertation advisor and also because of his familiarity with the institution.

Like many students he had numerous stories of racial micro aggressions that have directed at himself or his friends. As Taylor, Ruggiero, and Louis (1996) state, the theory of personal/group discrimination discrepancy reveals that a racialized individual may be more willing to discuss the discrimination that has occurred to others because discussing their own experiences may be too painful. Stephen told the story about a fellow Black male teaching assistant who was seen grading papers in a vacant departmental office.

Stephen: He was in an office and the door is like slightly ajar. He's functioning as a marker-grader. So he's sitting there going through and grading the papers. Some white middle age white professor walks by. What's this black guy doing here in this office right? He doesn't belong here.

Interviewer: Right.

Stephen: Instead of just maybe chalking it up as a peculiarity and then going about his business this guy went and called security on my friend. And then security comes on the scene –

Interviewer: Oh.

Stephen: Security comes on the scene and then I guess security was just in case because you never know it's a black guy, let's call a 31 division. So security is addressing my friend and the cops are outside of the building. And all of this was set in motion by, I won't call it white privilege, one call to security and the

freaking... The security showing up backed by guys with guns and Tasers and handcuffs... So anyway I don't want to tell the whole story because it's not important to hear the whole story but it wound up being a situation where there was some sort of mediation that took place with security and so on and so forth. And you know the security officer I think he needs to go to a two hour training session on diversity or whatever the case may be. You know as if these sorts of practices flow in that sort of belief and ignorance. Right? [Stephen, Canadian University]

Several relations of power arise in this narrative. The first set of relations involves the interaction between the Black male teaching assistant and the white male professor. The behavioural response of the White male professor to the presence of a Black TA was influenced by his negative stereotypes about Black males. The professor may not have regarded his behaviour as racist, but in accordance with Bonilla-Silva's (2014) cultural racism frame, the professor may justify his actions based on cultural stereotypes. He may make the attribution that culture, not race justified his suspicions. His behaviour could also be rationalized as a reasonable response given the recent incidents of crime on campus.

Color-blind racism allows him to simultaneously claim innocence while engaging in overtly racist behaviour. The second set of relations involves the Black male TA and the security officials on campus. The campus security personnel followed a standard protocol for response to a campus intruder. What they failed to do was to ascertain whether the Black TA had a legitimate reason to be working in the vacant office. The report of the white male professor was taken as evidence without consideration for the Black male TA. Another set of relations of power lies in the institutional response. The security personnel were the ones held accountable for the 'error' and 'forced' to undergo diversity training. There were no consequences for the

White male professor who initiated the incident.

Stephen's dialogue shows layers of multiple dialogues within his narrative. Stephen speculates about the White professor's thoughts when he says 'What's this black guy doing here in this office right? He doesn't belong here.' This statement shows him linking institutional racism to the perspective of the White male professor. Stephen's statement in the second excerpted quotation that 'You never know it's a Black guy, let's call 31 Division' mimics the imagined interior dialogue of the security officer who also has negative perceptions of Black males. In examining the excerpt, Stephen appeared to be making the allegation that the heavy-handed response on the part of the security team was a result of being notified that the 'suspect' was a Black male. Stephen made the observation that the incident was initiated in part by 'White privilege' which he in the next sentence appears to distance himself from. It is indeed a culture of hegemonic whiteness that exists on any Canadian university campus. The Black male body being the subject of surveillance on campus constitutes a racial micro aggression. Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) revealed that Black males on predominately white campuses were targeted with 'hyper surveillance.' Stephen's narrative corresponds with several of the other narratives from Black males who believed that they were perceived as 'intruders' on campus.

### **Black female single parent student experiences- Jasmine, Canadian University**

Jasmine was a 23 year old parent of a five-year old in her final year of study at

the Canadian university. Originally from Jamaica, she identified her social class as low to poverty. She grew up on government social assistance and has also recently had to use government social assistance to care for her child. Her narrative demonstrates how normative societal constructions of the traditional undergraduate student as single, childless, White, and middle class contributed to her feelings of isolation and alienation on the campus. Jasmine regularly confronted the negative stereotypes associated with young Black single mothers as being socially and culturally deficient. Jasmine was also the child of a single parent who nevertheless encouraged her daughter to pursue higher education. Jasmine recalled a visit to her high school guidance counsellor who attempted to persuade her to attend a community college. Her mother said to her ‘She's just telling you to go to college because you're a Black student.’ After graduating from high school Jasmine became pregnant and explained that she felt a sense of urgency to pursue her education in order to take care of her child. She explained that her decision to pursue Legal studies was to be able to get a job in government and eventually apply to Law school. Jasmine claimed that without government support she would not be able to pursue her education. She remarked ‘The government support is what makes me wanna just work for the government, just anything, anywhere.’

Since the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, Jasmine has worked part-time at McDonald’s to purchase her own personal items such as clothes and school supplies because she could not rely on such support from her mother. She claimed that her peers at McDonald’s discouraged her ambitions:

I guess you could say friends or not really friends, actually the people I work with at McDonalds. I would say they have. I've only had one time where the store manager had told me, "Oh, you know you're such a good employee you should consider dropping out of University and working full-time" and I just think... No thank you. I don't want to be a McDonald's manager. [Jasmine, Canadian University]

Jasmine spoke at length about Professors and classmates who reacted negatively upon discovering that she was a single parent. She discussed one incident with a Professor below:

I wasn't going to be in class the following week, so I asked for take home work and he asked why and I explained to him, "Oh my daughter was sick" and he was just like, "OK well, I'll make this exception this time" but, "to make sure I separated my personal life from school life." That's what he said to me. So I said, "Yeah. Thanks for the advice," and you know they're very insensitive, very insensitive. [Jasmine, Canadian University].

### **Experiences with White Faculty- Rosa, U.S. University**

Introduced in chapter five, Rosa was a 22 year old senior with a double major in Legal/African-American Studies. She was born in Jamaica and moved with her family to the Bronx, New York when she was eight years of age. She has six brothers, two of which were murdered as a consequence of gang violence and three sisters. Rosa, the youngest child, was the first in her family to attend college. Growing up in poverty in the Bronx, Rosa chose the U.S. university because of the financial assistance offered.

Freeman and Thomas (2002) in their study of Black student college choice, identified financial aid as a factor of critical importance. She was accepted at two more highly selective institutions but financial considerations and out-of-state tuition fees encouraged her to select the U.S. university. At the beginning of the interview, she announced that she had been accepted at a law school in Connecticut but that the

partial scholarship offered was insufficient for her to attend. She explained that she may consider working for one or two years as a paralegal to save enough money.

Rosa's narrative was distinct because she spoke at length about the importance of Black faculty members and her disappointment with the lack of support provided by White faculty members at the U.S. university. She was originally a Business and Legal studies major but switched to African-American history because she was very impressed with the faculty members and their support of Black students. Rosa recalled one incident of a racial micro aggression that was salient for her. She was standing in a hallway waiting to speak with her academic advisor when a White female English professor admonished her for making noise when she believed that she was being silent. When asked about her relationship with White faculty members in general, she responded:

They're helpful but to a point, I go to meet them, they said this is the class you need to take, take it by then bye, they try to get me out the door. In African American studies, I go there, this is the class you need to take, take it by then, these are the best teachers to take, this is the best person to help you, you go here get your resume done, you could go to...that's how they are [Rosa, U.S. university]

Rosa points out that in her experience, her relationship with White faculty members was perfunctory in nature and that they did not go beyond the minimum requirement in order to support her the way that the faculty members in African-American Studies did. Her claim that they wanted to 'get me out the door' elucidates her status as 'trespasser' in White hegemonic spaces on campus.

The majority of Black students believed that Black faculty members would be more likely to mentor Black students. Rosa's experience was that Black faculty

members provided her with more support and mentorship possibilities. She expressed the hope that Black faculty members would want to help her.

I think it's very important like I want to learn something from somebody that looks like me. I want to know if they went through the same struggles as me. I want to see like, I want them to be my mentor and let me want to be in their shoes one day too... [Rosa, U.S. university]

### **Disparities in Campus Funding- Jaleesa, U.S. University**

Also introduced in Chapter five, Jaleesa was a 21 year old senior attending the U.S. university on a 4-year scholarship for Minority students. A Business Major, she planned to attend law school the following year and had applied to a range of schools in the South and Mid-West. She was born in the same city as the U.S. university and grew up in a middle-class home with both parents. She claimed that while growing up, not going to college 'wasn't an option.'

Jaleesa described herself as a high achieving high school student who received a great deal of institutional support for her goal of attending college. She remembered that her peers were encouraged by guidance counsellors to attend the local community college instead, several of whom ended up at the U.S. university with Jaleesa anyway. Jaleesa was very active in various campus groups related to Black students.

In the previous chapter, it was noted that Jaleesa participated as a volunteer to recruit more minorities to the U.S. university by visiting local high schools. As she

described her experiences on campus, she revealed that she regretted her decision to participate in those recruitment activities because she became disillusioned with the lack of commitment to diversity practices on campus. An earlier quote from Jaleesa discussed the ‘inner workings’ of diversity and how it failed on many levels.

... And then, being a part of the Black Student Union, we always have problems with the Student Association trying to cut our budget and trying to merge us into different councils. We're on a People of Color council as a matter of fact, they tried to get rid of the People of Color council this year. [Jaleesa, U.S. university]

Jaleesa's excerpt above shows how the institutional support for race-related student clubs on campus can be easily restricted or terminated. The institutional power relations accord more decision-making power to an overarching student council which mostly consists of white members, according to my study of the campus newspaper that year. While the presence of race or ethnic related student clubs can be perceived as segregationist by the majority group members, researchers in the area of ethnic identity and ethnic identity retention argue that such groups provide a benefit to adolescent minority group members within a dominant social structure. Social psychologists maintain that ethnic identity is developed and maintained through social interactions (Phinney, 1990; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Tatum, 2003).

Minority adolescents learn about their own ethnic identity through social interactions with their same-raced peers while simultaneously providing a coping mechanism from racism (Tatum, 2003). Tajfel and Turner (1986) connect the ability to develop a positive ethnic identity to overall self-esteem. Under a framework of color-blind racism, this type of benefit would be minimized or denied (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). All social differences, particularly racial ones can be equated under the tenets of

abstract liberalism.

### **Campus racial incidents- Canada**

While no specific demographic data is maintained at the Canadian university with regard to campus hate incidents, the local police services report annually on the numbers of racially motivated hate crimes. The Canadian Department of Justice defines a hate crime under sections 318 and 319 of the Criminal Code of Canada. The lengthy definition can be summarized as a criminal violation against an identifiable group (Department of Justice Canada, 2014). In 2012, it was reported that while Blacks constitute only 2.5% of the Canadian population, this group was the target of 295 out of 704 racially motivated hate crimes (Statistics Canada, 2014).

In a report published by the Metro Toronto Police, Blacks and Jewish groups in Toronto were the victims of the most hate crimes involving either assault, vandalism/mischief to property, or criminal harassment. The report showed that there were 26 hate crimes based on race as a motivating factor during the year 2012 only for the City of Toronto (Toronto Police Service, 2012).

A search of the campus student media archives reveals that there have been eleven racially related incidents from 2003-2013 directed at Arab, Jewish or Black individuals.

In both Canada and the U.S. participants reported poor handling of campus racial incidents by the institution. Campus climate studies have considered the prevalence of campus racial incidents a problem for the inclusion of minorities (Hurtado et al., 1998;

Museus, Nichols, and Lambert, 2008; Rankin and Reason, 2005; Smith, 2004).

Participants in this study cited a lack of formal institutional statements following racial incidents and a failure of the administration to adequately investigate and punish perpetrators. In the Canadian context, researchers Henry and Tator (2009) have documented decades of Canadian campus racial incidents that date back to 1981. At the Canadian university, a search of media archives found several incidents that targeted Black students.

In 1994, three Black administrative staff members were awarded \$14,000 in total by the Ontario Human Rights Commission for racial harassment at work. In 2001 during Black History Month, police hate-crime investigators were brought in by the university to investigate the racist defacement of the Black Law Students' Association's bulletin board and hate letters received by two Black female law students.

With the proliferation of social media, post-2000 racial incidents have been well documented online and have facilitated the creation of student activist groups. The students are able to exert their agency through these methods and present counter-discourses that challenge the dominant discourses about racialized students on campus. Solórzano and Yosso (2002) refer to these dominant discourses as 'majoritarian.' By presenting counter-discourses through social media, the students are engaging in acts of resistance (Solórzano and Yosso, 2002).

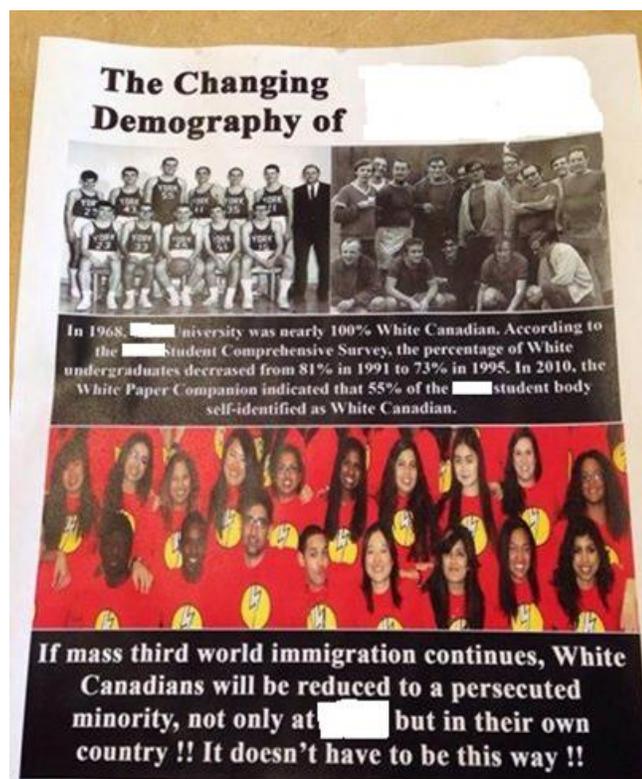
For the students in this study, there was one incident recounted by six participants. Some were new students at the time of the incident and others learned about it after their arrival at the Canadian university. In January 2008, the office door

of the main Black student group on campus was defaced with racist graffiti in addition to a nearby bathroom stall. The Pan-African Black student group was founded in 1996 after an amalgamation of Caribbean, African, and Black Canadian groups. In response, hundreds of students rallied in protest on the campus and the event was covered by local news media. The immediate response of the university was to dispatch security personnel and a representative from the Office of the Ombudsperson to the site.

The demands of the protesters were that the President issue a formal statement condemning the acts, that a full investigation be launched, and that Black students be permitted to participate in developing policies for discrimination, racism, and harassment on campus. Based on interviews with administrative staff (see Chapter 7), the most of the demands remain unmet. Twenty-four hours after the incident, the President issued a formal statement of condemnation only in response to numerous emails and media interest (Henry and Tator, 2009). The student-led anti-racism protests were organized without the institution's approval.

The most recent, well-publicized incident was in July of 2014. Hundreds of flyers from an anti-immigration group were distributed on campus. The flyer included a class photo from 1968 depicting all White students and contrasted it with a recent photo depicting a class photo that was multiracial. The text of the flyer implied that White students were becoming a minority and that it was negative. The university responded quickly by removing the flyers and sending a formal complaint to the anti-immigration group who created the flyer.

Figure 6.1 Anti-immigration Hate Flyer



Bonilla-Silva (2014) considers the minimization of racism to be one of the frames of color-blind racist ideology. The reactive rather than proactive response to most of the campus racial incidents at the Canadian university is indicative of an approach that minimizes the problem of racism on the campus. The lack of co-ordination in the university's response suggests that a systematic plan for responding to such incidents had not been implemented.

Phyllis, a 26 year old graduate student in Sociology, was born in Jamaica and attended the Canadian university for her undergraduate degree as well. She chose the Canadian university because of the two-year funding package offered. Phyllis hoped to teach or work as a policy analyst for the government. Phyllis recalled a campus

racial incident and the students' responses.

I think, I mean, on campus, we've had a few problems with racism, and not from—Black-White racism, specifically. And you had a lot of, not that Black people are writing bad things about White people; it's more the White people writing bad things about Black people. I think one person—somebody had written on the wall something about “You, N-words, go back to where you come from,” you know, like it was—if you look it up online or in the [website], you'll find stuff. There was a lot of anti-Black sentiments written on walls at [Canadian University]. And I remember that everyone particularly kind of rallied around that issue, and I think they had a ... what did they do? They did some type of talk event at [Canadian University], where they were talking about, you know, racism on campus. So, race relations here, in that sense, have been—there's tensions sometimes, but on a day-to-day basis, you won't see anything. But I think, you know, there are people here who are White supremacists. And they don't just hate Black people; they hate Asians, they hate Indigenous people – they hate everyone. [Phyllis]

In total, five students mentioned this particular incident during their interviews.

This suggests that it had an impact on their perceptions of the campus racial environment as well as their personal safety. Phyllis mentioned that it was her perception that there was a segment of the student population who promoted hatred against visible minority groups. Several research studies have indicated that Black students may perceive the campus racial environments differently than their non-racialized peers (Hurtado and Carter, 1997; Rankin and Reason, 2005).

Jasmine, the 25 year old single parent discussed earlier in this chapter, also remembered the incident and added some insights about the institutional response.

I remember, I don't know if it was last year or the year before they have this incident where someone either wrote Nigger or something on, I think it's the -- I don't know if the Black student's club board or something. They had that and they had CP 24 (a local news broadcaster) come in and there was this guy who was really like, he was really hurt by it. He was expressing his anger on TV and everything and then all of a sudden [Canadian U] wanted to bring security in to like calm him down and they sent out some kind of e-mail bulletin basically saying if you want to express, you should do it in this way and I felt like, it comes like silencing the Black voice, kind of, so. [Jasmine]

In her narrative, Jasmine talks about the Black voice being ‘silenced.’ An aspect that is related to the minimization of racism is the avoidance of racism-related discourse. Bonilla-Silva (2014) maintains that a variety of other factors such as social class or culture may be cited when societal or institutional discrimination is addressed. In chapter one, the central research question considers how Black student experiences are shaped by these institutional discourses. Through the actions of the administration, the implicit norms being reinforced are that one should be silent about accusations of racism.

In 2012, the university administration hosted an open forum on campus safety. Members of the Black Student Alliance group testified that Black male students on campus were being racially profiled by security staff in response to recent sexual assaults and property offences on the campus. Two of those who testified at the event were participants in this study. As shown by Stephen’s narrative in this chapter and supported by research by Smith, Allen, and Danley (2007) security personnel are more likely to monitor and control Black male bodies on campus.

### **Campus racial incidents-American University**

There were far fewer reports of hate crimes on the U.S. campus based on data from the most recent 10 year period from 2003-2013. This may reflect differences in reporting and classification of hate crimes. Most U.S. states have their own hate crime statutes. The first federal act, the Hate Crime Prevention Act, was passed in 2009. In

the city where the university has its main campus, hate crime data from a state services report showed that there were six hate crimes based on race in 2008, 19 in 2009, 24 in 2010, 12 in 2011, and 24 in 2012. The university's annual safety reports show that there were no hate crimes on campus in 2010 or 2011.

A search of the campus newspaper using search terms 'hate crimes' found that one Muslim student was the victim of racially motivated hate crimes in 2011. The newspaper reported that her vehicle was defaced with a swastika symbol. In 2009 the same student reported that she was told "Why don't you blow yourself up" when handing out flyers protesting the appearance of a prominent Israeli speaker. The campus newspaper reported that the administration did not officially respond in any way, even when asked to by the Muslim student.

Two were reported in 2012. From 2003 to 2009 there were only four reported hate crimes. A search of the campus news media discovered several race-related incidents in recent years. In 2005 several students attempted to form a Caucasian Students Association. In 2012, a student group was formed to protest racial profiling in the city and campus in response to the well-publicized Trayvon Martin case in Florida. Martin was at first racially profiled by George Zimmerman as he returned from a corner store to visit the home of his father. Martin was subsequently killed during an altercation with Mr. Zimmerman. Student leaders complained to local media about the lack of official reporting concerning campus racial incidents and racial profiling.

When asked about campus racial incidents, Sean, the 21 year old junior discussed earlier, spoke at length about finding racially offensive graffiti in the library:

Oh definitely, I don't even have think twice about that. In fact, I was in the same library, like a few, I'd say, last week when I was studying for an exam between exam classes. I noticed that somebody wrote on the wall, like you probably see these crazy things on the wall. And one of the independent study rooms, like the single seating ones over there, somebody actually wrote the "N" word on the wall. Yeah and I took a picture of it, too, because I like couldn't believe it, so I had to show my friend. Yeah that is definitely racism. Right around like, it's the third floor, it's like in one of those cubicles like the single student things like on the wall, there's whole much of crazy writing on the wall. You know, they were talking trash about, not just Black people, but you know, apparently has too many Asians, you know, people were complaining about that and, you know, there was other things, Indian people, you know, smell, you know, like there's a whole bunch of stuff. And then just randomly when I was just glancing, I saw the N word and I was like, oh wow. I don't know, suddenly people gain courage in little bathroom stalls and those little cubicles. Probably things they'll never say. [Sean, U.S. university]

Similar to the Canadian university, racist graffiti was found on the campus.

In this case it was in one of the library study cubicles. Unlike the Canadian university, there was no official university response and it was unclear whether it had been reported to the administration. An institutional ideology that is influenced by color-blind racism would tend to minimize the significance of these types of incidents (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Through naturalization, which is one aspect of color-blind racism, racist graffiti can be ignored as frivolous adolescent behaviour. Since graffiti is commonly found on campus spaces, the institution can deem it an inevitable aspect of campus life. For the racialized this can be seen through a very different lens. Racist graffiti may be experienced as a racial micro aggression (Pierce, 1995; Smith, Allen, and Danley, 2007).

Another type of campus racial incident that is beginning to be researched (Howard, 2013) are 'Blackface' incidents. More common among fraternity parties on campuses with a Greek system, this type of racial incident is condemned by the

university administration once the media attention has been attracted. Christine, a 27 year old doctoral candidate, recalled an incident while attending as an undergraduate.

In undergrad, not in graduate school. In undergrad, there was the issue where this kid tried to dress up with black face and danced around ... Yeah. And he danced around the dorm and did not get in trouble. That was the only like blatant racism ... [Christine, U.S. university]

Several universities have developed policies that would sanction such activities under racial harassment policies. The U.S. university at the time did not have such a policy. Using color-blind ideology as a frame, the above type of incident may be minimized in its impact and offenders may be encouraged to see the 'humour' instead of being offended (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). One strategy on the part of the dominant culture to silence complaints about racism has been to pathologize the victim (hooks, 1995; Kincheloe and Steinberg, 2002). The victim can be cast as a person with a 'chip on their shoulder' who is overly sensitive about racial issues. This places the emphasis on the racialized as an individual actor. The individual focus absolves the institution from looking collectively at systemic practices and policies.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter focused on individual narratives that challenged both the theoretical frameworks and also the institutional practices and policies that purport to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. These narratives show how the institutionalization of color-blind racist ideology have influenced institutional policies and practices. Institutional racism, racial micro aggressions, disparities in campus funding, and

campus racial incidents are met with an institutional response that minimizes the significance of the issue. In each instance, there is a failure of the institution to acknowledge racism as a reality on the campus.

The participants were nevertheless able to exercise their resistance through peer support and by simply telling their stories. hooks (1995) argues that rage and anger should be considered a motivating factor for resistance against oppression. Each of the participants expressed their anger at the injustices they experienced. Through their narratives they are able to offer counter-stories that challenge abstract liberalism that espouses meritocratic ideals and fairness while also challenging the experiences of cultural racism they encounter (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). The next chapter will present narratives from diversity administrators and show their connection to the overlapping theoretical frameworks that guide this study.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: DIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS

*So no I mean I hate to tell you this but basically this is a racist institution and we are in a racist city okay? And my proof for it is simply to say look around you know, nothing much has been changed in terms of numbers etcetera okay and that's the way things are [Diversity Administrator, U.S. University].*

### **Introduction**

This chapter is a response to the research question about how institutional practices are connected to the diversity discourses. This chapter presents the findings of interviews with diversity administrators between the two institutions. Six in-depth

interviews were conducted at one Canadian and one U.S. university for a total of 12 interviews. Diversity administrators were recruited via email.

Participants were asked about diversity policies and practices at their respective institutions. Participants were also asked to share their personal insights about how diversity has been conceptualized within higher education. The diversity-related administrative and faculty positions represented a range of occupational titles but retained similar functions. Occupational titles indicated roles such a Director of Diversity, Director of Intercultural Services, Director of Student Affairs, Director of Student Services, Equity Officers, Equity Advisors, and variety of faculty who served in diversity leadership positions. As discussed in the methodology chapter, several of the job functions at each institution were unique to the particular institution such that the individual could be easily identified. In my analysis of the findings, I will refer to each of them only as ‘Diversity Administrator’ with identifiers of gender, race, and country. At the U.S. institution, there were four female and three male participants. One was Latina, three were Black, and two were White. At the Canadian institution, the recruitment sample produced an even gender representation with three Black and three White participants.

Similar to the student interviews, the administrator interviews were coded using the qualitative software program Atlas Ti. Pseudonyms were assigned at the time of coding. I performed line-by-line coding of the data and tracked co-occurring codes and code families. After creating code families, I was able to identify several themes that were used to analyze the administrator narratives.

This chapter draws mainly on Ahmed's (2006; 2009; 2012) critical work on diversity and inclusion policies and practices in higher education. Other recent qualitative studies have examined the work of diversity administrators in a variety of institutional settings (Griffin, Muniz, and Espinola, 2012; Tatli, 2011; Wilson, 2013). The work of diversity administrators involved in recruitment and retention can be impeded or aided by the campus racial climate (Griffin, Muniz, and Espinola, 2012). Griffin, Muniz, and Espinola (2012) found that creating diversity administration positions was insufficient to effect institutional change. The narratives in the present study show that the self-efficacy of diversity administrators was affected by many institutional factors.

Through analysis of the narratives, I will draw comparisons to Ahmed's (2012) own study of diversity practitioners in UK higher education and the liminal spaces that they occupy. In anthropological literature, liminal spaces are ambiguous spaces that exist in the 'in-between' (Turner, 1967). Garsten (1999) placed this theory within institutional contexts when examining the subjectivity of temporary workers. In this particular study, the diversity administrators often occupied liminal spaces within their institutions. Their job functions were often contract, temporary positions that were subject to budgetary approval on an annual basis. The permanent directorship positions were sometimes coupled with faculty work, making the positions more challenging. As was the case with three of the administrators, their positions were eliminated or were terminated within a five-year tenure at the university.

I also draw on Bonilla-Silva's (2014) framework of color-blind racism which provides a tool to interpret the current shift in race relations in higher education where

explicit institutional discourse about racism or anti-racism is largely absent (Modood and Acland, 1998; Smith, Allen, and Danley, 2007, Solórzano and Villalpando, 1998). Bonilla-Silva (2006) notes that color blind racism is the dominant racial ideology. Its primary manifestations are in subtle, racially coded language, and in institutional practices. The diversity administrators in this study each spoke about the use of coded language and institutional practices that minimized racial discourses.

This chapter contributes to existing research in several broad areas. This chapter extends the literature on diversity leadership in higher education. Few studies have compared national contexts to study how diversity leaders within institutions conceptualize their roles. The third area of relevance is policy analysis in higher education. This study contributes to an understanding of the linkage between policy and practice, which is a fundamental organizational problem.

### **Findings: Administrators**

This section presents an in-depth discussion of the themes derived through qualitative data analysis. In summary, there were two broad themes and five sub-themes were identified through qualitative data analysis of the 12 narratives. The two main themes were *disillusionment* and *institutional hegemony*. For the theme of *disillusionment*, ten of the twelve participants talked about how their initial enthusiasm about creating institutional change was tempered by the limits of their institutional role. They realized that they had limited input in implementing the policies and practices they proposed. Initiatives required many levels of institutional support,

which sometimes was not provided. The compartmentalized nature of diversity functions within the institution did not support wide-spread systemic change. Diversity administrators faced the challenging situation of working with colleagues who opposed their efforts or undermined their positions. Diversity-related positions were often temporary, limited-term, and subject to the threat of elimination through fiscal austerity measures.

The other main identified theme was *institutional hegemony/power relations*. Related to the above, all the diversity administrators realized that their positions were isolated from institutional power relations. Diversity-related positions were often temporary, limited-term, and subject to the threat of elimination through fiscal austerity measures. Participants explained that their positions and diversity-related practices were secondary to the primary economic goals of the organization. Another general finding was that there was a homogenization of diversity. All aspects of social identity were framed in parallel terms without regard to the impact of intersectionality. No mention was ever made about historical inequalities that may shape diverse populations. Almost all Diversity Administrators tended to define institutional diversity by focusing on the various social identities represented in the undergraduate student population, while neglecting to include diversity as a factor in administrative leadership or faculty.

Diversity administrators were expected to align their work with the interests of globalization and placing the institution within a global marketplace. Diversity administrators also emphasized the importance of connecting to global migratory trends by recruiting and retaining international students primarily from Asian

countries. The diversity administrators reported that there were institutional sanctioned discourses related to race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender. This constrained the discussions about specific issues related to race, gender, or sexuality. Several participants mentioned that there were tacit institutional norms against using words like 'racism' in either oral or written discourses.

More than half of the participants were from minority groups, reflecting a trend in higher education to assign diversity administrator jobs to females and/or racialized persons (Ahmed, 2012). Many were attracted to the role because of their personal lived experiences of exclusion and hoped that their role would be one way of creating institutional change. Below, the themes will be explored in detail.

### **Disillusionment**

Since the interviews were semi-structured, some of the Diversity Administrators offered elaborations about their personal background experiences. The most effusive was a former refugee who became a Diversity Administrator at the Canadian University. Marcus was an African political refugee whose journey to Canada began at a refugee camp in Istanbul, Turkey. He was given the option of repatriation to Australia, the United States, or Canada. Perceiving that Australia was too far away, Marcus chose Canada. He arrived in 1978. Marcus had an academic background from his home country but his credentials were immediately devalued upon migration. Marcus intended to pursue a career as a lawyer. He claimed to have been told by an immigration official “Look you know, we didn’t bring you here to send you to law school. You are an immigrant.”

He was 27 years of age and was finally given permission to enroll at a university as a mature student while working as a security guard to financially support himself. He studied sociology and became a social worker. After many years, he became aware of an opportunity for a Diversity Administrator position at his alma mater and applied in 1992. He held the position until 2005.

Marcus talked about the Canadian University in the late 80s and early 90s as a 'progressive' institution with a newly formed sexual harassment center. This early time of policy development saw the creation of policies related to equity, human rights, and anti-harassment. Policies were also established to provide First Nations students with access to the law school through the creation of a First Nations admissions policy. Through his professional role, he helped to create policies directed at hate crimes, disability services, and LGBTQ positive spaces. Marcus talked about his role working with students, staff, faculty, management, senior administration, as well as external community members. He explained that the purpose of such coalitions were to reinforce existing institutional practices related to diversity.

After 13 years in his position he was terminated in 2005 under circumstances that he did not disclose on record. A search of campus media showed that the university did not reveal the reasons for his 'dismissal' or 'forced departure' depending on the particular newspaper account. Black students on campus led a petition campaign and protest to persuade the administration to reconsider their decision, but the termination was upheld.

R: Well, because of when I left [Canadian University] in 2005-6, we had such an agreement I am not supposed to really talk about.

- I: No, no. Say what you can say I guess. What happened to your position after you left? Do you know what happened to it?
- R: I think the whole departments have changed so that's something I don't want to go too much about it. That's what I am saying.
- I: Right.
- R: We made an agreement when I left or when I ceased to be an employee so I made an agreement I signed an agreement that I am not going to talk too much about what has happened and what kind of things happen. But the offices have changed you know.
- I: Right, they have changed. So it's been changed in a different way, okay.
- R: Yeah, I think the systems have new names I don't know whatever it is. I don't really want to comment about—those are the kinds of things maybe you should go and find out from those people who are there. I think there are people now who are in human rights and I don't think they are particular race relations or antiracism advisors per se. [Marcus, ex-Diversity Administrator, Canadian University].

After thirteen years in his role, Marcus was quite shaken by his sudden termination. It is important to note that his position was permanently eliminated and his job functions folded into other positions. The nature of such positions is that they are subject to budgetary provisions and vulnerable to institutional power realignments that can see such positions eliminated. Marcus made the observation that the focus on anti-racism or race relations was encompassed by human rights. The emphasis on broader focus on human rights fits with the color-blind framework.

Essed (1991) argues that we should regard racism as a system of structural inequalities and a historical process that is reproduced through everyday routine practices. Color-blind racism is the dominant racial ideology of the post-Obama era (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). The dominant cultural view in the public realm is that racism is part of the historical past and that racism is a social problem that has largely been resolved (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). Herring and Henderson (2011) argue that colorblind

diversity encourages organizations to celebrate and embrace cultural differences while ignoring the social inequalities faced by the groups. Ahmed (2012) points out that diversity is often associated with race but not explicitly so. Ahmed (2012) asserts that her book is about what diversity obscures. “the relationship between diversity and racism as a way of making explicit a tendency that is reproduced by staying implicit” (p.14).

As a follow up, two of the existing staff agreed to be interviewed for this study. Marcus moved on to community-based work and consulting work. He never worked in a university setting again.

At the time of interview, Maria had been at the U.S. University for six years in her position as a Diversity Director of a Student Center. Prior to her position she was Director of Student Support Services at a nearby university. Maria holds a doctorate in Education and her work focused on program evaluation. She claimed that the methodological tools used for her dissertation served her well in her current position. Her role is to direct the diversity-related programming of the student center.

The program supports underrepresented students by providing services like advising, tutoring, peer mentoring programs, workshops, and cultural events. Maria felt disillusioned about programs that were put in place purportedly to support underrepresented students but undermined the objectives of their support programs. Maria cites an instance below:

They have programs and steps in place to help support underrepresented students although I don't think that they are as effective as they need to be. I'll just put that lightly. We had a couple of representatives from I think Action Planning come to our meeting to encourage us to get students to

apply for their programs. So I did. I got one of my underrepresented students to apply for their program and she dropped out after three weeks. She feels very unwelcome in the program, unsupported and she tells me things that her faculty say to her, faculty members and I think that's very insensitive. Things like, "Well, I hope you don't ask too many stupid questions." Now why would you say that to any student let alone an underrepresented female student? You know. [Maria, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Maria's narrative excerpt illuminates the many ways that a lack of systemic approach to diversity and inclusion can have the impact of contributing to exclusion. Maria notes that the programs designed to support the inclusion of underrepresented minorities are ineffective. Few programs actually work closely with faculty members to communicate the mandate of the programs and enlist their support. There are also no mechanisms of accountability for faculty members who fail to support the program or the students.

Lenora was a tenured faculty member in the department of sociology and head of the faculty senate diversity sub-committee. Lenora was born in and grew up in the same city of the U.S. University. She earned her undergraduate degree in 1984. After taking a break, she returned in 1987 to complete her Master's Degree and completed her Ph.D. in 1995. Lenora readily acknowledges the role of affirmative action in her career, referring to herself as an 'affirmative action hire.'

I guess that's the part that makes me feel a little bit sad because I see a— well, the university has in my opinion moved away from diversity. I would say that started happening maybe in the late 90's or early 2000s. There was a move-away like in the mid 90's, or I'd say maybe like around '93, '94 towards the latter part, there was actually an aggressive attempt to attract more diversity to the university. [Lenora, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Lenora believed that the earlier diversity initiatives in the late 1990s and early 2000s were much broader in scope. This fits with why Bonilla-Silva (2014) argues that color-blind ideology is a modern regression away from the more civil rights-focused and anti-racism focused approaches to inclusion. Ahmed (2012) notes that diversity work involves revealing institutional whiteness. Ahmed (2012) argues that diversity work involves changing the perception about institutional whiteness rather than changing the whiteness.

White normativity is maintained since people of color are additive. Ahmed (2012) recounts the narratives of several practitioners who talk about the discomfort of whiteness and their self-awareness of difference. The culture of whiteness persists. Herring and Henderson (2011) argue that since social ascriptive factors that confer disadvantage are beyond one's control, such as race and gender. They argue that distributive justice should ensure that measures should target those groups. The authors contend that one must link diversity to compensatory justice.

Lenora also spoke at length about a former affirmative action officer who conducted an analysis across departments comparing salaries. This former officer determined that minority staff and faculty were paid less than colleagues performing similar work. Her audit led to pay equity initiatives. Lenora described her as taking an active role and taking her job very seriously. Her perspective was that hiring minority group members into affirmative action administration positions was positive because they bring a unique understanding of underrepresentation and exclusion that maybe majority members do not have.

Louise, a Diversity Administrator at the Canadian University, has held various administrative positions within the university for the past twenty years. For the past five, she has taken on an administrative role that involves supporting equity initiatives for women, Aboriginals, and underrepresented minorities. She was born in Regina, Saskatchewan and moved to the province of Ontario in 1993.

For Louise, learning about diversity and inclusion took place on the job. Her academic background was in finance and accounting, but she explained that she was passionate about diversity and inclusion and had undertaken a process of learning that involved reading scholarly material and attending professional development workshops. Although during her interview she spoke in glowing terms about her role and her perceived accomplishments, she did acknowledge that she had not seen any substantial structural changes. Louise identified the changes as superficial and saw that she was not having much of an impact on the institution as a whole.

You know, you see superficial changes in time but then you are put in this really ridiculous situation where you have this cushy job all right and yet deep down you realize you are not making much headway in terms of what you are supposed to be doing. [Louise, Diversity Administrator, Canadian University]

### **Disillusionment: Institutional Resistance**

Of the twelve participants, ten of the participants spoke about institutional resistance and how it contributed to their sense of disillusionment about their role. Institutional resistance took several forms. In some instances, colleagues in collaborating departments were not supportive, there was piecemeal support among

the organizational leaders, or funding was unstable and unpredictable. Ahmed (2012) includes the image of a brick wall to illustrate the principle of organizational resistance to diversity efforts in her chapter, referred to as institutional inertia. This is part of the paradox Ahmed (2012) discusses, which is the fact that diversity practitioners are employed by the institutions they are expected to change. Diversity practitioners are tasked with getting the communicational messages of diversity out and identifying institutional members who will disseminate the information (Ahmed, 2012).

Originally from Ohio, Kwame arrived at the U.S. University in 1990. He became the Vice-Provost of Diversity in 2009. He oversees several programs aimed at minority or underrepresented students which include Equal Opportunity programs, the McNair achievement program, and several others. Prior to his appointment he was a member of the graduate faculty as well as a Diversity Administrator at a university in the state of Texas. He has a Bachelor's degree in Sociology, a Master's Degree in Education and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership. Kwame had a long history of involvement with human rights and activist work. In the 1980s, he was the head of an affirmative action committee for a large labor union. He worked on issues related to pay equity for women and racial minorities. At the U.S. university, upon the initiative of the President in 1999 he oversaw a campus climate study directed at Black and Latino staff and faculty. Following the report, the President instituted a commission charged with investigating the report and implementing recommendations. The commission was disbanded in 2003.

Kwame spoke about conservative faculty members who opposed not only the efforts of his department, but diversity initiatives as whole. He explained that those individuals required education, although there were no institutional methods to provide the training and support required. Kwame made the interesting observation that diversity initiatives were *antithetical* to the stated objectives of the university:

The other part of it is institutions are concerned about their image and their reputation. And frequently what happens is those measures that tend to determine an institutions image and reputation are at odds with diversity. The kinds of things – you know in most instances, institution’s reputation is based on the profile – the academic profile of the entering class, their SAT scores, high school Grade Point Average, rank in class, those kinds of things. And the higher that is, usually the more prestigious an institution is considered. Well those things militate against taking students who come from less competitive schools, you see. As a result that will always work against diversity, at least class-wise. And since under-represented students, you know Black, Latino and others, are disproportionately represented in those schools, it’ll work against diversity ethnically. And that’s not because anybody personally is opposed or doesn’t want diversity. It’s kind of like institutionalized within the very fabric of the system, the structure that works against it. And so that’s what I – that’s my view (*laughter*).  
[Kwame, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Kwame in his narrative excerpt presented two tensions within the institutional discourse of diversity and the status of the university. Academic elitism is an issue for selective institutions. Kwame addressed the tensions between the goals of the university and needs of underrepresented Black and Latino students. González, Moll and Amanti (2005) argue against the cultural deficit model that seems to pervade this type of argument about excellence. They argue that all groups of people have a rich repository of knowledge, or funds of knowledge that is gained from distinct life experiences. (Gonzalez et al, 2005) argue that the public defining characteristics of

low income families feature social pathologies that erase the resiliency and fortitude of individuals within those communities as well as the communities themselves.

Richard was a tenured professor of African American studies who also held a diversity liaison position between faculty and the administration. The term of the position was three years and part of his duties involved the creation of diversity reports and policies. He was born in South Africa and completed his graduate work in England and Canada. Richard had been teaching at the U.S. University for 25 years. One of the things he felt very strongly about was his commitment to mentoring underrepresented students and he conceded that the institution would never recognize his work in service of the students at the university. Three of the student participants in this study mentioned this particular professor as a key figure in helping them to navigate the institution. They spoke passionately about his ‘open-door’ policies and the time and energy he devoted to helping them successfully complete their courses.

At the time of interview, his academic department was being merged with another department in light of budget cuts. Richard claimed that the opposition to the move was muted by concerns about the survival of his discipline within the university. He was concerned with the impact of budget cuts on the quality of his program and the ability to recruit diverse faculty. He also expressed concern about the new university president, a foreign-born scholar in a STEM field. He mentioned in his interview that unlike himself, many foreign-born faculty lack an understanding of the historical inequalities that have influenced the demographic makeup of the student, faculty, and administrative personnel.

‘Diversity My Ass’ was the title of a listserv posting by a member of the university senate committee of which Richard was an active member. The university hosts several computer list serves for members of various service committees on campus. Richard explained that he had participated in the listserv for the past year and that many of the postings were from individuals who expressed conservative beliefs, namely supporters of the right-wing tea party. While intellectual diversity is an integral part of academic freedom, the point made by Richard was that these views contributed to a culture of resistance that Diversity Administrators had to work against.

R: You see that heading over there?

I: Oh diversity my ass [*laughter*] ...

R: Somebody started off with it, but just to give you an idea of the heading, you know what I am saying?

R: Basically what I wanted to say was, it started off with characterization of the tea party... It will give you some idea of what is the institutional culture. Is that you really get to know how people think when there is slight problem, otherwise it's kind of smiley, smiley and then you never get to the root of things.

Richard was concerned that many of his colleagues on the Diversity Committee were not taking their roles seriously nor were they particularly concerned about the success of their mandate. One could speculate that they joined the committee because of departmental pressures to participate, personal desires to extend their service roles, or a desire for impression management on their part.

Richard alluded to the fact that he had spent considerable time arguing with those colleagues about politics and race. Richard showed that institutional resistance had become normalized in ways that contributed to a sense of personal frustration. Ahmed (2012) indicates that there is a paradox in that diversity practitioners must

attempt to institutionalize diversity when the institutional leadership may not share their goal.

Michelle, a Diversity Administrator at the U.S. University, took into account the geographic location of the city. Michelle was a young recent graduate of the same university where she held the administrative position. She was born in a Southern U.S. state and moved up north to attend the university. In her position for only three years, she still had many insights to share about the local area:

This city you should, you may be aware is very segregated, all right? I bet all these cities are in the United States. A high degree of segregation is one of the, I think it's in the top ten I might say. Yeah so in the sense to me what I'm saying is this is a racist city. Only time I have seen the issue of segregation can only maintain racism and segregation is racism okay that's one way... So we do hear then with an institution that draws its clientele locally and so we are dealing here also with a student culture, faculty culture that is not very warm and open to students from minority backgrounds so there is that problem too. [Michelle, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Michelle argued that since the city that the university was located in was segregated along racial and social class lines, that there would be a necessary spill-over effect within the university. Few universities consider the external geographic location as a factor when considering campus diversity and inclusion. The existing faculty members at the university live in local areas that are racially segregated and the students who were born locally also come from those areas. The culture of their home communities may isolate them from racially and culturally diverse individuals. This logically has an impact on diversity policies and practices within the institution.

At the Canadian University, none of the Diversity Administrators discussed residential segregation as a problem. Clifton, was a Jamaican-born Diversity Administrator who completed an undergraduate degree in another province before settling in Ontario. He had hoped to enter law school someday and was studying for his LSAT examinations. His aspiration was to gain admission to the law school at the university of his employ in order to become a human rights lawyer. Clifton had arrived in Canada as an immigrant in his late teens and although he had completed the equivalent of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade back in Jamaica, he was placed in a ninth grade classroom. His early initiation into systemic discriminatory practices influenced his career path. Clifton made the observation that faculty members did not have collegial relationships and that this affected the ability to garner widespread support for diversity initiatives.

So a lot of faculty know me, so I can interact with them that way (*Respondent takes phone call*). And so, those kinds of things, see an institution's weaknesses and shortcomings won't be restricted to issues of diversity. I mean if you find a faculty that has problems with diversity, it's not because they necessarily have problems with diversity, they've got problems anyway. You see what I'm saying? They got problems with each other. There are faculties where the members of the department have never talked to one another, or if they did, they did it for a while and then they got mad with each other and then didn't do it anymore. So now that will reflect in diversity issues, when it wasn't necessarily about diversity. Now there are some things that are just about diversity, but campuses overall are basically pretty progressive places – college campuses. [Clifton, Diversity Administrator, Canadian University]

Urrieta and Villenas (2013) raise important questions about the contradictions faced by Latino/a faculty members within the academy. Like the participants in this study, on one hand their hard-earned positions afford them the ability to gain a voice

in challenging racism while simultaneously being marginalized by institutional power relations.

### **Institutional Hegemony**

The second broad theme was institutional hegemony. The diversity administrators in the study encountered institutional power relations and practices that were intractable. Policies and practices that were developed over the life of the institution were difficult to influence. The position of the individuals tasked with diversity work within the organizational hierarchy tended to be lower in rank and their positions were frequently vulnerable to organizational restructuring or budget cuts. Three of the participants also had double roles as members of the teaching faculty. Their service obligations could be adjusted annually which affected the amount of time that they could devote to diversity work.

Diversity-related programs in both universities were localized within one or two particular departments or offices. In doing this, the institutional leadership could carry out their main organizational activities and divert all diversity-related programs to their respective departments. Institutional hegemony also meant that diversity was not a core part of the institution's functioning, but relegated to the periphery.

Ahmed (2012) notes that equity work is considered to be peripheral to the core functioning of the university. The 'Equity office' is a separate and alienated part of the institutional body (Ahmed, 2012). Ahmed (2012) describes a participant who labelled her work 'counter-hegemonic' and aligned her work with the institution if only in appearance.

Ahmed (2012) takes a phenomenological approach to the study of institutions by which consciousness is key to her philosophical approach. By phenomenological she refers to the aspects of consciousness (Ahmed, 2012). Her point is that practices and policies that become routinized within an institution recede from consciousness (Ahmed, 2012). In considering diversity ‘work’ as a phenomenological practice, Ahmed (2012) suggests that it is about paying critical attention to the processes and practices that are considered routine organizational functioning and to consider their implicit meanings.

A study by Clark, Fasching-Varner, and Brimhall-Vargas (2012) also support the argument that diversity administrators are engaged in what the authors refer to as ‘race work.’

Maria, the Diversity Director at the U.S. University, discussed the challenges of institutional hegemony:

Oh yes, to a certain point your hands are going to be tied because you can’t—you can only work within your sphere of influence. I mean, I can definitely make things fair within Student Services because that’s my sphere and I feel like the narrow sphere of influence they cast, I can definitely help in it. I have plenty of help make things more responsive within my programs but beyond that, you really have to rely on that cooperation of other people and if there is no will or recourses then...[Maria, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Maria’s narrative highlights the limited scope and influence that her position afforded her. Her example also draws attention to the lack of systemic implementation of diversity practices. She must depend on the co-operation of

others who may not necessarily be willing. There was no accountability beyond the scope of her department for the implementation of her programming work.

Kezar (2007) charges that organizational leaders lack the ability to implement varied strategies related to their diversity initiatives at particular times. Kezar (2007) adds that different strategies are required at each stage of implementation. Kezar (2007) summarizes most of the literature about organizational implementation into three phases which correspond respectively to structural, behavioral, and cultural change.

The first phase is mobilization , which involves generating awareness, exploring the change, and making initial attempts to implement some sort of change (Curry, 1992, cited in Kezar, 2007). The second phase involves implementation of the change within existing structures and the third phase institutionalizes the change as part of a strategic plan and organizational functioning (Curry, 1992, cited in Kezar, 2007). Phase one institutions are characterized by the existence of no campus-wide diversity agenda or policies in place, departmental diversity efforts that are compartmentalized (Kezar, 2007). Phase two institutions have a campus-wide diversity agenda and a commitment at all levels is loosely organized (Kezar, 2007).

Based on Kezar's (2007) categorization, both institutions in the study are somewhere between Phase one and Phase two. There is some co-ordination of efforts but the diversity functions are still compartmentalized.

### **Institutional Hegemony: Economic Considerations**

Several administrators mentioned economic considerations as a barrier to the implementation of diversity practices. As with most corporate and non-profit organizations, the financing for diversity-related programming fluctuates annually. It is not typically considered an essential aspect of organizational functioning. During budget cutbacks, diversity-related positions and programming may be drastically reduced or eliminated. Institutions are under pressure from the government and other stakeholders to function as businesses in a competitive marketplace (Butterwick and Dawson, 2005; Morley, 2003). Morely (2003) describes the current economic climate of the university as comprising an 'audit culture.' In an 'audit culture' all activities are subject to monitoring in order to ensure that the activities make the university more profitable. Maria mentioned that diversity-related programming was accorded a secondary status:

I mean, I think [U.S. University] is committed to diversity as long as it doesn't interfere with economic plans. But when money is an issue, and money is always an issue. I think they have to sacrifice their commitment to diversity or they feel they do anyway in order to meet enormous numbers. They can claim that they want to recruit more but then they don't do anything to retain these students that I can see. [Maria, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Maria noted that the university was committed to diversity within certain economic limitations. Since both of the universities were public research institutions they were subject to perennial budget cuts. This left diversity administrators and their program goals vulnerable to elimination or reduction. Morely (2003) argues that these regulatory norms convey messages about which activities will be deemed worthwhile.

Individual administrators within these universities are aware of the norms and structure their activities in accordance with those norms.

Comber (1997) explains how managerial discourses have dominated educational policy through the use of terms such as ‘measurable outcomes.’ Comber (1997) explains this as part of a process that shifted from education being conceptualized as a human right to a conceptualization as an investment in human capital. Fairclough (1995) asserts that universities are conforming their organizations to a market mode of operation that includes fiscal autonomy and external marketing.

Maria made the observation that programming devoted to recruitment may not equally devoted to retention efforts. Kwame, also from the U.S. university adds:

The issue comes when resources get scarce and it’s not necessarily lack of support of diversity as much as it is of putting diversity in its pecking order with respect to priorities, and in those instances there are signs that there are other priorities that rank higher than diversity. And I suspect that would be the same anywhere. Because essentially if you can look at the way an organization expends its resources, you begin to see where its priorities are. So issues around funding and budget and scarcity will affect diversity everywhere, because there are very few places where diversity is the number one priority. Oftentimes it’ll be given lip service that way, but the reality of it is it’s not the number one. And I can’t in reality say it should be, although personally I think it’s at the top of the list (laughter).  
[Kwame, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Kwame framed the problem in relation to resource scarcity. The institutional hierarchies of power referred to by Kwame as the ‘pecking order’ relegates diversity-related goals to a secondary or tertiary status. Kwame makes the statement that ‘there are very few places where diversity is the number one priority.’ His insights provide evidence for the hegemonic normalization of diversity as a low priority endeavor.

Through everyday practices and behaviors within the organization, members learn to place a lower value to diversity-related issues.

One of the questions posed to the Diversity Administrators from both universities was to ask about how they conceptualized diversity and whether it differed from how students might conceptualize diversity. A major finding was that from the perspective of the institution, diversity was defined in demographically *quantifiable* terms based on a broad range of social differences.

While the students may frame diversity more narrowly in human rights, anti-racist or social justice terms, the institutional framing of diversity encompassed more. On one hand, this could be regarded as positive to include as many aspects as possible, but on the other hand, by positioning all social differences as having equal social implications, it might be problematic.

Critical race scholars and anti-racist scholars argue that the saliency of race is a powerful social marker that shapes life experiences and life outcomes (Dei, 1999; Delgado and Stefancic, 2001; Solórzano and Yosso, 2002). Bonilla-Silva's (2014) critique is less about liberalism that is rooted in social reform than liberalism's central tenets. It means supporting equal opportunity while ignoring the historical inequalities that result in race, gender, and class inequality. Part of abstract liberalism is also meritocracy and untroubled is the fact that those recipients of 'merit' are most often of the dominant culture.

Tanisha began working at the U.S. university in 1993. The previous year, she had been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and spent a difficult year trying to

determine what career path to pursue given her debilitating condition. After completing her university degree in psychology, a fellow church member helped her to get a job at the U.S. university as a receptionist. She worked in a variety of administrative positions until her eventual position as a diversity administrator for a division of student services. Her job function is to provide financial and personal counselling for minority students. Having grown up on social assistance, she believed that she could relate to the low-income students well and establish trusting relationships.

One of the challenges of her work is to help the students navigate the complex regulations and policies related to financial aid provisions. Her counselling services are open to all students, but the majority of the students are Latino/a and African-American. She believed that financial aid was one of the main factors that allowed students to successfully complete their degrees within six years. Tanisha offered the institutional definition and contrasted it with her own:

I like to be I'll let you on my definition, I would say to me diversity is really, I feel like it is difference among people basically. It's how I see diversity is, well so that is it could be the gender, it could be the color, it could be its even the year at school, it can be the majors, it can be diversity for a whole a lot of different levels, it's not just on one level. When I think of diversity to me personally, I definitely think of minority races. But I know there are other people in the university who view it differently.  
[Tanisha, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Ahmed (2012) notes that the corporatization of diversity reflects the use of managerial discourses. The word diversity connotes difference but doesn't imply any commitment to challenge inequalities. Ahmed (2012) diversity can function as a containment strategy. Ahmed (2012) considers diversity an institutional speech act.

Diversity invokes the aesthetic of the body as marked by ‘otherness’ while also invoking a moral value. So valuing diversity involves the appearance of valuing it.

Maria, the Diversity Director at the U.S. University, provided an expansive definition of diversity:

Here at [U.S. University] we define it very broadly. So diversity includes aspects of identity or you know, having to do with age, race, ethnicity, gender, class differences, sexuality, religious differences, but then also having to do with diverse perspectives and diverse opinions, so diverse life experiences. So I would try to define it as broadly as I could. I think for [U.S. University] policy for practical reasons, they probably define it according to things that are more easily measurable. You know, boxes that students can check at applications ... I think they also go by like nationalities so international versus domestic students and even State residency, I think that’s another aspect of diversity for [U.S. University]. I think actually [U.S. University] also does diversity by rural, urban or suburban. Oh! Also majors. So those are the categories I think I have seen in my group work and whatnot for [U.S. University] diversity. [Maria, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Maria pointed out in her narrative that the varied social identities encompassed by the institutional definitions of diversity needed to be measured. Intersectionality scholars (Crenshaw, 1991; Frideres, 2002) have shown that intersecting identities of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation may intersect in ways that are not captured by forms of measurement.

As referenced earlier, six of the twelve diversity administrators employed the language of globalization and discussed how international students fit into the strategic plans of the university. Both universities boast on their web site about the high number of international students they attract. The U.S. university stated that they had the fifth highest percentage of international students in the country. Spring (2009) warned that

the language of globalization has appeared in discursive forms in the educational literature. With the global decrease in government funding for higher education, international partnerships and the recruitment of international students becomes more of an economic consideration (Kezar, 2004).

At both the U.S. and Canadian university, international students paid tuition fees that were three times the in-state/in-province domestic rate. In addition, international students are used to bolster the diversity statistics for race and ethnicity. It was a common practice to 'count' African foreign students as 'African-American' when counting the number of students for demographic data collection.

At the Canadian university, only the demographic diversity of foreign students was collected through mandatory measures, not the Canadian-born racially diverse students. Ahmed (2012) notes that institutional diversity discourses also invoke the idea of global citizenship and how it fits into the promotion of the university. This means being able to attract foreign students and also becoming a skill that can be helpful when working across global cultures. It can become a tool. Iverson (2007) found that higher education tends to be framed as a competitive marketplace for the recruitment of 'diverse' bodies that are presumed to benefit the institution. Lastly, diversity is supposed to help make the university more democratic (Iverson, 2007).

At the Canadian university, one Diversity Administrator discussed how admissions processes are connected to economic interests and how these interests may present disadvantages for native-born underrepresented minorities:

I suspect that, though I hope not; I really have to say that. There maybe be certain economic interests that may influence admission practices and academic equivalence mechanisms. If that image of diversity, then I have a

little bit of concern about that. We are looking at diversity by having those things. I still believe students of African ancestry, the first nations and indigenous people still are not really represented in all universities, not only in one.

We are also living in a global society. Another thing really these days, we have to understand whereby people talk about multiculturalism, multiracialism and other forms of isms. That is what I say but that means different equity seeking group communities and agencies need representation and work together to challenge the systems for change. I think that change is something also that people don't want to think about as possible, but it is possible. [Marcus, ex-Diversity Administrator, Canadian University]

Marcus makes the critique about international students and the underrepresentation of minority students. Yet, his narrative excerpt illustrates that he still embraces the language of globalization by saying 'We are also living in a global society.' Then he expresses his hope that change can occur over time.

Dugger (1989) regards organizational rhetoric as a form of hegemony. Dugger (1989) contends that organizations will emulate the policies and practices of their competitors in order to maintain and enhance their positions in the marketplace. A primary goal is that of competitive advantage, also termed 'the business case for diversity.' The discourse around this goal focuses on reinforcing the economic benefits or 'return on investment' for creating a diverse organization.

Gandz (2001) argues that "diversity in the future will be driven by the imperatives of competitiveness, demography, immigration, and globalization and these will supersede the social activism and legislative interventions of the past" (p.5). Another corporate goal is organizational effectiveness. Here, the focus is on the benefits that a more inclusive environment will provide for an organization. In both Canada and the United States, cultural diversity is represented as a business

opportunity that can potentially increase productivity, foster innovation and create organizational cohesiveness (Carnevale & Stone, 1995; Elmes & Connelley, 1997; Mayo, 1999; McCune, 1997).

Lenora was very critical of how the interests of globalization can further entrench inequality for underrepresented minorities who are local to the university:

What I've seen is I've seen that interest kind of way and what has happened is which is really kind of interesting, what has happened is they sort of flipped the script and now if you look at it, I mean diversity, international students are counted as diversity. Not in my mind but in their minds. So [U.S. University] counts itself as being this incredibly diverse university and what they do is they impose those international students statistics into the mix and talk about how we have students from Singapore, and we have students from Ghana, and we have students from Poland. So it's, I guess you could say in a sense that those definitions of diversity have kind of slowly changed over time and eroded. Because when I was hired the going I guess buzzword was affirmative action. But affirmative action always had a lot of negative baggage. People misunderstood the term and what it meant. A lot of African-American and people of color took offence at affirmative action you know, like this dirty little word. I never viewed it that way because I recognized that without affirmative action, a lot of people of color would never have been hired. [Lenora, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Lenora has explained how the focus on international students has eroded strategic affirmative action plans over time. By 'counting' diversity as international, the institution may absolve itself of any responsibility to existing U.S. born or Canadian-born underrepresented or equity-seeking groups who have been historically disadvantaged. Lenora, employs the language of affirmative action and concedes that it can be controversial. In efforts to avoid controversy, the university can claim to be supporting equity efforts by promoting the international student body as an achievement of 'equity.'

Ayers (2005) contends that neoliberal discursive practices appear to be based on neutral commonsense are biased in favor of the dominant, upper class societal members. Neoliberalism is a position that education should ultimately serve the interests of the global economic marketplace. Discursive texts refer to the preparation of students for the workforce. Learners are positioned as ‘economic entities’ whose needs are tied with suiting market needs. Richard, also at the U.S. university, made a similar complaint about the focus on international students:

Okay there is a different side of issues involved okay and to me internationalization of the school is primarily economically driven because we are now talking about students who are able to pay and basically we have a preponderance of students coming from China and from India. We are not talking about true diversity within the international student population of talking about say students coming from Africa all right, students coming from South America all right, students coming from the Caribbean all right. So we are talking about a lopsided internationalization where there is a domination of basically two countries all right? I don’t know... you might be able to get some statistics on this one now but... I feel that this school is not doing enough in terms of you know trying to recruit local students you know and so forth you know so that’s what I’m saying. [Richard, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Richard’s appraisal of the situation was that economic imperatives were influencing the university to recruit students who were less likely to be disadvantaged, but international students from privileged social classes in India and China. Richard discussed that such students had the ability to ‘pay’ and it is known that the international tuition fees are exorbitant. Such recruitment practices also have the effect of reproducing social class hierarchies. The international students may fit into the social class status quo more than locally-born underrepresented minority group members. The diversity recruitment practices ostensibly intended to benefit

underrepresented minorities in the U.S. and Canada end up being obscured by the rich portrait of international student diversity.

Kezar (2007) makes the important observation that campuses with institutionalized diversity agendas are less likely to promote diversity through media (web sites and printed materials). Since the one of the main research questions in this study was about diversity-related promotional media, diversity administrators were also asked to share their insights. Eight of the twelve administrators were aware of the various diversity media on campus and four claimed to be unaware because their diversity work was restricted to policy documents. Of the eight who were aware, most framed them as an offshoot of the university's business and marketing functions. Almost all of the eight used corporate language to discuss the existence of diversity-related promotional media. Tanisha, a U.S. Diversity Administrator, described the media using entirely corporate language:

I think the web sites, posters, and such originate out of marketing...you know branding. The University has a serious focus on branding its image. So the marketing department sees diversity as something of a product 'differentiator.' I don't think anyone in the administration consciously thinks that it will influence a student to attend. It is just part of its marketing strategy. [Tanisha, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Dugger (1989) contended that corporate hegemony consisted of an institutionalized set of practices. Diversity-related media have become part of corporate representation in many sectors outside of education. Corporations can market diversity as an 'asset' that is presumed to create the impression of good corporate citizenship. Tanisha noted in one sentence that the university had an interest

in ‘branding’ its image. Branding is a major marketing element for organizations who wish to distinguish themselves from competitors in the educational marketplace by selling ‘diversity.’

During the interview, Maria, a U.S. Diversity Administrator, was looking at a diversity poster as we spoke. She described the types of diversity that were recently being depicted and provided some details about how the posters were developed: Maria noted that the diversity posters were created by the specific department designated to address the particular aspect of diversity within the institution. During the process of investigating the origin of the diversity posters both campuses, I found that most are created outside the university by graphic arts agencies who are specifically contracted to provide them for various universities, non-profits, and community groups. Few of the diversity-related media are created in-house with actual photographers and real students. Marcus from the Canadian university explained:

Most of the photos are stock images and I don’t think they are real students on campus. Some departments actually use real students, like the adult continuing education department but most are just stock images put together by the graphic arts team. The students who appear in a photo together never posed that way, they are photoshopped and cropped to form images. [Marcus, ex-Diversity Administrator, Canadian University]

Several of the student participants expressed skepticism about the origin of the images they saw on diversity-related promotional material. Most students understood that stock photographs were used in most cases since the photos appeared to depict tokenistic additions of members of racial and cultural groups. Some students mentioned that the posters gave the impression of more diversity than may exist within

certain academic departments and this disappointed them upon arrival. The other contradiction was that most students mentioned racial segregation on campus but the diversity posters always depicted a group with one member of each race or ethnicity in a social situation or posed photo in a way that would rarely occur in reality. These images may reinforce ideals about color-blind ideology and the myth of social cohesion on campus without racism.

### **Institutional Hegemony: Silencing and Language**

The final sub-theme and most prominent was language and the silencing of racial discourse within the administration. All twelve of the administrators were frustrated by the policing of the language in their roles. By far the greatest paradox articulated by each of the participants was that racial discourses were silenced by hegemonic institutionalized norms yet they were still expected to address racism in their work. Each of the participants learned very early in their positions that the institutionally sanctioned language of ‘diversity’ was to be employed and that racially neutral language like ‘disadvantaged’, ‘urban’, or ‘underrepresented’ was to replace racial labels. This was frustrating for the diversity administrators who felt stymied in their efforts to identify racism. Ahmed (2012) notes that even to name racism is problematic for the institution because it suggests failure of compliance. Ahmed (2012) notes that researching diversity involves attending to the implicit and explicit forms of language.

Each of the administrators had some background in anti-racism, affirmative action, human rights, or anti-oppression but were painfully conscious that expressing

racial discourses would expose them to ostracism or condemnation. Lenora's interview stood out from the rest as she quite passionately articulated her frustrations:

First of all, I'm not involved in any formal committee dealing with this issue but I think yes. I think there is a language now. It's the language of inclusion, it's the language of you know, everybody in the boat. That's what it is. I mean what better way to undermine something than to as you say limit the language? So what happens is you are not really talking about the issue at hand. You are talking about all these other tangential issues that may have some bearing on it, but it's really not the cracks of the issue. Those are two big things and the other thing is, if you dare to be who you are and speak your mind, there is that fear of alienating your peers who have to ultimately vote on you. So it this is like walking on egg shells. [Lenora, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

As a faculty member, Lenora cautions that open expressions about race and racism could jeopardize an individual's status within the organization. This results in a silencing that further entrenches the problems of exclusion and racism. Lenora mentioned that the neutral language of inclusion is now commonplace. Inclusion is deemed to be a term that refers to the social inclusion of individuals with varied social identities. The language of inclusion does not implicate any particular group, as the supposedly incendiary term 'anti-racism' does. The presumed Black-White binary of the language of anti-racism positions one race as the perpetrator and the other as the 'victim.' This powerful association negates the ability of administrators to frame their efforts in such a manner. Lenora makes the key argument that limiting the language actually undermines the efforts that diversity administrators are tasked with. Failing to address racism as a root issue of exclusion for many underrepresented students ensures that there can be little progress in its amelioration.

Bowen and Blackmon (2003) claim that individuals within organizations will be remain silent if they perceive that members of their workgroup have a particular

attitude about the issue. The individual will be likely to speak if they perceive that they have support. Noelle-Newman's (1974, cited in Bowen and Blackmon, 2003) 'spiral of silence' accounts for why opinions become held by the minority or the majority. Fear of ostracism and isolation can silence individuals with dissenting opinions. Bowen and Blackmon (2003) point out that individuals with stigmatized identities such as LGBT or racial identities may attempt to assimilate in the dominant to avoid further ostracism.

Ahmed (2012) notes the institutional use of euphemisms such as 'certain communities' to mean racialized communities or communities of color. These are implicit references. The language of 'welcoming' is based on the logic that sees the institution as the 'host' and the non-white as the 'guest' Ahmed (2012) contends that the logic of institutional diversity can be considered a conditional hospitality (Derrida, 2000, cited in Ahmed, 2012). The very language of welcoming implies that the non-white is a visitor. Ahmed (2012) argues that people of color are welcomed on condition that they return the hospitality by adopting the institutional culture or allowing themselves to be showcased as diverse. Ahmed (2012) argues that to critique institutional whiteness is to be ungrateful for the 'hospitality.' "The very structural position of being the guest, or the stranger, the one who receives hospitality allows an act of inclusion to maintain the form of exclusion." (p.43).

Also at the U.S. University, Kwame put quite succinctly that 'diversity' was to be the acceptable term:

And so in essence I think diversity is where we have moved because of the objection to integration or desegregation or affirmative action, you see. So diversity is a much broader and more inclusive term. It does encompass

the traditionally protected groups, but it expands it to a wider audience. And so I am not really clear. [U.S. University] includes all of the types of diversities, and so I don't imagine the university would be in conflict with that. [Kwame, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

What is telling about Kwame's narrative is that he does not identify who the individuals or groups who object to the term affirmative action. He has understood that his role is to conform to institutionalized norms around language. Kwame justifies the use of 'diversity' as a broad term that is acceptable to members both inside and outside the institution. Ahmed (2012) maintained that the language of diversity serves the purpose of making people comfortable enough to be willing to 'come to the table.' It is a means of hiding and softening the critique. Trowler (2014) wrote about Spivak's theory of the subaltern. Subalterns are populations who are excluded from the hegemonic power structure by geography, politics, or social relations. Spivak (1994) noted that the oppressed are muted by hegemonic discourses and that in order to be heard they must learn and adopt the thoughts and values of the dominant.

Ahmed (2012) argued that diversity accrues value by becoming the 'correct' way to speak within institutionalized discourse. Ahmed (2012) found that diversity practitioners were self-conscious of the language they used to navigate the institution and diversity was one of those officially sanctioned words. Ahmed (2012) notes that diversity language aligns itself with the goals of the university. Ahmed (2012) notes that "the buzz of diversity might be how it cancels out other noise, such as the noise of racism" (p.61).

Another administrator at the U.S. university , also highlighted the point that there are few opportunities given to actually report racism or discrimination within the scope of her position:

Clearly I guess in terms of written—because when you say a report, I guess I have been given opportunities in like climate surveys to report on this. I don't actually have opportunity to communicate to higher admins except for a report. You know what I mean? And those would be related to assessing my program. So I suppose if I—yeah. You know, the way that the reports are structured, I would really have to maneuver within there to figure out a way to make a claim that the underrepresented students needed more support. Yeah, I hadn't really thought about that so I mean I see limited opportunities to communicate with the administration in writing. But yeah, I don't see a lot of opportunity for me. [Maria, Diversity Administrator, U.S. University]

Maria earlier reported that several students in her program had experienced overt forms of discrimination but she felt powerless to help them. When I questioned whether there were mechanisms in place to report such incidents, she explained the nature of the reporting structure. She is responsible for an annual report on her programming activities and it focuses on program evaluation. She was frustrated that there were no means of reporting incidents of discrimination to those in higher administrative positions who she reported to. By limiting diversity administrators to annual or bi-annual reports, the diversity administrator's role can be structurally devised in a manner that prohibits free expression.

At the Canadian University, there was similar discontent with the framing of language. Marcus made a point of distinguishing 'anti-Black racism' as a pervasive problem that fails to be addressed within the 'diversity' discourses of social identities.

Consciously challenging the practice of work is also—this is something for me very critical. Challenging the concept what we call anti-black

racism. This is very serious. That is where I was talking about anti-black racism. This is something that our communities have to learn about and also the community at large in the university and the others. Finally, it is very important really promoting a safe and non-threatened environment to file any and all complaints against those who violate the rights of individuals, groups and other community. That's another issue. People have to feel safe to complain. [Marcus, ex-Diversity Administrator, Canadian University]

Marcus addresses two issues. One is the neglect of anti-Black racism within the Institutionalized diversity discourses. The neutral language of diversity and its multiple identifies obscures the serious social consequence of race for certain marginalized groups and not others. The other issue is that complaints procedures are challenging to navigate and place the victim at further risk. Clifton, another Canadian Diversity Administrator, talked about language and his own perception of the 'angry Black man' stereotype. Clifton explained :

I never played a very defensive approach by making them feel like they are threatened or like I am an angry black man. No. The question is I wanted to talk to them without anger, how angry black people are. He was one of those administrators with whom I used to have a very close relationship. He is one of those also vice-president—those big senior administrators who really doesn't mind coming by and talking to equity seeking kind of offices like ours. So, I never played a very defensive approach, you know what I mean? [Clifton, Diversity Administrator, Canadian University]

Clifton pointed out that he was aware that resistance to him as a Black man could affect his message. Above he discusses how he is careful to avoid such perceptions through managing the impressions of him

Ahmed (2012) contends that the language of diversity also permits institutional members to feel positively about solving the problem of inclusion. Guilt is assuaged under the umbrella of inclusiveness. Ahmed (2012) makes the observation that

diversity discourses involve apparently contrasting logics of the business model for diversity and social justice. Diversity practitioners must resolve this conflict and switch discourses accordingly so they must develop the repertoire. Ahmed (2012) observes that the institutionalization of diversity-related language is used to promote the university and to maintain a public image of being inclusive.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings of interviews with diversity administrators between the two institutions. The overall finding was that diversity administrators were subject to hegemonic power relations that silenced them. Discourses about race and racism were silenced. Their initial disillusionment was transformed into a critical analysis of hegemonic relations of power that operated to limit the scope of their roles. Participants understood their role within the wider institution and sustained themselves by working to create incremental changes within their own departments or limited scope of power. The lack of systemic approaches to diversity practices was evident by their narratives. Diversity administrators received fragmented support for their efforts and were faced opposition from some institutional members. Economic imperatives and globalization were influences that became part of the hegemonic discourses. Participants struggled to balance those organizational priorities with their own goals for equity and inclusion. This chapter highlighted the paradoxes of inclusion within a context of hegemonic exclusion.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The narratives in this study highlight the need for a more critical examination of how policies that comprise the equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) frameworks operate within institutions of higher learning in both Canada and the United States. Both nation states are engaged in a form of discursive myth-making at a national level

about the inclusion of diverse citizens. One major finding was that the experiences of Black students in both countries were strikingly similar.

Despite Canada's national discourse of multiculturalism and inclusion, a recent report by the African Canadian Legal Clinic (2012) argued that a specific form of racism, being *Anti-Black racism* in particular, is pervasive in Canada. At the time of writing in June 2015, the Toronto Police Services in Toronto introduced in policy of carding that targets only Black male youth. Black male youth can be questioned and must provide identifying information to police officers upon request or risk arrest (African Canadian Legal Clinic, 2012). In the United States, far from the post-racial, recent 2015 political events and riots in Ferguson, MO, and Baltimore, MD show that anti-Black racism targeted at Black males is very much a reality. One might speculate that Blacks in industrialized Western European and North American contexts face similar social contexts *regardless* of the national or institutional policies. Certainly the literature coming from Black British scholars such as Stuart Hall and Paul Gilroy (1991; 2000) has demonstrated the need for a global framework to study the situation of Blacks in industrialized nations. I argue that in my conclusion to this study that Anti-Black racism is a global phenomenon that is present in every industrialized and non-industrialized nation.

Consistent with understanding anti-Black racism as a global phenomena, Villenas and Angeles (2013) suggest that we might also see 'whiteness' as flexible and global in its scope. Elaborating on the work of Leonardo (2009), the authors argue that whiteness is flexible and shifts and reinvents itself in the face of racialized discourses.

Ideas about whiteness and the 'other' are not fixed but malleable so that it can exist within various social contexts and nation states.

Studies of Black students at predominantly white universities (PWIs) in the Canada and the United States show that they still report feelings of exclusion in spite of the fact that most universities actively engage in discursive practices that frame their institutions as inclusive spaces. Both language and discursive practices structure policy and diversity practices around campus climate.

The findings in chapter four show that institutional diversity discourses drew on legal and managerial discourses from the business sector. The showcasing of diversity was used to promote the university as an inclusive space for all learners and to promote diversity as an advantage of the university. Diversity was used as a competitive differentiator. The implication from this finding is that diversity discourses *focus on the institution* rather than the marginalized or underrepresented populations they seek to attract and retain. Images of racial and ethnic diversity were concentrated at the level of the undergraduate student population. Very few images depicted organizational leaders or professors from underrepresented groups. It was beyond the scope of this study to identify the purpose of showcasing and promotion of diversity at the undergraduate level. I speculated in several sections throughout the dissertation that these promotional diversity discourses operate as a form of hidden curriculum that is intended to convey a message to the students that they should believe that they are in an inclusive space. Black students are positioned as 'visitors' who are 'welcomed' by the institution and by implication are expected to feel gratitude.

As Kezar (2007) has noted, the proliferation of diversity-related messages and advertising is perhaps *inversely* related to actual effective practices around diversity. In effect, the showcasing of diversity is designed to conceal *non-action*. Although the students in this study were asked to respond to the diversity-related media, none of them identified that the media was more important than the actual practices of diversity.

The issue of varied Black identities complicates this study and provides direction for new ways to conceptualize racial diversity in higher education by developing a nuanced understanding of intersectional identities. Black students come from various social locations and diversity policies and practices need to strike fine balance between the need for what Spivak (1994) refers to as ‘strategic essentialism’ and recognizing the intersections of identities. Strategic essentialism is still important because it allows for a broad framing of collective social justice rights related to a social identity such as race.

I felt that Bonilla-Silva’s (2014) framework for color-blind racism was demonstrated throughout the findings from the textual analysis, administrator interviews, and student interviews. Participants were able to identify the abstract liberalism and racial minimization present in the institutional diversity discourses.

One gap I noted in the policies and practices around diversity was the lack of formal and informal means to express discontent. In particular, diversity administrators had very little avenue beyond private spaces to express their emotions without fear of reprisal. This emotional suppression is what hooks (1995) articulates in

her work *Killing Rage*. Policies of inclusion are limited in their scope by the presence of institutional cultures that suppress emotional expression.

hooks (1995) contends that anger should be regarded as a force that can motivate individuals to resist oppression. Diversity administrators experienced hegemonic power relations that silenced their language and their emotional expressions. Both administrators and student participants offered counter-stories that challenged the dominant narratives about them.

Lastly, the overall findings suggest that without a systemic and overarching approach to diversity and inclusion, that racialized minorities will continue to experience exclusion in predominantly white universities. Diversity practices operated in isolated pockets of both institutions and the organizational leadership did not take a systemic approach.

### **Limitations**

There were many limitations of this study. Methodologically, this was a descriptive comparative case study of only two institutions. It represented a snapshot of two particular institutions at particular times. This does not represent the experience of Black students everywhere in Canada and the United States.

There is also the issue of selection bias at the level of the institution, the student, and the researcher. I sought institutions that would give me access to their internal list serves, the campus buildings, and students. Institutions that denied me access might have been rich sites for data collection. Also, the students who elected to participate in

the interviews might have been motivated by different factors than students who chose not to participate. So one can speculate that students who experience racism might be more motivated to ‘vent’ their feelings in a research project than students who had no experiences of racism. In addition, the influence of myself as a Black Canadian researcher may have shaped students’ responses to contribute to a selection bias.

The other potential limitation was the comparison of national contexts. Canada and the United States have distinctly different histories related to the integration of the Black population. One key difference was that historical racial segregation as a policy was never present in the province where the Canadian university was located. The Black populations in both contexts were also culturally different, with most African-Canadians being of Caribbean parentage.

In spite of these limitations, this project contributes to existing research on Black student experiences in higher education by comparing two contexts. The findings support earlier research about Black student experiences in higher education and theories about the limits of diversity policies and practices outlined by Ahmed (2012). This study also focused on diversity-related media and how Black students responded to such media. This study also highlighted the challenges related to forming successful linkages between diversity policies and practices, which is a problem that many organizations face.

Living with this data over several years has also shaped my own perspectives about diversity discourses, race, and higher education. I saw myself reflected in many

of the participants' narratives and their resilience has inspired me to pursue my research interest in this area.

### **Recommendations from the Participants**

The majority of the student participants in this study hoped that their voices could contribute to research in this area and that their recommendations would be published. As part of my commitment to the students in this study, I conclude by offering their recommendations. Their recommendations may help to ensure that the link between diversity discourses and actual practices become closely connected. Here is a summary of their recommendations:

***1. Provide Diversity training for all staff, faculty, administrators, and students.***

Several of the participants mentioned the need for all university members to receive mandatory diversity training. For students, this should be an integral part of the orientation process. Participants in particular believed that the training should have a strong focus on eliminating stereotyping since it affected their everyday experiences on campus.

***2. Social events should focus on bringing together diverse groups.*** Many

campus events were targeted to specific student populations even if they were promoted as diverse events. One student gave the example of a freshman skiing trip, which may exclude unintentionally many underrepresented minorities who did not have experience skiing or would find the cost prohibitive. Students also suggested the idea of campus groups being encouraged to host joint events.

3. ***Increase student, faculty, and administrative diversity.*** Using outreach activities to increase underrepresented student enrollment was suggested, along with financial and social support for such students. Also, recognize the impact that diverse faculty members and administrators may have on student retention. Many students noted that seeing more diverse faculty members signalled a sincere commitment to diversity on the part of the university. The diversity administrators in this study were frustrated by the focus on student diversity and not at higher levels within the administration.
4. ***Solicit input from underrepresented minorities about diversity initiatives.*** Several students mentioned that they did not feel as if they had a ‘voice’ within their institutions. There should be more open forums and focus groups to find out how better to support underrepresented minorities.
5. ***Create specialty advisor positions for specific underrepresented groups, such as a Black Student Advisor.*** Some universities have this in place, but the two universities in this study did not. Many students talked about using Black faculty members for this purpose. This resulted in extra workload for the Black faculty members who had to perform tasks such as counseling and academic advising. Creating a separate advisory position would be beneficial to both students and faculty.
6. ***Provide equal funding to all campus groups.*** It was repeated several times in the student narratives that funding allocations for student clubs were highly

variable. Providing a fixed amount for all campus groups would reduce the perception that certain groups are being discriminated against.

7. ***Host more public forums on racism and other related social issues.*** In the student and administrator interviews, the participants believed that there was a silenced discourse about racism on campus. Diversity administrators wanted to speak more openly about racism as did students.
8. ***Widely disseminate anti-racism and anti-Harassment policies.*** Ensure that all university members are aware about the policies that exist and provides means to solicit input on such policies.
9. ***Respond to campus racial incidents in a timely manner.*** Campus racial incidents should be immediately responded to by the administration and this should be followed up with an open forum to discuss the matter and prevent its re-occurrence.
10. ***Hold professors and administrators accountable for racist or discriminatory actions.*** One of the most frustrating issues for students was the lack of accountability for professors who made offensive comments or performed discriminatory actions. Students were advised to complain to Student Affairs departments and the complaint usually went nowhere. Tenure and promotion policies for faculty members should be connected to this process of accountability.

- 11. Attempt to re-engage with student drop outs.** A few students mentioned that no intervention took place for their Black peers who dropped out. They recommended that administrators interview drop outs and make attempts to re-engage them by providing additional support.
- 12. Create safe spaces in the classroom.** Students recommended that professors of all races should be aware of the dynamics in the classroom for underrepresented minorities. Professors should structure their teaching practices to ensure that students are not excluded from peer group activities and that there is an open dialogue in their classrooms about diversity.

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## APPENDICES

### Interview Protocol for Students

Context of Analysis/Theoretical Basis	Interview Question
<b>Rapport Building</b>	Why did you choose to attend Local University? What is your program of study? What are your career goals? Which individuals would you say have been the most supportive of your educational goals to this point?

	Who supports you here at X university?
<b>Individual</b> Color-Blind Racism Neoliberal Discourses	How would you define diversity?  Do you perceive that the institution defines diversity differently than you do? If so, how?
<b>Individual</b> Institutional Diversity Practices	What is your perception of this institution's commitment to diversity?
<b>Institutional</b> Institutional Diversity Practices	Which interactions have you had with faculty of color? How do you feel about the presence or absence of African American professors on this campus? What is your relationship with faculty members here?
<b>Institutional</b> Institutional Diversity Practices	Which diversity-related material have you seen at this university?
<b>Individual</b> Institutional Diversity Practices	Do you perceive that the institutional messages you have seen about diversity are accurate reflections of the practices around those policies? Why or why not?
<b>Individual</b> Black student experiences	Describe the ways in which you feel included by this institution.
<b>Individual</b> Black student experiences	Describe the ways in which you feel excluded by this institution. Probe: Have you ever felt like somebody judged you or made assumptions about you before getting to know you?
<b>Individual</b> Black student experiences	How would you describe the Black or interracial dating scene at this campus?
<b>Institution</b> Black student experiences	What has been your overall experience at this institution?

Black student experiences	If you were in charge of diversity on campus, what would you say and do? What changes would you make?
<b>Individual</b> Black student experiences	What term do you use to identify racially? (African-American, Black, Caribbean etc.)
<b>National</b> Multiculturalism/Pluralism	What is your perception of race relations in your country?
<b>National</b> Multiculturalism/Pluralism	How do you feel about the way universities in your country address diversity?

**Interview Protocol for Diversity Administrators**

<b>Context of Analysis/Theoretical Basis</b>	<b>Interview Question</b>
<b>Rapport Building</b>	How long have you held your current position? What led you to pursue this career?
<b>Individual</b> Color-Blind Racism Neoliberal Diversity Discourses	How would you define diversity?  Do you perceive that <b>students</b> define diversity differently than you do? If so, how?
<b>Individual</b> Institutional Diversity Practices	What is your perception of this institution's commitment to diversity?

<b>Institutional</b> Neoliberal Diversity Discourses	In your opinion, how have economic interests influenced diversity policies and practices at your institution?
<b>Institutional</b> Institutional Diversity Practices	Do you perceive that the institutional messages you have seen about diversity are accurate reflections of the practices around those policies? Why or why not?
<b>National</b> Multiculturalism/Pluralism	What is your perception of race relations in your country?
<b>National</b> Multiculturalism/Pluralism	How do you feel about the way universities in your country address diversity?

**Appendix II:**

**Research questions and relevant methodologies.**

<b>CONTEXT</b>	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>METHODOLOGY</b>
<b>National</b>	iii) What are some of the similarities and differences between the national diversity discourses in Canada and the U.S.?  iv) How does the national context of integration influence university	Critical discourse analysis of existing policy documents and secondary research on the topic.

	diversity policies in the U.S. and Canada?	
<b>Institutional</b>	<p>ii) How are corporate diversity discourses manifested in university policy statements, web sites, brochures, and mission statements?</p> <p>iii) How do these diversity discourses influence institutional practices?</p>	<p>i) Critical discourse analysis of a sample of existing institutional documents related to diversity (web sites, brochures, mission statements).</p> <p>ii) Interviews with university diversity administrators.</p>
<b>Individual</b>	<p>iii) How do Black university students articulate diversity discourses and practices within their respective institutions? Does it differ from how the institution articulates them?</p> <p>iv) Which discursive fields are Black university students drawing from when they talk about diversity?</p> <p>v) How do Black students experience the practices associated with institutional diversity discourses in their everyday interactions within their institutions?</p>	<p>i) Interviews with Black students.</p>

	vi) What are the different ways in which Black students' discourses of diversity challenge/reaffirm the institutions' diversity discourses?	
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