

A CRITICAL RACE THEORY ANALYSIS OF MÉTIS TEACHERS' COUNTER-STORIES

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By

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ABSTRACT

In Canada, Métis are a distinct Indigenous population and nation that have been racialized as mixed-race historically. Using critical race theory (CRT) and mixed-race studies (MRS), this study examined the counter-stories or racialized experiential knowledge of thirteen Métis professionals with K-12 teaching experience in the Canadian province of Saskatchewan. The counter-stories examined include racialized experiences prior to becoming teachers and as practicing teachers. A critical race theory methodological framework was utilized to analyze the participants' counter-stories as a means to identify multiple ways in which racism operates in Saskatchewan K-12 schools. The research suggests that Métis teachers, regardless of their racial appearance as White or visibly Indigenous, have visceral reactions to racism directed toward Indigenous peoples as a result of witnessing colourism, passing as White, experiencing intersectional oppression, and learning about racism from family. As a result, the participants were able to remember stories about racism as K-12 students and as practicing teachers, unlike a majority of research that has been conducted with White teachers. The research found that racism continues to operate in Saskatchewan schools through various practices and policies legitimized by deficit, essentialist, and liberal ideology. Drawing from critical race theory, I argue that the racist practices and ideologies identified in the data structurally determine Whiteness and racialized academic outcomes in Saskatchewan schools. While the Métis teachers in this study were able to tell stories about racism in K-12 schools, an inability to conceptualize how to counter racism beyond integrating Indigenous knowledge and, at times, anti-racist content into the curriculum was evident. This finding suggests a need to consider student integration rather than content integration in Indigenous education policy, as content integration has been a focus within Saskatchewan Indigenous education. In addition, the participants were able to remember more counter-stories about Indigenous K-12 students' encounters with racism when they were K-12 students compared to when they were practicing teachers. The study therefore concludes with direction for an anti-racism educational framework that is inclusive of the unique counter-stories of Métis as well as other K-12 teachers and students racialized as mixed-race.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my son, Ethan Tavis Baker Gillies.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Using critical race methodology (CRM), this dissertation presents original contributions to knowledge in anti-racist and Indigenous education through a critical race theory (CRT) analysis of thirteen Métis teachers' experiential knowledge concerning their K-12 educational experiences in Saskatchewan, Canada. The study answers the central research question: *Using a CRT analysis, what can Métis teachers' racialized experiential knowledge reveal about how racism operates in K-12 schools?* To contextualize and introduce the study, chapter one provides a review of the motivation for the research, an introduction to Saskatchewan's socio-historical context as it relates to Métis provincial education, and a review of critical race theory and critical race methodology. To conclude this chapter, I describe my racialized social positioning in relation to the purpose of the research. A list of the acronyms used commonly throughout this dissertation is included in the first footnote below.¹

Motivation for the Research

In the mid-2000s, when I was working on my Master of Education degree, I had the opportunity to teach a required anti-racism education course with a focus on Indigenous education to undergraduate teacher candidates. While teaching the anti-racism course, I encountered teacher candidates who identified as Métis.² These teacher candidates often presented a variety of personal and professional challenges with anti-racism education, often struggling to see themselves in course materials that positioned individuals as either White or non-White. It was difficult, for example, for 'White Métis' students to recognize, process, and conceptualize their own White privileges as they had also been taught throughout their lives they are not 'really' White. While Métis students often entered the course identifying as either

¹ Acronyms used commonly throughout the dissertation:

CRT (Critical Race Theory)

CRM (Critical Race Methodology)

MRS (Mixed-Race Studies)

SUNTEP (Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program)

CLS (Critical Legal Studies)

² Métis are one of the three distinct Indigenous peoples of Canada, as well as First Nations and Inuit peoples, and are recognized by the Canadian Constitution. Unlike Inuit and First Nations, Métis are historical decedents of First Nations and White Canadian settlers (primarily French, British and Scottish).

Indigenous or White, this identity became unsettled after learning about race and how racism justifies and normalizes White supremacy³ and colonialism in and through K-12 schools. After learning about racism and White privilege, I noticed Métis students who felt a distinct type of angst or confusion in the course. I could relate to my students' struggles in some ways as I, too, questioned how to make sense of some of the assigned articles. For example, I remember reading Peggy McIntosh's, *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*⁴ (1989) and feeling conflicted as I, a Métis educator with Chinese and Norwegian ancestry who can pass as White, could not check off all of the White privileges she identified while also knowing I have White privilege as a mixed-race⁵ Métis person.

After teaching the history of race and historical racial hybridity (mixture) theories in the anti-racism course explicitly, I noticed many Métis teacher candidates began to share their experiential knowledge as individuals positioned as mixed-race. Observing common patterns of Métis teacher candidates' experiences with racism was very interesting as these stories provided evidence of racism in education, how racism operates and reproduces White advantages in K-12 schools, and how Métis individuals' experiences with racism vary from those identified as mono-racial (racially 'pure' such as White or First Nations). For instance, one of my Métis students who looks White wrote a list of White privileges based on her experiences, which varied significantly from McIntosh's original list. In it, she included experiences such as 'I can be sure to be accepted by White people as long as they don't meet my family' and 'I know White students at school will be my friend if I don't play with my brown cousins.' Such stories demonstrate how racism privileges White students in K-12 schools and how Métis students, regardless of skin tone, are perceived and treated differently according to how they are racially positioned. In addition, unlike other White teacher candidates, I witnessed visibly White Métis students often express shame for escaping from the overt racism their visibly Indigenous family members experienced. Numerous Métis students, regardless of skin colour, also only identified as Métis in their writing, including some students who denied their Métis ancestry publically and instead identified as First Nations. Métis, for many teacher candidates, regardless of whether they were visibly White or Indigenous, seemed to be an identity one hid from others in the

³ I use the term White supremacy to refer to "a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources" (Ansley, 1997, p. 592).

⁴ See: <https://nationalseedproject.org/White-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack> (retrieved May 2, 2017)

⁵ I use the term 'mixed-race' to refers to individuals who have biological parents who identify with more than one 'pure race' (not culture) (Ifekwunigwe, 2004).

College of Education.

Emotional disclosures from Métis teacher candidates through writing and private conversations included admissions of racist beliefs about First Nations and disdain for their own White ancestry. While visibly Indigenous Métis teacher candidates often spoke openly about the racism they encountered, White Métis teacher candidates often felt confused about their experiences with racism. I tried to assist both groups with understanding how they had been affected by racism in often contradictory ways. In each case, I began to recognize that as people who are of a distinct Indigenous nation within Canada but who are also positioned as mixed-race, Métis teacher candidates often experience and witness racism through a unique lens. My experiences teaching Métis teacher candidates, as well as my own experiences as a Métis teacher, however, have led me to recognize that anti-racism scholars commonly avoid analyses of mixed-race peoples' experiences with racism, including Métis. At the same time, it was the theorizing of Whiteness or the ideologies and practices of White supremacy (Leonardo, 2002) as hegemonic to society by anti-racist scholars that created space for valuable Métis experiential knowledge to surface in my classrooms. This Métis experiential knowledge included personal testimonies of racism that assisted with "exposing, demystifying, and demeaning, the particular ideology of Whiteness" (Roediger, 2000, p. 12). Teaching anti-racism education to Métis teacher candidates, therefore, directed me to identify a need to expand anti-racism educational theory through an analysis of Métis, a distinct Indigenous population racialized as mixed, experiences with racism. As such, this dissertation is premised on a belief that the unique views of racism held by Métis teachers can assist educators with identifying how racism operates in K-12 schools. Critical race theory (CRT) provided a framework in which to accomplish this goal.

Saskatchewan Socio-Educational Historical Context

Before reviewing why CRT was selected for this study, I position Métis teachers' experiential knowledge in a social historical context as the experiences of the Métis teacher participants of this study, like my teacher candidates, are situated in broader patterns of racialization. Racialization processes work to maintain White supremacy, are historically driven, and are used to designate individuals as belonging to a particular race. In essence,

Racialization, or the assignment of racial meaning to real, perceived, or ascribed differences among individuals or groups, produces hierarchies of power and privilege among races. These racial hierarchies constitute the basis for racism, discrimination,

and the perpetuation of inequality in a society and within families. (Burton, et al., 2010, p. 445)

Racialization processes are often assumed only to affect non-White people as, “Whites are assumed not to ‘have race,’ though they might be racists” (Roediger, 2000, p. 12). This, however, is a false assumption as racialization processes produce those constructed as White as biologically and morally superior while constructing others simultaneously as innately inferior.

Racialization is the direct result of historical racial theories authorized widely as scientific knowledge and implemented into policy and laws by Western imperialists from the 1700s until the mid-twentieth century; after WWII when scientists and intellectuals argued publically against scientific racism (Gould, 1981; Smedley, 1999). But the long lasting impacts of racial theories cannot be overstated. Racial theories rationalized and normalized patriarchal White supremacist economic systems such as the trans-Atlantic slave trade, imperialism, and colonialism (Hannaford, 1996) and have endured through capitalism and neo-liberal globalization (Allen, 2001). Racial theories were used to racialize humans as innately superior (White purity), inferior (non-White purity), or contaminated/mixed (White with an inferior race). Those racialized as mixed, such as Métis, have often found themselves shifting between inferior and superior statuses depending on socio-political contexts and the needs of colonizers. For example, Métis poet Don Freed wrote:

And when the Great Depression came the country said to the Métis

“Taking care of ‘breeds was never our responsibility.

Though you flourished in the fur trade that made this country rich

You can take your squaw and go and make your living in a ditch.”

And when our patriotic hunters volunteered to go to war

Never dreaming what inequity would lie in store

While others received benefits, would they ever get the same

From a hard and distant government with no honour and no shame?

To this very day it has no shame!

So the Métis became outcasts, their usefulness all done

The Empire’s dirty laundry cast aside by everyone

Looked upon as mongrels, suspicious in a crowd

Although we have a heritage of which we should be proud.⁶

Reflected in Freed's poem, the status and legal rights of Métis decreased when Métis were not considered politically and economically useful to colonizers. At the same time, in an effort to limit access to Indigenous Treaty and land rights, Métis were not recognized as Indigenous people with legal status until 1982 (Lawrence, 2004). Historically, the term 'Indian' served as a racialized construct representing members of a 'pure race' just as those racialized as Black or White are constructed as 'racially pure.' Such constructs were informed and legitimized by 'scientific' race theories, which were taught widely in Canadian educational institutions until the late 1970s (Willinsky, 1998). It was therefore the 'impurity' of mixed-race peoples such as Métis that justified limited access to White rights as well as to the 'special rights' provided to those constructed as racially subordinate, such as First Nations. Unlike those constructed as racially pure, Métis have been constructed as 'racially mixed' 'half-breeds' and 'mongrels.' The term Métis itself is derived from the French term *métisser*, which means the mixture of races or crossbreed (Préfontaine, Dorian, Young & Racette, 2003). While Métis did/do not use terms such as half-breed in derogatory ways, the Métis nation emerged and existed in a White dominant social-political context that constructed mixed-race peoples as innately inferior and in this way shaped Métis experiences. As St. Denis (2007) explained, "A central feature of the colonization of Aboriginal people occurred through the implementation of racialized ideology and racialized social relations" (2007, p. 1071). In sum, colonial officials used the social construction of race to racialize populations and maintain White supremacy and colonial power. Although racial theories are no longer considered scientific knowledge by most, to understand how the racialization of Métis continues today it is necessary to understand this historical process.

Noting ongoing debates regarding the origins of Métis and membership criteria to the Métis Nation in Saskatchewan, scholars generally agree that Saskatchewan Métis originated from the expansion of the fur trade into western Canada during the late 1700s until the late 1800s. (Lawrence, 2004). Chartrand (2006) further explained,

By the end of the eighteenth century, there were two distinct groups: the *Red River Métis* who occupied the Red River/Assiniboine basins and the Great Northern Plains of what is now the northern United States and the prairie provinces; and the *country-born* whose ancestries were essentially Cree and Anglo-Saxon. (p. 12)

⁶ See: <http://www.metismuseum.ca/resource.php/05249> (Retrieved May 6, 2017)

Because Canada's historical economy depended on the fur trade, unions between British or French men and First Nations women were for a time encouraged by colonial governments (Van Kirk, 1980), although often through patriarchal colonial domination of First Nations (Bourgeault, 1989). At first, fathers of the *country-born* Métis often abandoned children of these relationships or took children from their mothers, and Métis children were forced to identify with one side of their ancestry (Van Kirk, 1985). It was when fathers chose to stay with their families that the Métis nation was born in places such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as was the case with my Morin family lineage (McDougal, 2012). According to Chartrand (2006), this practice was always the case with Red River Métis as Métis families stayed together and traveled westward until they decided to settle in Métis communities. Some scholars as well as the Métis nation itself, contest notions that racial mixture alone is what led to the creation of Métis peoples. Rather, it is often argued that a distinct choice was made to become Métis in terms of "[t]he culture they built, the language they created [Michif], the songs they sang and the lives they lived...[h]istorical Métis were real human beings who had choice in the matter, and who created a political and social entity on their own accord."⁷ This is certainly true for the Red River Métis of Manitoba who after the 1870 Métis resistance to the Canadian invasion of their traditional lands, settled in Saskatchewan only to participate in another resistance to White colonial encroachment of their lands in 1885. Yet, other Métis fur trade communities existed and continue to exist in what is now Saskatchewan prior to and independent from the Red River Métis (McDougal, 2012). Following St. Denis' (2007) argument, what ties Indigenous peoples together "is a common experience with colonization and racialization" (2007, p. 1087). In this sense, the majority of Métis were excluded from Treaty rights in Saskatchewan and therefore had no entitlement to land beyond scrip.⁸ Lawrence (2004) traced this history explaining how imposed racial designations of half-breed or Indian were used strategically to limit who received Treaty rights. Only 'Indians' as designated by White officials according to standards of 'primitiveness' and assumed need of support were permitted to sign Treaties. As Lawrence argued, Métis with connections to Métis communities who purposely chose to take scrip rather than sign Treaties, could not have foreseen the dire positions they would be placed in without

⁷ See: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/metis-are-a-people-not-a-historical-process/> (Retrieved May 7, 2017)

⁸ Scrip was offered to Métis after the 1885 Batoche resistance. Métis and non-status Indians could take scrip for 160 acres of land or trade scrip for \$160.00. Many Métis chose to trade their scrip due to severe poverty and starvation among other impractical policies enforced when one chose scrip including the quality and location of land.

access to Treaty rights or full citizenship rights reserved for White settlers. Nor could Métis have foreseen the reassertion of racism and momentum by which racialization would come to impact their lives.

One of the ways Métis were oppressed through half-breed designations in Saskatchewan after the Treaties were signed was through federal and provincial school systems. Littlejohn (2006) explained how Métis, along with First Nations, children were provided access to schools by the monopolizing fur trade Hudson's Bay Company, which 'owned' Rupert's Land and included all of the land with water that drained into the Hudson's Bay.⁹ The HBC schools were run by missionaries who sought to 'civilize' half-breeds and Indians throughout most of the 1800s. Missionary schools excluded Métis input into how the schools operated as "parents had no say in how the schools were administered or what the curriculum would include" (Chartrand, 2006, p. 15). Some Métis who graduated from the schools, however, went on to teach at the schools. One example was Sara Riel, Louis Riel's sister, who, "[a]fter taking her vows in 1868...became a teacher at the Île-à-la-Crosse boarding school" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 5). Yet, "[t]he non-participation of parents in the education system left children vulnerable when emotional and physical abuse occurred or when students were exposed to incompetent teachers" (Chartrand, 2006, p. 16). The HBC schools operated from the 1820s until 1869 when the HBC sold Rupert's Land to the Government of Canada (Littlejohn, p. 67). Hence, beginning in 1870, the education of Métis and First Nations children began to differ as the federal government took over the HBC missionary schools and provided funding only to First Nations students as had been promised in the signed Treaties and legalized in the 1876 Indian Act. This process culminated in the residential school system, which continued to be administrated by Christian church authorities but was funded by and operated through the federal government. While access to British Canadian education was promised in the treaties, residential schools existed as a system of physical and cultural genocide and approximately 6000 children died while attending the schools. White authorities took First Nations children from their families and forced children to learn in often hostile, traumatic, and violent environments, where Indigenous languages and knowledge systems were demonized.

⁹ Rupert's Land existed from 1670 until 1870 and included northern Québec and Labrador, northern and western Ontario, all of Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan, south and central Alberta, parts of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and small sections of the United States. See: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ruperts-land/> (Retrieved May 13, 2017)

This process has been documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of Canada, which included testimonies of over 6000 witnesses over a six-year period (Truth and Reconciliation Committee of Canada, 2015).

Although some Métis children also attended residential schools, their experiences with the schools often differed from First Nations as Métis students were considered ‘outsiders’ (Chartrand, Logan & Daniels, 2006). According to Littlejohn, Métis students were only allowed to attend federal residential schools until 1910. After 1910, authorities targeted only those Métis children deemed ‘uncivilized’ or who spoke Indigenous languages for acceptance to residential schools when First Nations student enrollment was low and authorities needed to fill quotas (Chartrand, 2006). In addition, because the federal government would not fund Métis students, Métis families could pay to have their children attend some residential schools until 1910. The elimination of this practice in 1910, five years after Saskatchewan became a province, left Métis children in Saskatchewan without access to education for decades. As Littlejohn (2006) explained, “schools were, at the time, funded through local property taxes. Since most of the Métis parents lived in road allowances or Crown lands, they did not pay taxes” (p. 73). Therefore, Métis who did not pay property taxes were not eligible to send their children to provincial schools with White students. In general, provincial schools did not permit enrollment of Métis children until the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) was elected in 1944 (Anuik, 2010).

Ensuring all Métis students have access to provincial education, however, has been a long and incomplete process as CCF programs in the North were rarely successful and Métis students throughout Saskatchewan were provided a modified education. In addition, White provincial schools in Southern Saskatchewan often refused to admit Métis students as Barron (1990) explained:

At the most fundamental level, racism operated as a structural barrier to the integration of Native people into mainstream society. Nowhere was this more evident than in the systematic debarment of Métis children from local schools. Superintendents' reports were replete with references to the fact that Métis people were not welcome and that Native parents had been discouraged from sending their children to schools. The excuse commonly cited was that Native children represented a health hazard, a fact under-scored in a 1943 school report. (p. 246)

Barron further argued that, “In reality, the health issue was little more than a smoke-screen for racial and class prejudice” (p. 246).

Consequently, any value that has come from access to provincial schools was and remains questionable as Métis students have been excluded from or forced to attend often racially hostile schools and culturally degrading conditions that have not led to increased employment opportunities on par with the White Saskatchewan population. For example, in the 1970s, a three-part plan was implemented by the Saskatchewan government to study “the “deficiencies” of Métis learners and their families; investments in schools; and solicitation of evidence-based expert opinions from teachers and scholars on effective pedagogy and curriculum for Métis learners” (Anuik, 2010, p. 83). Such policies were grounded in racist ideology that viewed Métis families as problems that could be ‘fixed’ by so-called experts. Due to such oppressive conditions, many Métis have continued to hide their ancestry and identify as White to avoid racial persecution and protect their families (Richardson, 2006). Consequently, how Métis education is conceptualized and practiced in Saskatchewan remains a pressing challenge as racialization processes have varied little within the past century. Yet, as more individuals claim Métis ancestry in Saskatchewan, increasing pressure has been placed on provincial schools to acknowledge Métis rights and perspectives.

Canada recognized Métis as an Indigenous population officially in the 1982 Constitution Act under section 35(2). According to the 2006 Census, 12% of the national Métis population reside in Saskatchewan, mostly in urban centers such as Saskatoon where nearly 10,000 people identified as Métis (Gionet, 2009). The 2006 Census also highlighted how the Métis population has grown 91% since 1996 due to higher birth rates and an increasing tendency to self-identify as Métis. Statistics from 2011 state that 52,450 Métis resided in Saskatchewan and self-identifying Métis increased 9% from 2006 to 2011.¹⁰ This same survey found 45% of the 2011 Saskatchewan Métis population was under the age of 25. Research concerning Métis education in Saskatchewan is significant because of the province’s demographic and also because of the unique history of Saskatchewan Métis and the provincial accomplishments regarding Métis-controlled education through the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Planning for the Gabriel Dumont Institute began in 1976 and has since established advancements unique to the province such as Métis scholarship foundations, Métis publications and publishing services, the Dumont Technical

¹⁰ See: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2016009-eng.htm> (Retrieved May 7, 2017)

Institute, the Gabriel Dumont College, the virtual museum of Métis history and culture, and the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP).¹¹ SUNTEP, a Métis and non-status teacher education program hosted at the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and Prince Albert, is of particular interest to this study as the participants are Métis teachers, many of whom graduated from SUNTEP. Currently, Métis teachers are a growing demographic in Saskatchewan where over 1000 teachers have graduated from SUNTEP since it was established in 1980. SUNTEP has played an empowering role for Métis teachers across Saskatchewan, providing space to acknowledge, accept, and assert diverse Métis cultural identities and rights within Saskatchewan education. At the same time, many Métis teachers have graduated from teacher education programs unaffiliated with SUNTEP. Consequently, practicing Saskatchewan Métis teachers reflect diverse teacher education experiences in addition to diverse cultural and political identities.

Common themes among Métis identity scholarship exemplify how mixed racialization and stolen lands, which led to the Métis diaspora, continue to complicate Métis identities (Laliberte, 2013). Many Métis perceive public identification as Métis as a political act for economic, cultural, and historical reasons (Anderson, 2014). Such acts of identifying as Métis have at times been understood through essentializing notions of what constitutes authentic Métis identity, such as having a connection to traditional Métis culture. Claims of Métis ancestry now come with some material benefits (e.g. access to education programs, scholarships, and hunting and fishing rights) since the 2003 Powley Canadian Supreme court decision which recognized Métis rights (Barman & Evans, 2009). Consequently, whom the Métis National Council (MNC) recognizes as Métis and who identifies as Métis often vary (Green, 2011). As Gereaux (2012) uncovered, many Métis, including Métis Elders, have chosen not to register with the MNC because they find the MNC definition of Métis too restrictive. On the other hand, Anderson (2008) is critical of individuals who claim Métis ancestry but do not have ties to traditional Métis lands or are in actuality of First Nations and White ancestry but are not Métis. Métis scholarship has reflected the ongoing contentiousness of identifying as Métis (Belcourt, 2008; Belisle, 2006; Turner, 2010). Although there can be ambiguity surrounding Métis identity, Métis often accept those who have decided to reclaim their identity after being dis-membered from historical Métis communities for various reasons. As Richardson (2004) pointed out in her study with Métis

¹¹ See: <https://gdins.org/about/overview/history/> (Retrieved May 7, 2017)

individuals, non-Indigenous governments have imposed Métis identities and Métis have at times actively resisted such legal definitions in overt and more nuanced ways. Like other Indigenous peoples, Métis resist racialization processes and instead desire “to be self-defining and self-naming [which] can be read as a desire to be free, to escape definition, to be complicated, to develop and change, and to be regarded as fully human” (Smith, 2005, p. 86). In addition to identity scholarship, Métis research has primarily focused on historical studies that document Métis political alliances, cultural knowledges, and racialization processes imposed by colonial governments (Barman & Evans, 2009; Dickason, 1985; MacDougall, 2010; 2012; Peterson & Brown, 2007). These studies often outline the matriarchal influence within Métis societies, connections to land, Métis cultural government systems and laws, and the effects of dislocation from land and community through colonial warfare and policies. Throughout the long history of colonization, there have always been Métis individuals in Saskatchewan who have resisted racialization processes.

Colonization relied on racialization as a strategy to determine who has access to land and citizenship rights and continues to reverberate in the lives of Métis teachers who are racialized as mixed-race often in contradictory and challenging ways. Although Métis identity scholarship as discussed in this section has in some ways informed my research, this study’s central concern is with how CRT can be used to analyze Métis teachers’ K-12 experiential knowledge to assist with better understanding how historical racialization processes continue in K-12 schools. Research that examines Métis identity, in my view, can be interpreted in ways that turn attention away from White patriarchal colonial power and onto pathological analyses of those who are racialized as inferior such as Métis. Instead of challenging racism, identity studies often focus on individual victims of oppression and how to help them rather than on the conditions that cause oppression. At the same time, the distinct history and political positioning of Métis within Canada make Métis a unique mixed-race population unlike other mixed-race individuals. This unique positioning makes Métis teachers an ideal group to examine using CRT as Métis are both racialized as mixed-race and are a distinct Indigenous population. As such, my research is situated in a broader historical context that has shaped the racialized experiential knowledge and identities of Métis peoples, particularly in Saskatchewan. This experiential knowledge can provide valuable insight regarding how racism operates when analyzed with CRT through critical race methodology (CRM). CRM is grounded in CRT and was selected to frame this research

with Métis teachers because it explicitly names White supremacy as endemic and values the experiential knowledge of racially oppressed people. Furthermore, CRM works to uncover and challenge racialization processes in institutions such as K-12 education systems.

Critical Race Methodology

CRM was selected for this study because of its potential to assist with understanding how Métis teachers' racialized K-12 experiential knowledge can provide insight into various ways that racism operates in K-12 schools and reproduces inequitable learning outcomes. Because CRM is informed by CRT, this section will review CRT's main tenets. More detailed descriptions of the historical underpinnings of CRT are provided in chapter two and the CRT theories used to analyze the data are discussed in chapter three. Racial consciousness is a central concept in CRT, and informs each CRT tenet. It is therefore important to begin by explaining how I use the term racial consciousness and why it is a central feature of my study. I use the term racial consciousness to refer to an ability to recognize racialization practices, how racism operates, and how Whiteness is reproduced through individual, cultural, and institutional processes. Racial consciousness is fundamental to CRT because:

[Canadians] share a common historical and cultural heritage in which racism has played and still plays a dominant role. Because of this shared experience, we also inevitably share many ideas, attitudes, and beliefs that attach significance to an individual's race and induce negative feelings and opinions about non-Whites...At the same time, most of us are unaware of our racism. We do not recognize the ways in which our cultural experience has influenced our beliefs about race or the occasions on which those beliefs affect our actions. In other words, a large part of the behavior that produces racial discrimination is influenced by unconscious racial motivation.

(Lawrence, 1987, p. 322)

For example, King (1991) theorized unconscious White racial motivation as 'dysconscious racism,' which is "not the absence of consciousness (that is, not unconsciousness) but an *impaired* consciousness or distorted way of thinking about race as opposed to, for example, critical consciousness" (p. 135). CRT argues for and provides theory needed to develop a critical consciousness of race or an ability to identify racism within ourselves as Lawrence stressed but also within society and institutional structures. Crenshaw et al. (1995) explained:

With its explicit embrace of race-consciousness, Critical Race Theory aims to

reexamine the terms by which race and racism have been negotiated in American consciousness, and to recover and revitalize the radical tradition of race-consciousness among African Americans and other peoples of color—a tradition that was discarded when integration, assimilation, and the ideal of color-blindness became the official norms of racial enlightenment. (p. xiv)

Without this consciousness, the material and social outcomes of White superiority and thus Whiteness (the normalized worldview and practices of White supremacy) remain protected. Originating in American legal studies, CRT scholars have argued for racial conscious decision making of those with institutional power, which demands an understanding of what racism is and an awareness of how structural racism operates. Racial consciousness is essential to racial justice but is difficult to achieve and sustain because racism constantly adapts to the needs of Whites (Bell, 1992; Gillborn, 2005) and does not require intent (Freeman, 1995). As Lawrence (1987) explained, “the injury of racial inequality exists irrespective of the decision makers' motives” (p. 319). Racial consciousness is therefore essential to racial justice. In the case of my study, a CRT analysis of Métis teachers’ racialized K-12 experiences can increase one’s racial consciousness and abilities to identify how racism operates in K-12 schools. As educators, once we understand what racism is and can recognize how it operates, we can challenge it more effectively.

Beyond exposing racism in K-12 schools through race consciousness, CRM was selected for this study because “[a]dopting and adapting CRT as a framework for educational equity means that we will have to expose racism in education *and* propose radical solutions for addressing it” (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 22). Given Métis teachers’ unique racialized positioning, this study uses CRT to consider how the experiential knowledge of Métis teachers can inform and advance anti-racism education. Within CRM, every aspect of the research process is shaped by CRT. CRT offers a valuable and empowering framework that can be used to understand the experiential knowledge of Métis teachers and how this knowledge can lead to a more racially just K-12 Saskatchewan provincial school system. Significantly, CRT seeks to respond to the immediate rights and needs of racially oppressed peoples, traces distinct histories of White supremacy, rejects constructions of racially oppressed peoples as innately inferior, and assists in identifying structural factors that lead to racial and colonial injustices (Bell, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 2005).

In particular, this study uses the CRT method of counter-storying to examine the

participants' childhood and adult memories as a way to reveal how structural racism operates in Saskatchewan K-12 provincial schools from Métis perspectives. One of the more common CRT methods, counter-stories are generally thought to have first been utilized in American legal scholarship by two founders of CRT, Derrick Bell and Richard Delgado (Huber, 2008). Counter-stories are based on the experiential knowledge of racially oppressed peoples and are used purposely to expose White supremacy and provide racially just ways of viewing racially oppressed peoples' experiences (Delgado, 1989). Inspired by people of colour and Indigenous peoples who have historically used storytelling to convey coded messages of resistance to White supremacy and their hope for an emancipatory future, counter-stories are used by critical race theorists to identify the pervasiveness of racism and White supremacy and how these operate at personal and structural levels. Counter-stories differ from and challenge stories of meritocracy or stories of individuals who overcome adversity through hard work and determination alone and instead are fictional stories based on real events or true personal stories to expose common experiences of racialization that belie meritocracy and individualism (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Fernández, 2002; Williams, 1991; Yosso, 2005). In this study, the factual personal experiences of the participants are framed as counter-stories and examined through CRT to reveal common experiences of racialization in Saskatchewan K-12 schools.

Critical Race Theory Tenets

Hyland (2012) explained, CRT "is determined by an ontological position best outlined by its commonly held tenets" (p. 24). CRT tenets must therefore inform the ontological and epistemological framework of all CRM research. Each stage of this research with Métis teachers was framed and guided by the tenets outlined below. That is, while conducting the research, each tenet was foundational to the study as I accepted the validity of each tenet and used such understandings to inform my own worldview and epistemology. Six CRT tenets identified in the literature (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005) were pivotal to my analysis and are outlined below.

Racism is endemic. CRT asserts that racism and White supremacy are endemic to society. Drawing from historical evidence, Bell (1992b) argued that racism is a permanent fixture of American culture and, therefore, striving toward racial equality is a futile goal. Instead, Bell theorized the importance of taking a 'racial realist' perspective to racial justice, one that is honest about the subordinate position of people of colour in America. At the same time, Bell stressed that a realist view of justice can lead to progress, sustain hope, and inform more effective

and practical strategies by which to challenge injustices. Moreover, through racial realism, one can imagine an emancipatory future even as racial oppression is not overcome. This stance has been taken up as cynical by many, but I admire Bell's honesty about racism. While racism may not be eliminated within the foreseeable future, Bell argued "Continued struggle can bring about unexpected benefits and gains that in themselves justify continued endeavor. The fight in itself has meaning and should give us hope for the future" (377). The assumption that racism is endemic to society is foundational to CRT's ontological and epistemological foundations and informed every stage of this research project (Crenshaw et al., 1995). As discussed earlier, because racism is endemic, CRT scholars have also identified race consciousness as fundamental to CRT epistemologies (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006).

Skepticism of liberalism. Skepticism of liberalism is the second CRT tenet and includes critiques of claims to race neutrality, colour-blindness, individualism, meritocracy, and post-racialism (assumptions that racism no longer exists). Each of these claims, which are grounded in liberal ideology, are based on a premise that individuals have free will and can overcome adversity through hard work, making the right decisions, and when the law is applied to everyone equally. Furthermore, liberalism stresses the importance of focusing on similarities between people rather than differences. While such claims may sound emancipatory or fair, each can serve to mask and normalize inequality and, ultimately, patriarchal White supremacy. Originating in the Enlightenment ideology of individualism, where individual rights to free will and autonomy were central, liberalism reproduces inequities through institutional mechanisms that construct oppressive realities as fair, neutral, and inevitable (Delgado Bernal, 2002). Skepticism of liberal discourse is an important CRT tenet because "what counts as knowledge about racism has changed as attempts to redress problems have yielded continued oppression" (Tyson, 2003, p. 19). For example, ideas professed by Martin Luther King Jr. which were originally critical of Whiteness, have been appropriated by liberal anti-racists to uphold beliefs in meritocracy and colour-blindness (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Similarly, multi-cultural education originated from those who sought to challenge Whiteness but has since been appropriated to advance liberal understandings of equity (Banks, 1992). Skepticism of liberalism is also an important CRT tenet because White dominance is recognized typically as occurring through overt hostile acts such as racial slurs, legalized segregation, and explicit hate crimes. Liberalism, on the other hand, can lead to more insipid forms of racism that are difficult to recognize such as

assuming racially oppressed peoples can overcome oppression through hard work. Liberal ideology may sound ethical and fair, and may in fact be the ‘fairest’ mainstream ideology produced by western cultures, but can also mask and maintain the structures of White supremacy.

Value racially oppressed peoples’ epistemologies. Acceptance of racially oppressed peoples’ epistemologies as valid and legitimate systems of knowing is the third CRT tenet. This tenet is significant as the epistemologies of non-White peoples have been delegitimized historically in academia. Ladson-Billings (2000) explained,

It is important to reinforce that the concept of epistemology is more than a “way of knowing.” An epistemology is a “system of knowing” that has both an internal logic and an external validity. For example, literary scholars have created distinctions between literary genres such as that some works are called *literature* whereas other works are termed *folklore*. Not surprisingly, the literature of people of colour is more likely to fall into the folklore category. As a consequence, folklore seen as less legitimate, less scholarly, and, perhaps, less culturally valuable than literature. The claim of an epistemological ground is a crucial legitimizing force. (p. 257)

As described in the example provided by Ladson-Billings above, within White supremacist contexts, the knowledge systems of non-White peoples have been racialized as inferior to knowledge systems that have been constructed as derived from the ‘White race.’ One way that CRT counters such assumptions is through valuing experiential knowledge as integral to epistemology. Yosso explained, “CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of People of Color is legitimate, appropriate, and critical to understanding, analyzing and teaching about racial subordination” (2005, p. 75). As such, experiential knowledge is foundational to epistemology. For example, Delgado Bernal’s (2002) analysis of the raced-gendered epistemologies of students of colour demonstrated how experiences of oppression form a common knowledge base particular to those who experience specific systems of racialized and gendered oppression. Experiential knowledge is also a tenet of CRT because racism is best identified through victims’ perspectives as subtle forms of White supremacy are rarely observed by perpetrators and beneficiaries of racism (Freeman, 1995, p. 29).

Rejection of ahistorical analyses. The fourth CRT tenet, historical contextualization, necessitates that research is situated within a “history of racial subordination” (Parker, 1998, p. 45). Rejection of ahistorical analyses requires familiarity with historical events, policies, laws,

and ideologies that have ensured racial subordination through normative discursive racialization processes. CRT's insistence of historical contextual analyses stems from the recognition that attempts to rectify inequitable and racially violent conditions are ineffective when viewed through ahistorical viewpoints (Lawrence, 1993; Matsuda & Lawrence, 1993). For example, the ongoing use of swastikas by White nationalists can be justified when isolated from the historical use of the symbol by Nazis. As Freeman reasoned, when viewed from ahistorical and liberal perspectives, even overt racist acts can "be rationalized by treating them as historical accidents or products of a malevolent fate, or, even worse, by blaming the victims as inadequate to function in the good society" (1995, p. 41). It is therefore essential to situate and understand present-day racial inequities through a framework that has examined broader historical contexts of White supremacy including patriarchal imperialism and colonialism. Within CRT it is crucial to reject ahistorical analyses of racism as current manifestations of racism are historically driven through institutional and social practices and processes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012). White supremacy is reproduced within shifting political contexts that may look differently yet serve the ultimate purpose of preserving White power. It is also imperative to situate present-day racism within a historical context because racism often only has meaning when understood through an analysis of the history and use of race and racism within specific geographic and cultural contexts.

Racial justice. CRT scholars assert that racial justice can and must occur within society through countering oppressive institutional structures. The elimination of racial discrimination as it is intersected with all systems of oppression is a fundamental goal of CRT. While CRT scholars insist that racism is endemic, they also embrace the optimistic and hopeful view that society can become more racially just (Lazos Vargas, 2003). As Bell (1992b) stressed, "continued struggle can bring about unexpected benefits and gains that in themselves justify continued endeavor" (p. 378). Within CRT, racial justice is conceptualized as manifesting through the recognition and challenging of racial injustices by attending to and defending the immediate needs and rights of racially oppressed peoples (Dalton, 1995). In this sense, CRT takes a very practical approach to racial justice. There is an implicit understanding within CRT that incremental change is not a viable solution when considering the daily impacts of racial injustice. Instead, CRT theorists argue for the need to fight for democratic, human, and Indigenous rights at a very basic level in ways that benefit racially oppressed people's everyday lives (Delgado, 1992; Williams, 1997).

Interdisciplinary. Finally, CRT is necessarily inter-disciplinary, as it must incorporate theories outside of CRT that further the aims of racial justice in specific contexts (Calmore, 1995; Delgado Bernal, 2002). For example, my study draws from mixed-race studies (MRS), which will be discussed with more detail in the literature review, and, to a limited degree, Tribal CRT, an offshoot of CRT which aims to deconstruct colonial ideologies and practices by re-centering traditional and contemporary Indigenous knowledge systems and rights (Brayboy, 2005). The interdisciplinary nature of CRT ensures that the complex socio-economic and political conditions of particular sites of White supremacy are understood through broad areas of study which are grounded in CRT. By recognizing the importance of interdisciplinary analyses, CRT scholars can challenge racism more effectively and respect the rights of distinct groups of peoples.

My Social Positioning

CRM requires that researchers consider and reveal their social positioning in relation to the research topic. The next section therefore provides rationales for the research grounded in my experiential knowledge. I am of Métis ancestry but was not aware of this part of my identity until I returned to complete my M.Ed. I knew I was of Native ancestry on my dad's side but my father did not know his cultural or ancestral family lineage until I found out unexpectedly while searching for documents in the Saskatchewan archives with another Métis graduate student who I later discovered is my cousin. Until this time, we knew my dad was Native but only because he and his mother were visibly Indigenous. My dad's father was Chinese Canadian and he died when my father was three years old. After my grandfather's death, my dad's relatives disowned him and his mom and, because my dad's mom suffered from alcoholism, my dad spent most of his childhood taking care of two younger brothers in dire circumstances. When he was young he hitchhiked with his mom from British Columbia to Saskatoon. When his mom returned to British Columbia, my dad stayed in Saskatoon with his mom's father. Eventually, my dad found his way to school and was placed in a loving foster home.

Most of his siblings were not as fortunate and were at times placed in abusive and overtly racist foster homes, expelled from school, experienced addictions, and in some cases had children who have been incarcerated, forced out of school, and live in poverty. One of his brothers died very young as the result of domestic violence perpetuated by one of my grandma's White male partners and we do not know what happened to two of his brothers. Unlike his siblings who were racialized as Native, my dad was often racialized as Chinese when he was young. Even as a

visibly brown teenager in the 1960s, my dad was on the SRC, participated in the Saskatchewan's Older Boy's Parliament (now the Saskatchewan Youth Parliament), was on the track team, and played basketball, and his friends were White. In addition, at the recommendation of his high school academic counselor, he applied to Engineering. After a year in the College of Engineering, however, he withdrew to complete his Education degree and his Bachelor of Fine Arts and became an artist and art teacher. In the late 1960s, he met my Mom, who is of Norwegian ancestry, at church. They moved to Uranium City, Saskatchewan where they both taught for five years, had two children, and returned to Saskatoon where my dad taught until he retired. My dad did experience overt racism, especially as an adult and as a high school teacher within the education system, but I believe he was in some ways protected from the structural racism directed toward his siblings in his earlier years because he could identify and pass as Chinese. I share this story to demonstrate the vast differences encountered between my father who was racialized as Chinese and his siblings who were racialized as Native. Of course other variables played a role in my dad's life but I believe had he been racialized as Native in elementary and high school, his experiences would have been dramatically different.

As for my brother and me, we grew up White—with White culture, White friends, and a White family (minus one). We were not taught about my dad's cultural heritage because, quite simply, before being placed in a loving foster home, his childhood mostly consisted of poverty, violence, hunger, abandonment, and dislocation. Yet in spite of growing up White, I always felt different from my White friends. I was not 'culturally different.' I spoke English and, for example, when I could afford to, wore name brand clothing, which I perceived as a White trait. Looking back, I see now the major factors that separated me from my White friends are that I am not 'pure' White and that I experience rage and distress when encountering racism. Growing up, I did not hear a lot of racism directed towards Chinese people but on a regular basis I heard Indian jokes, racial slurs directed to Native people, and a certain disdain for Native people even by those who were well-educated. Every time I heard this racism I wanted to fight back with words or run away and cry. Often, I went home to vent. But when I did stand up to the racist jokes, I was told repeatedly that I only care because I'm Native—as if being Native is not a legitimate reason to care about the racism directed at us.

I now know many of my friends, teachers, and mom's side of the family did not always perceive me as 'pure' White. I often wondered why I was the only female child of my friends

and in my family to receive not one but two ‘Eskimo’ Barbie Dolls for my birthday. Or why my White cousin who had blonde hair and blue eyes was given beautiful White dolls from distant White relatives to display on her dresser while I didn’t. In my late twenties, I discovered many of my high school friends called me a Chin-dian (Chinese Indian) behind my back, even though I believed that I had an elevated social status compared to other students. I realize now that I worked hard for this ‘White status’ as a way to avoid racial persecution. Yet, in spite of how I have been racialized as not ‘pure’ White, I have always benefitted from White supremacy. I have the option to state my ancestry when it pleases me. My dad did not have this option. I attended the high school where he taught, Bedford Road Collegiate. I was a cheerleader, on the honor roll, and had popular (not necessarily good) White friends. But I came home from school most days to listen to my dad’s complaints: students who did not listen to or respect him, administrators who did not listen to or respect him, and parents who questioned him. When he passed away on September 23, 2013, I was therefore surprised to see so many of his former students and colleagues attend the service. Reading the comments following his on-line obituary helped me to understand the impact he made with his students. He demanded excellence but also supported his most vulnerable marginalized students. I remember him buying students lunch when they were in need and driving students home. He would stay after class to let students who could not work at home finish their homework in his classroom. And for Indigenous students and students of colour, the difference my dad made was through his presence. While I attended Bedford Road Collegiate, from 1986-1990, only one other visible Indigenous teacher was employed. The rumor at the time was that she was driven out of the school and forced to quit because White students tormented her. Throughout my K-12 and Bachelor of Education degree, I had one Indigenous teacher—my dad, who taught me grade twelve Art. I didn’t realize how groundbreaking he was to be a visible Native teacher in the Saskatoon school system in the late 1960s, before Indigenous teacher education programs were established.

In 2013, he passed away unexpectedly from a massive heart attack, because, I believe, of institutionalized racism in the healthcare system. He had suffered from debilitating stomach and chest symptoms for over a year and was told continuously to take antacids when in fact his diabetes had caused nerve damage to his heart and he had been suffering from heart attacks. His doctor did not take his health concerns seriously in spite of my dad’s middle-class status, his career, how he dressed, his ‘White’ culture, and the Standard English language he spoke. In my

view, a view which is informed by studying systemic racism, my dad's racial appearance as a Native man determined ultimately the care he received and led to his early and unexpected death.

Before he passed away, I returned to graduate school to begin my doctorate. I was fortunate to take a course with Dr. Verna St. Denis who introduced me to CRT. I was captivated by the theory because it offered practical conceptual strategies to counter racism in education. I was also encouraged by CRT's concern with the immediate needs of racially oppressed peoples and its privileging of counter-stories. Beyond the practicality of CRT, I found CRT's history inspirational, emotional, and empowering. I believe there is a desperate need for this wisdom today in the schools and institutions of my own community. CRT offers complex yet straightforward theory that K-12 educators can implement in their everyday practice. The need for CRT in teacher education was further solidified for me after teaching an Education course in 2014. The White elementary teacher candidates I taught were eager at the beginning of the course and spoke passionately about the anti-oppressive education course they had completed the previous term. Soon, however, it became apparent that much of what they thought they had learned had not been fully comprehended. For example, there was a misunderstanding of the CRT concept 'intersectionality' as this was used by many of the young White female teachers to emphasize their own oppression as females rather than the multiple experiences of oppression women of colour encounter as originally intended by Kimberly Crenshaw who first used the term and theorized intersectionality (1980; 1982). This misuse of anti-oppressive theory became increasingly apparent when one group of White females refused to acknowledge gender oppression in their analysis of race and became visibly emotional when I explained this to them. These students then ignored my direction regarding the problematic aspects of one of their assignments. Instead, against my instructions, the teacher candidates decided to showcase liberal examples from popular culture that preach color-blind ideology as examples of anti-racist education. Along with their unexamined liberal ideologies, the students in general confused culture with race and tended to essentialize Indigenous peoples and Indigenous curriculum integration. Furthermore, most of the teacher candidates demonstrated a lack of awareness regarding how their White privilege and oppressive beliefs influence their teaching practice and contribute to specific outcomes for students. As a result of teaching that class, I have since used CRT to frame the anti-oppressive education courses I have taught. Reflecting on this method, I believe a majority of teacher candidates including Métis, First Nations, students of colour, and

White students have indicated that CRT was beneficial in many ways. I was particularly impressed with how teacher candidates were able to recognize how structural oppression operates in schools and how this affects and leads to specific K-12 outcomes. Witnessing teacher candidates investigate their social positions, connect these to inequitable school outcomes, and identify concrete strategies to work towards school-based racial justice was inspiring. After teaching this course and successfully using CRT to teach a SUNTEP course, it also occurred to me that our stories as Métis people are needed in anti-oppressive education.

Finally, and most importantly, my decision to select CRT as the methodological framework was driven by my experiences being racialized while teaching the anti-oppressive course. While teaching the course, I noticed that when I talked about my Métis ancestry I encountered increased hostility from White teacher candidates. In 2016 I therefore decided to teach the course as a White person. I did not mention my Métis or Chinese ancestry once throughout the course but did refer to my Norwegian grandparents. My course evaluations were the best they have been; it was an extremely positive experience, and my White teacher candidates' behavior was consistently respectful and professional throughout the term, even while learning about White supremacy. The following term I taught a SUNTEP course for the first time and, unlike the previous term, spoke about my Métis ancestry throughout the course. They, too, were respectful and grateful for the course. But to cultivate this type of learning environment with White teacher candidates I have always had to minimize, or as I did one time, hide my identity. I have been perceived and treated differently as an instructor depending on how I identify in spite of my racial appearance and White students in general seem to learn more when I do not remind them of my ancestry or share my family's experiences. These instances are micro examples of how White teachers commonly racialize K-12 students at a general level. That is, teachers, especially White teachers, racialize their students as superior or inferior depending on how individuals are racially identified. Yet, I am only able to recognize this process because I am racialized as mixed and have studied CRT. As such, this study is unlike research that dissects White teachers' practices to expose racism. Rather, the study uses CRT and aspects of MRS to examine the experiential knowledge of Métis teachers and argues this knowledge can expand and complicate how racism is perceived and acted upon in Saskatchewan K-12 schools. Métis teachers are the subjects of this study and not teachers who identify as mixed-race in general.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into six chapters. Chapter one provided an introduction to the research and my social positioning. Chapter two provides a review of the literature, outlining the origins of CRT and MRS, as well as research that has examined K-12 teachers and racism in education. Chapter three provides a description of critical race methodology and outlines the methodological and theoretical framework of the study. Chapter three also presents the study's analytical lens, outlining the nine core CRT theories used to examine the data. Chapters four and five present the research findings and are also organized in accordance with CRT and MRS theories. In particular, chapter four highlights the participants' prior K-12 teaching counter-stories and chapter five presents the participants' counter-stories concerning their experiences teaching in Saskatchewan provincial K-12 schools. Chapters four and five also provide a discussion of the findings. To conclude, chapter six discusses the implications of the findings with respect to K-12 education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two presents a review of the literature relevant to this study. The chapter begins with a review of the history of critical race theory (CRT) to emphasize why CRT is congruent with the aims of this research with Métis teachers. I then outline the advancement of mixed-race studies (MRS) and three stages in the progression of the theory to explain why MRS was selected. Central principles of CRT and MRS are highlighted in the first two sections to demonstrate the appropriateness of using CRT and MRS to frame this research. The last section reviews literature that has examined teachers and racism in K-12 education. After each section I discuss the literature's relevance to this study and how the ideas reviewed support the research question: *Using a CRT analysis, what can Métis teachers' racialized experiential knowledge reveal about how racism operates in K-12 schools?*

Critical Race Theory Historical Context

As Banks (1992) stated, "The way in which the history of a field is conceptualized is directly related to how its aims and boundaries are constructed" (p. 273). Tracing the history that led to the development of CRT can assist with understanding why CRM is useful to this study which has examined Métis teachers' experiences with racism. This section of chapter two reviews the origins of CRT beginning with African-American roots in slavery and ending in the 1980s with critiques of critical legal studies (CLS) from primarily legal scholars of colour. CRT has been influenced by inter-related and cross-global theories and philosophies including liberalism, critical theory, post-colonialism, post-modernism and radical feminism, as well as artistic expressions, the humanities and social sciences, and community activism (Bell, 1992; Deldado & Stephanic, 2012; Ortiz & Jani, 2010; Yasso, 2005). CRT has always been interdisciplinary as the emancipatory work of scholars such as Audre Lorde, Franz Fanon, Cesar Chavez, Paulo Friere, James Baldwin, Hanna Arendt, and Patricia Hill Collins influenced the intellectual development of CRT theorists. Acknowledging its multiple intellectual influences, I draw from the founders of CRT who situate CRT's origins within African-American resistance to White supremacy and critiques of CLS.

Black American CRT Origins

American legal scholars formalized CRT as an academic discipline in the late 1980s in response to the arrested success of the 1950s-1970s Civil Rights movement (Bell, 1992). Often marked by the famous 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case that made segregated schools illegal in America, the Civil Rights movement led to increased rights for people of colour including the 1961 Affirmative Action ruling (Bell, 1980). Civil Rights legislation did improve the socio-economic standing of African-Americans for nearly two decades, but by the 1980s poverty and unemployment reached levels higher than those prior to the *Brown* decision (Freeman, 1988; Hardwick, 1991). Building on the intellectualism of generations of people of colour, CRT emerged as legal scholars examined the limitations of Civil Rights litigation.

According to Pillow (2003), claims that CRT is “in debt to post-structural discourse, masks other readings—other long traditions of different ways of knowing, being, learning and seeing” (p. 194). Although White critical theorists such as Horkheimer and Weber and Black scholars such as Woodson and Du Bois formulated pivotal ideas about oppression during the same time period, the latter are often unacknowledged in the dominant canon (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). For instance, in his critique of the American K-post-secondary education system, Carter G. Woodson, a Black American scholar, (1933/2008) argued:

It is strange, then, that the friends of truth and the promoters of freedom have not risen up against the propaganda in the schools and crushed it. This crusade is much more important than the anti-lynching movement, because there would be no lynching if it did not start in the classroom. (p. 7)

This analysis and other foundational knowledge theorized by scholars of colour have largely been discounted or ignored in academic discussions concerning educational injustices and inequities (Rabaka, 2007; Rashid, 2011; Shuford, 2001). The exclusion of critical scholars of colour from academic scholarship was reflected in CRT scholar Delgado’s 1984 study that found “the twenty leading law review articles on civil rights” (p. 561) were all authored by White males who cited each other. Delgado “knew that there [were] about one hundred Black, twenty-five Hispanic, and ten Native American law professors teaching at American law schools” (p. 561) who wrote passionately about anti-discrimination law driven by their own experiences yet seemed to be “consigned to oblivion” (p. 562). Published academic scholarship, therefore, has traditionally excluded the differing strategies of “the African-American community [who had]

...establish[ed] a strong critical tradition of both theory and practice... long before the development of critical theory by the Frankfurt school or the rise of critical pedagogy” (Jennings & Lynn, 2005, p. 23).

First and foremost, CRT is grounded in the intellectualism and resistance to White supremacy of scholars of colour, particularly Black Americans (Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado & Stefaniec, 2012), which can be traced back to historical slave narratives. Like other racially oppressed populations, Black Americans have used various epistemological means including oral teachings, spirituals, and artistic expressions to resist racial oppression for centuries (Cone, 1972; Johnson, 2002b; Jones, 1993). For example, through attending religious services Black slaves deconstructed biblical ideology to reveal contradictions between messages of love and the realities of slavery (Cook, 1995, pp. 92-93). Black slave critiques of Christian ideology enabled an ability to identify allies or those who practiced Christian teachings but did not use these teachings to justify slavery and to survive the inhumanity of slavery while seeking liberation for future generations. This dual purpose—survival and hope for liberation—is at the heart of CRT (Dalton, 1995). Unlike critical theory, the epistemological foundations of Black American critiques of power have always centered race, challenged White supremacy, and been informed by African American community teachings, spirituals, and theology (Frederick, 2003; Harding, 1981; Raboteau, 2000; Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009). While manifesting in sometimes conflicting ideals of nationalists (i.e. Malcom X and the Black Panthers), integrationists (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr.), and critical integrationists (i.e. Derrick Bell, Patricia Collins), Black American critiques of inequality differed from those of White critical theorists (Peller, 2011).

To better understand the historical context of CRT it is helpful to examine the ideological foundations of the American slave economy. According to Derrick Bell, the founder of CRT (Tate, 1997), the 1787 American Constitution laid the underpinnings of modern day racism. Bell (1987) argued that the decision to legislate individual rights for all men in the 1787 Constitution while simultaneously allowing the transatlantic slave trade until 1808 and legalizing slavery or the American slave economy until 1865 was premised on a contradiction that continues in the present. This constitutional contradiction, which allowed White colonizers to claim democratic ideals while enforcing oppressive, horrific legislation, was justified by pseudo-scientific racial theories produced by White Western European and American men. As highlighted in chapter one, racial scientists used a variety of techniques to measure all humans against the presumed

inherent superiority of White males, allowing colonizers to assume a Christian democratic image while oppressing and exploiting those constructed as sub-human (Shanklin, 1998; Smedley & Smedley, 2005; Warmington, 2009). Supported by racial theories, the constitutional contradiction constructed America as the ‘democratic land of the free’ while justifying patriarchal colonization, slavery, and the institutionalization of those deemed inferior.

Although the American South is often thought of as the primary beneficiary of the slave economy, “plantation states provide[d] a market for Northern factories, and the New England shipping industry and merchants participate[d] in the slave trade. Northern states, moreover, utilize[d] slaves in the fields, as domestics, and even as soldiers” (Bell, 1987, p. 30-31). The constitutional contradiction, therefore, benefitted White Americans in the North where slavery was illegal as well as the South where slavery was legalized. As well, the creation of a “Black sub-class enabled poor Whites to identify with and support the policies of the upper class” (Bell, p. 40). Through such processes, the slave economy enabled the economic livelihood of White male elites and their families and created an illusion of political power and freedom for working class and poor Whites. CRT legal scholar Williams (2000) applied a similar analysis to the experiences of Native Americans, explaining that, “Since its invasion of America, White society has sought to *justify*, through law and legal discourse, its privileges of aggression against Indian people by stressing tribalism’s incompatibility with the superior values and norms of the White civilization” (p. 103). This contradiction, that America is both a White supremacist colonizer *and* democratic just nation, has been used by critical race theorists to explain why the abolition of slavery, as well as civil rights litigation, could not lead to or sustain racial justice (Bell, 1987). As Harris (1993) theorized, the constitutional contradiction authorized White ‘virtuous’ males to own, control and exclude non-White people who, along with their land and resources, became White possessions. In addition, because the right to own land was reserved for White males and citizenship rights were reserved for those who owned land, only White males could become American citizens until this changed in 1844 for White women, 1868 for Black Americans, and 1924 for Native Americans. Although citizenships rights, for example, have shifted, the constitutional contradiction remains intact as White supremacy, or the racist ideologies and practices that preserve Whiteness, remains embedded within American democratic institutions.

The experiential intergenerational knowledge derived from surviving and resisting slavery, segregation, and ongoing racial violence contributed immensely to the development of CRT. For

instance, many CRT legal scholars received undergraduate training in Ethnic Studies departments established across America as a result of Black American scholars such as Carter G. Woodson and W. E. B. Du Bois (Banks, 1992) and corresponded with and influenced by a pan-global opposition to White supremacist colonialism in the 1960s after WWII and during the civil rights movement (Banks, 1992; Carbado, 2011; Zuberi, 2011). Resistance to the dehumanizing conditions of slavery and a history of racial segregation and violence has informed an ontology and epistemology unique to Black American scholars, influencing how racism is theorized and challenged strategically (Davis, 1989; Tate, 1997). For example, Du Bois studied at the University of Berlin and was influenced by Marxism, yet, like other African-American scholars trained in Western paradigms, developed distinctive analyses that both rejected and embraced American society (Gilroy, 2000, p. 70). Du Bois' conceptualization of *double consciousness* (the complex ontology of people of colour that comes from seeing oneself through the eyes of oppressors as inhuman while experiencing life as human) provided a unique lens in which to observe and understand White supremacy and racism. To Du Bois, reconciling this double consciousness meant neither rejecting American culture entirely nor claiming only African identities, but working instead to "make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (1903/2009, p. 8).

Because CRT originated within legal scholarship it is also important to trace how this history is linked to the legal traditions of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Led by Du Bois, the NAACP formed in 1909, bringing together hundreds of individuals committed to racial justice and ending legalized segregation (Freeman, 1988; Peller, 1995). Historian and educator Carter G. Woodson was influential in the formation of the NAACP legal strategies and the future formation of CRT (Lynn & Bridges, 2009), as he provided instruction regarding how Black lawyers can best serve the community (Woodson, 1933/2008):

Of unusual importance...is the necessity for understanding the misrepresentation in criminal records of Negroes, and race distinctions in the laws of modern nations. These matters require a systemic study of the principles of law and legal procedure and, in addition thereto, further study of legal problems as they meet the Negro lawyer in the life in which he must live...The case, however, requires not only the

unselfish spirit...but much more understanding of the legal principles involved. (p. 84)

Following Woodson's words, Mordecia Johnson the first Black president of Howard University hired Charles H. Houston as the Dean of Law, who developed the NAACP meta-strategy of litigation as social engineering used to increase public education, build alliances and change the law (Tate, 1997). In the 1930s Houston also became chief counsel of the NAACP and trained Thurgood Marshall, the lead Lawyer in the *Brown* case, who eventually offered Derrick Bell, founder of CRT, a position with the NAACP litigation staff. It is through his experiences with the NAACP that Bell became proficient in this meta-strategy for racial justice (Tate, 1997).

Scholars such as Bell became increasingly skeptical about the power of litigation to achieve racial justice in the 1970s and 80s (Crenshaw, Gotana, Peller, & Thomas, 1995). While a professor at Harvard Law School he therefore offered a course on race and the law providing a counter narrative to liberal Civil Rights litigation. His course was very popular largely because his textbook challenged traditional liberal and conservative racial justice strategies that emphasized color-blindness and integration through a lens that viewed racism as arbitrary and increasingly insignificant (Tate, 1997). Informed by a broad political context of community struggles and student resistance, Bell's ideas were integral to the development of CRT (Cho & Westley, 2000). In 1982 Bell accepted a position at the University of Oregon and as a result Harvard administrators cancelled his course (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Harvard Law students urged the administration to replace Bell, viewing his course as integral to their legal training. Although Harvard administrators conceded and agreed to offer the course, students were told no minority scholars were qualified to replace Bell. Students protested through various means that eventually led to national news coverage (Crenshaw, 2011). Eventually, students organized an 'Alternative Course' and invited guest lecturers devoted to racial justice. A number of the lecturers, such as Mari Matsuda, Richard Delgado, and Charles Lawrence, as well as a student organizer, Kimberly Crenshaw, eventually became founding CRT scholars. Lipsitz (2011) explained that the Harvard student protests were one of a series of civil rights protests occurring across America producing "profound and powerful critiques of dominant institutions" (p. 1463).

Legal Realism, Critical Theory, and Critical Legal Studies

Although CRT is grounded in the ontologies and epistemologies of racially oppressed peoples, particularly those of Black Americans, critical legal studies (CLS) informed by White-

centered paradigms also indirectly led to the eventual formation of CRT. CLS was informed by legal realism and critical theory. In the 1920s and 30s, left wing White male lawyers and academics primarily at Yale and Columbia law schools developed an American legal tradition called legal realism (Bell, 1992b). Influenced by Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.'s critique of formalism, many realist intellectuals were instrumental in the development of the progressive New Deal policies designed to alleviate the social crises of the 1930s economic depression (Tate, 1997). Through challenging formalist legal traditions that assumed the rule of law to be apolitical and produced through objective and neutral reasoning, realists made influential contributions to the practice and study of American law (Gordon, 1984; Hunt, 1986; Leiter, 2003; Livingston, 1982; Tushnet, 1986). Realists argued the rule of law is not objective but indeterminate, as the law can be manipulated to produce desired outcomes (Boyle, 1985; Cohen, 1935; Tushnet, 1986), and thus sought to identify factors that influenced legal decisions such as the subjectivity of judges and lawyers (Leiter, 2003; Livingston, 1982; Llewellyn, 1930). Tracing legal history, realist scholars also demonstrated how economic forces produced biased legal systems (Livingston, 1982).

This radical departure from formalist legal ideology “seemed to imply the impossibility of separating law from politics, not merely because of the judge’s subjectivity but also because of the impossibility of constructing a set of rules that could be applied in a neutral or objective manner” (Boyle, 1985, p. 692). While contesting the legal system’s claim to neutrality, legal realist academics remained positivistic in their stance that legal policy informed through better historical analyses, social sciences, and empirical evidence enabled judges and lawyers to become more objective (Tate, 1997, p. 207). Furthermore, legal realists such as Hale (1923) described the abstract and circular conditions of the law as coercive and used by the state to ensure the protection of elite property rights. The threat of Realism to formalist legal traditions led to its abandonment in the 1940s. Critical Legal scholars returned to the influential tradition in the 1970s.

As mentioned, critical legal scholars were also influenced by critical theory, which originated with the 1930s’ Frankfurt School at Germany’s Institute of Social Research under the leadership of Max Horkheimer (Held, 1980). Critical theory culminated as a collective response, primarily by Jewish philosophers, to growing Western European authoritarianism, nationalism, anti-Semitism, and fascism after WWI. Due to growing hostility towards the Frankfurt School

and Jewish German citizens after Adolf Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of the Nazi party, the Frankfurt School fled to Geneva, Switzerland in 1933, New York City's Columbia University in 1935 and eventually returned to Germany in 1953. Critical theorists critiqued capitalism, socialism, and relationships between power and knowledge, which were theorized to be embedded within historical and political processes that normalize social stratification and oppression (Held, 1980). Orthodox Marxists' critiques of instrumentalism, that the ruling class uses institutions to maintain power through coercive force, influenced critical theorists (Hunt, 1986). Building on instrumentalism, critical theorists asserted institutions not only enforce inequality through coercion, but also *legitimize* inequality through institutionalized oppressive ideology constructed as neutral, ahistorical, and desirable (Gabel & Harris, 1982).

In the 1960s, a second wave of critical theorists emerged in Germany where Habermas played a principle role (Ingram, 2010). Habermas made significant advancements to critical theory through his analyses of institutionalized knowledge, power, and emancipation (Grundy, 1987; Trubek, 1984). Other critical theorists such as Gramsci, Foucault, and Freire are also cited as playing substantial roles in the development of critical theory (Jennings & Lynn, 2005). Inspired by legal realists and critical theorist, critical legal studies (CLS) formally became a movement through the CLS conferences of the late 1970s and early 1980s (Hunt, 1986; Hutchinson & Manahan, 1984) organized by White male neo-Marxist and left wing legal intellectuals. Returning to the realist tradition, critical legal scholars aimed to develop radical new conceptions of the law (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Gordon, 1984; Hutchinson & Manahan, 1984; Unger, 1983). While critical legal scholars built upon realist principles (Livingston, 1982; Trubek, 1984; Tushnet, 1986), they refuted premises that experts and empirical evidence can better inform legal decisions, stressing instead a need for mass social efforts to challenge liberal capitalism and democratic values (Boyle, 1987).

In general, the tradition critiques liberalism while aiming to generate an emancipatory society through community engagement (Hardwick, 1991; Matsuda, 1995). Like critical theorists, CLS scholars challenged instrumentalist conceptions of the law, analyzing how legal discourse normalized social hierarchies through promoting beliefs that individual rights are obtainable only through exploiting others (Boyle, 1987; Cook, 1995; Crenshaw et al., 1995). It was argued that individualism, when institutionalized, deemed all efforts to achieve equality futile (Hutchinson & Monahan, 1983). In particular, CLS scholars deconstructed language that

claimed the law is separate from society, objective, and a legitimate institution that yields determinant outcomes through legal rights (Hunt, 1986). Consequently, some CLS scholars called for the abandonment of rights discourse (Kennedy, 2001) and civil rights litigation (Gabel & Harris, 1982; Hutchinson & Monahan, 1984; Tushnet, 1993). Informed by Gramsci's theory of hegemony, critical legal scholars also sought to understand how the law convinces individuals to comply with their own oppression (Cook, 1995; Gabel & Harris, 1982), arguing that legal rhetoric "severely limit[s] the potential to imagine life differently" (Hunt, 1986, p. 11). It was argued legal systems persuade the masses to unknowingly participate in maintaining socio-economic oppression (Gabel & Harris, 1982).

Motivated to create and practice meaningful theory to "expose the dysfunction between reason and reality" (Hutchinson & Monahan, 1984, p. 213) and injustice within the law (Livingston, 1982), CLS scholars stressed how exposing "legal conflicts of every type can become opportunities to crack the façade of legitimacy that these hierarchies project" (Gabel & Harris, 1982, p. 374). To achieve this, some CLS scholars called for a utopian society where alienation would give way to communication and social participation (Hunt, 1986). The CLS vision required more than a restructuring of the law, as the law was viewed as a "set of belief clusters that function to make the social world seem natural" (Boyle, 1985, p. 706). Social connection was central to CLS scholars who "were concerned with transcending the isolation and alienation enforced by social hierarchies that divide segments of society in ways that prevent individuals from becoming fully human" (Gabel & Harris, 1982, p. 371). In general, CLS theorists viewed everyone as oppressed and emphasized freedom could come only from exposing hegemonic ideology.

Scholars of Colour Critique Critical Legal Studies

The 1970s' and 1980s' CLS conferences, particularly the 1985 Fem-Crit and 1987 CLS National Conferences, brought together legal scholars committed to social justice. Legal scholars of colour were attracted to the CLS movement for several reasons. For example, that "the law was neither apolitical, neutral, nor determinant hardly seemed controversial [to minority scholars who] believed that this critical perspective formed the basic building blocks of any serious attempt to understand the relationship between the law and White supremacy" (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xxii). CLS was also appealing because it enabled dialogue about racism and the law outside of hostile legal spaces (Dalton, 1995; Matsuda, 1995). In spite of similar interests

between CLS theorists and minority legal scholars, differences of ideology surfaced during the conferences (Delgado, 1987). In part, differences arose as some CLS scholars, primarily a small group of White elite men, “engaged in exclusionary and exploitative conduct with respect to minority scholars” (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. 80). There was also a sense that White CLS academics avoided discussions about Whiteness to prevent feelings of guilt (Dalton, 1995) as critiques of the law as a ““White” institution drew a surprisingly defensive response” (Crenshaw, 1995, p. wviii). The conferences played a significant role in CRT’s progress as inconsistencies between CLS and the racialized experiences of people of colour surfaced.

In particular, legal scholars of colour challenged the majority of CLS scholars who refused to acknowledge the law’s complicity in White supremacy (Cook, 1995; Harwick, 1991). For example, early CRT scholars critiqued CLS theories of racialism, a theory that placed racial identity formation and racist ideologies outside of the law rather than produced by the law (Crenshaw, 1995, p. xxvii). As well, while CLS scholars provided detailed historical accounts of how the law normalizes social inequality, racial accounts of social inequality were regarded as “analogous to class reductionism” (Crenshaw, p. xxv). That is, class analyses were privileged by CLS. The prioritizing of class oppression analyses and reduction of all other forms of oppression as equal in effect, minimized both the racialized experiences of people of colour and the White privilege of most CLS scholars (Dalton, 1995; Matsuda, 1995). Scholars of colour argued CLS academics “seldom [spoke] to or about Black people” (Crenshaw, p. 110) and conceptualized oppression from paternalistic Eurocentric worldviews resembling the very theories they challenged (Williams, 1997), which was further perpetuated by a failure to learn from and cite scholars of colour (Matsuda, 1987).

In addition, the concept of hegemony as presented within CLS theorized that everyone is oppressed and all participate in their own oppression, suggesting generations of people of colour caused their own oppression through investing in the legal system (Williams, 1987). While hegemony may explain partially why some are complicit in oppression (Lawrence, 1987), it can also blame victims and ignore the history of every day resistance to White supremacy (Delgado, 1987). CLS scholars largely ignored the history, context, and state sanctioned disciplining of racially oppressed peoples who resisted racial domination (Cook, 1995; Matsuda, 1995). For instance, CLS theoretical insinuations that engagement in the Civil Rights movement was a result of hegemony alone ignored the conditions of White supremacist segregation and the role the law

could and did play in creating material and social advancements for people of colour in America (Williams, 1987). Thus, “trashing rights consciousness may have the unintended consequences of disempowering the racially oppressed while leaving White supremacy basically untouched” (Crenshaw, 1995, p. 111). As Cook (1995) explained, CLS scholars lacked an understanding of the “full range of conditions that lead people to believe that an authority is legitimate” (p. 89), and seemed more concerned with building community than fighting for the rights of racially oppressed peoples, rights most CLS academics were accustomed to receiving (Freeman, 1988). To people of colour, the hegemony of the state was not merely an illusion bought into but a very real coercive dimension that required immediate relief (Crenshaw, 1995, p. 110).

The insistence of CLS scholars on abandoning civil rights legislation as a solution to inequality, therefore, was not an option for legal scholars of colour (Bell, 1992b). The failure of CLS scholars to ground theory in the experiences of racially oppressed peoples garnered an inability to recognize the re-humanizing power that has come from increased rights for both victims and perpetrators of racism (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Williams, 2000). While CLS theorists identified contradictory legal concepts and processes to expose the illegitimacy of the state, scholars of colour identified the same contradictions to seek legitimacy within the state, advocating for rights to education, housing, employment, and other rights taken for granted by White critical scholars (Dalton, 1995; Delgado, 1987; Hardwick, 1991; Williams, 1991).

The lack of an alternative program also led many scholars of colour to reject CLS (Cook, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995; Dalton, 1995; Delgado, 1987; Matsuda, 1995). Matsuda (1995) explained that CLS theorists were “hesitant to proclaim new sources of norms” (p. 63) to “achieve and maintain their utopian vision” (p. 67). Although CLS advocated for a negative program of ‘trashing’ the legal system through exposing its’ inconsistencies, such analytical approaches did not consider that the ‘right to trash’ derived from White supremacist privileges (Hardwick, 1991; Williams, 1987). With the exception of some CLS scholars (e.g. Freeman, 1995; Kennedy, 1995; Peller, 1995), CLS offered no concrete plans to meet the immediate and future rights of racially oppressed communities (Cook, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995; Delgado, 1987). Legal scholars of colour and their allies argued that change must and can occur within present oppressive contexts, as racially oppressed people cannot wait for or trust in a liberating utopian society. This and the aforementioned critiques of CLS contributed to the development of CRT.

When twenty-four scholars attended the New Developments in CRT workshop in 1989

many of the foundational principles of CRT had been conceptualized (Crenshaw, 2011). According to Crenshaw et al. (1995), the purpose of CRT is to understand and change how legal systems and laws maintain White supremacy. While both CLS and CRT are interdisciplinary and challenge liberalism, they differ in many respects. CRT accepts White supremacy as endemic, privileges race rather than class analyses while also accounting for intersectional oppression, examines racialized historical contexts, values the experiential knowledge and epistemologies of racially oppressed peoples, and aims to eliminate racism and all systems of oppression (Delgado & Stephanic, 2012). Furthermore, founding CRT scholars developed theory to better understand and utilize the law to achieve racial justice in varying contexts. Later CRT scholars studied foundational CRT documents and outlined the central CRT tenets (Solorzano, 1997; Parker & Lynn, 2002) as outlined in chapter one. CRT has since led to the development of the field of Critical Race Studies including LatCrit, FemCrit, QueerCrit and TribalCrit (Lazos Vargas, 2003) as well as Whiteness and globalization studies (Gillborn, 2006) from which new theories and methods have been developed, expanding CRT within and outside of the law in areas such as education (Parker & Lynn, 2002), social work (Ortiz & Jani, 2010), and public health (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). Indigenous legal scholars such as Robert A. Williams and Gerald Torres contributed significantly to CRT's theoretical foundations through analyses of Indigenous rights and racialized experiences.

CRT was first applied to educational research in 1995 when Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argued property rights, not human rights, structure American society including its education systems. Ladson-Billings' and Tate's formative work critiqued multiculturalism as well as the limits of class and gender analyses of school achievement gaps while emphasizing Du Bois and Woodson's calls for racial justice in American schools. CRT scholars are concerned with transforming teachers and schools in ways that respect the needs and rights of all children and youth who deserve and require a rigorous and meaningful quality education. CRT educational research has expanded since 1995 (see Dixon & Rousseau, 2005; Parker, 1998, Yasso, 2005), examining topics such as racism and English literacy (Revilla & Asato, 2002), American Indian education (Brayboy, 2005; Villenas, Deyhle & Parker, 1999), and Chicana/o education (Pizarro, 1998). Furthermore, CRT education scholars have addressed racial injustice in varying educational contexts and from multiple racialized perspectives (Ladson-Billings, 2011). For example, during the 2000s, scholars such as Goldberg (2002), Cruz (2005), and

Tsosie (2005), used CRT in their legal work to advance American Indian Rights. During this time McKinley Jones Brayboy (2005) introduced TribalCrit. Since 2005, scholars such as Castagno and Lee (2007), Fletcher (2008), Writer (2009), Kaomea (2009), Cerecer (2013) and Padgett (2015) have utilized Brayboy's theory in their analyses of Indigenous education while also centering CRT.

Relevance to the Research

The history of CRT is relevant to this study because understanding the origins of a theory can assist with recognizing its usefulness in examining specific problems. As outlined in this section of chapter two, CRT is grounded in a history of resistance to White patriarchal oppression making it an appropriate theory in which to frame my study. By examining Métis teachers' counter-stories to identify how racism continues to operate in Saskatchewan K-12 schools, this study contributes to the history of CRT's resistance to Whiteness. In addition, as described in this section, CRT is embedded in the experiential knowledge and counter-stories of people of colour. Although Métis people have a distinct history when compared to people of colour, as do all Indigenous peoples in Canada, our racialized experiences have been shaped by the same ideological systems of oppression that legitimized slavery, Jim Crow policies, and institutional injustices such as mass incarceration in the United States. Similarly, my Métis family's experiences of racial oppression have been institutionalized by the same White supremacist ideologies that oppressed my Chinese Canadian family. While the trans-Atlantic slave-trade and colonialism are often presented as two differing historical processes, each system of oppression was interconnected through a broad system of imperial violence and conquest, justified by Christian doctrines of discovery and patriarchal White supremacy. Indigenous rights to land and sovereignty, as well as Indigenous epistemologies, may set Indigenous peoples apart from people of colour, but the racialized experiences of people of colour in many ways mirrors those of Indigenous peoples, including Métis, as all systems of racial oppression have been linked intimately for centuries across continents. Harris (1991) theorized how African and North American Indigenous peoples experienced similar systems of imperial violence including the vicious dispossessions of land, brutalization of bodies, separation of families, and dehumanizing oppression of nations, children, families, languages, and knowledge systems through racialized constructs. The common experience of White supremacy thus weaves together the struggles of all racially oppressed peoples regardless of differing historical experiences, rights, and

connections to land. Racialized experiences of Black and Indigenous peoples in Canada and the United States differ, however, in how each population was racialized according to skin colour, phenotypical characteristics, and geographical locations in ways that served the diverse desires of White imperial powers. Harris (2002) theorized how White supremacy in North America has underpinned both Black and Indigenous experiences, saying:

Although the systems of oppression of Blacks and Native Americans differed in form—the former involving the seizure and appropriation of labor, the latter entailing the seizure and appropriation of land—undergirding both was a racialized conception of property implemented by force and ratified by law. (p. 277)

As objects in White supremacist societies, non-White people including their knowledge systems and land are viewed as commodities those constructed as White have the right to use and exploit. Recognizing the often differing connections to land and rights of people of colour and Indigenous peoples, CRT has been conceptualized in skillful and efficient ways to identify and challenge institutionalized White supremacy, which makes it ideal for this study with Métis teachers.

A history of CRT was also included because understanding this history led me to select CRM to frame this research. I have gained valuable knowledge from American legal critical race scholars, many of whom have devoted their professional careers and made great sacrifices to study and challenge institutionalized racism. This fundamental line of inquiry into how racism operates and Whiteness is reproduced can make significant contributions to Canadian anti-racist scholarship that examines Indigenous education. CRT is the only theoretical framework, theorized primarily by those who have experienced racial oppression, that names and works explicitly against racism. CRT exists because of generations of courageous individuals who have fought collectively and strategically against White supremacy. I believe Indigenous peoples and those who seek to advocate for Indigenous education can learn from this intellectual work and it is self-defeating to claim we cannot. I agree with Grande (2004) who argued Indigenous scholars “need to challenge their own propensity to privilege local knowledge and personal experience over the macro-frames of social and political theory...it is up to Indigenous scholars to resist the notion that experience is self-explanatory” (p. 3). CRT holds potential to contribute to the much needed “critical debate among Aboriginal people in our analyses and strategies for change” (St. Denis, 2007, p. 1088). There is tremendous value in the knowledge that has been shared from

CRT scholars and using CRT to frame my research allowed me to understand the participants' counter-stories in ways that theory often used in Indigenous education are limited.

Furthermore, interrogating how White supremacist ideologies and institutionalized practices determine citizenship and democratic rights is central to CRT and is desperately needed in K-12 schools where Métis teachers are employed and must navigate racially hostile spaces. While respecting struggles towards Indigenous sovereignty, attending to the present and immediate rights of Indigenous students, families and staff within provincial schools is a priority and focus of this research. CRT holds potential to more effectively challenge patriarchal colonial power and processes which operate and are normalized in provincial schools than current initiatives that do not directly challenge racism and Whiteness yet may attempt to challenge colonial power. In these three ways, a historical review of CRT assists with explaining and justifying why CRT was selected for this study which examined Métis teachers' counter-stories.

Mixed Race Studies Historical Context

CRT scholars have identified a need to examine race and racism through alternative perspectives considering the experiential knowledge of multi-racial or mixed-race people (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado & Stephanic, 2012). Reflecting the purpose of my research project, which is to examine the race-based experiential knowledge of Métis teachers, mixed-race studies (MRS) provides an appropriate theoretical lens when integrated with CRT. The following section outlines the development of critical MRS which can complement CRT in ways that also complicate how racism can be conceptualized and challenged. The following section follows Ifekwunigwe's (2004) work which outlined three ages of MRS: the age of pathology which began with the social construction of race; the age of celebration beginning in the 1980s; and, starting in the 1990s but making broader gains in the 2000s, the age of critique which examines mixed-race identities and White supremacy.

Mixed-race studies began with what Ifekwunigwe (2004) has termed the age of pathology, which began in the late eighteenth century when White Western European and American elite males produced theories of race to prove 'scientifically' the superiority of White males as discussed in chapter one. The pathologizing of 'mixed-race' individuals served to regulate clear racial boundaries between White and racially oppressed populations (Mawahni, 2010; Stoler, 1995). To prevent racial mixture, scientific studies pathologized racial mixture as dangerous and immoral, giving authority to colonizers to legally control race mixing through prescribed social

norms, institutionalized law, and violence (Mawani, 2002). For example, to maintain supposed White purity, false beliefs in racial contamination were used to sanction social stratification measures such as miscegenation laws in the United States (Pascoe, 1996; Perry, 1997) and, as in the case of Indigenous peoples in Canada, laws intended to prevent racial mixture (Backhouse, 1999). Individuals racialized as mixed were constructed as innately degenerate and infertile, with weak intelligence, character, and physical abilities (Young, 1995). Hybrids, mulattos, creoles, half-breeds, and other racialized labels ascribed to those constructed as mixed-race connoted innate racial contamination and inferiority that increased with darker skin tones and non-White physical traits (McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 2002).

In the 1930s, pathologizing studies turned to more sympathetic psychological analyses that described mixed-race people as unstable due to living on the margins of two distinct racial groups (Stonequist, 1938; Reuter, 1931). In some ways, pathologizing research continues in psychological studies that produce mixed-raced people as socially deviant or unstable (e.g. Bonovitz, 2009; Cheng & Lively, 2009; Hitlin, Brown & Elder, 2006; Jackson & Lecroy, 2009). For instance, in education scholarship, some scholars have offered pedagogical knowledge and methods to assist children and youth identified as racially mixed without naming the White supremacist context that lead some students to struggle with their identity (Caballero, Haynes & Tikly, 2007; Renn & Shang, 2008; Wallace, 2004; Williams, 2009). Other scholars have encouraged teachers of mixed-raced students to support students in cultivating healthy racial identities without naming and challenging racism and Whiteness (Baxley, 2008; Dutro, Kazemi, & Balf, Pollock, 2004). Although oppressive, such findings are justified through research such as Harris' (2002) work which revealed 219 of 241 American school counselors believe society does not openly accept mixed-race children. Without examining how a culture of racism supports societies' non-acceptance of mixed-race children, this type of research positions mixed-race children as the problem and thus the solution comes from strengthening the children's sense of identity, which ultimately pathologizes the children. Research also reveals mixed-racial youths' racial identities often shift depending on skin tone and according to experiences with racism (Barn & Harmon, 2006; Herman, 2004). The focus on identity in mixed-race studies has been problematic and can reproduce Whiteness. For example, Foley (2000) found when non-Indigenous teachers challenged the identities of Indigenous students who have fair skin tones, 75% of the youth chose not to identify publically as Indigenous. This questioning of identity

occurred while students were accused of taking advantage of programs and initiatives designed for ‘real’ or visibly Indigenous youth. Such findings were replicated in a study with mixed-race Native Americans (Doyle & Kao, 2007). When the conditions of White supremacy are not used to understand such findings, the focus has turned to identity, leaving the practices of Whiteness intact.

In the late 1980s a new age of MRS originated as a way to challenge pathologizing research through celebrating and deconstructing mixed-race identities and articulating counter-narratives of and potential rights for mixed-race peoples (Anzaldúa, 1987; Root, 1992; Root, 1996; Zack, 1993; 1995). MRS conceptualized mixed-race identities as fluid and contextual (Rockquemore, 1998). Some scholars also constructed racial mixture as the answer to the United States’ racial conflicts (Mahtani, 2002, p. 407), which culminated in a movement to articulate and defend the rights of mixed-race people and official multiracial census categories in America (Burton et al., 2010) and Great Britain (Cabellaro, Haynes & Tikly, 2007). The age of celebration continues in academic fields such as education through studies that encourage mixed-race students to embrace their multiple cultural backgrounds (as if mono-racial peoples do not have multiple cultural backgrounds) and to be proud of their racial identities (Baxley, 2008; Dutro, Kazemi, & Balf, 2005; Pollock, 2004). While this new age of MRS challenged pathologizing discourse, this scholarship was also largely limited in its critique of White supremacy and at times privileged the struggles of mixed-race peoples over those people of colour who do not identify as mixed-race (Zack, 2010).

Resistance to the ages of pathology and celebration, led to what Ifekwunigwe (2004) has called the age of critique. Resistance came largely from anti-racist scholars who stressed that mixed-race research and narratives minimized and de-centered the oppression and rights of Indigenous peoples (Lawrence, 2004) and people of colour (Collins, 2005; Jones, 1994; Njeri, 2004). For instance, as mentioned, in 2000 the United States census added a multiracial category (Burton et al., 2010). This change spurred criticism within Black American communities who called on all citizens of African ancestry to select the African-American category in an effort to maintain political power (Daniel, 2004). Other reactions to the census addition questioned how the change would address racism as Jones (1994) stated:

Instead of fighting for a new racial category, if the end goal is, as census activists say, to do away with the biological pseudoscience of race, why aren’t they in the trenches

casting stones at institutional racism? People of colour, whether they call themselves biracial, Swirls (as they do in Fostorio, Ohio), or zebra Americans, are disproportionately members of America's underclass. (p. 57)

Collins (2005) also stressed that mixed-race people who look White may experience identity confusion, but do not experience the full oppressiveness of White supremacy. For example, studies with mixed-race individuals of White ancestry often fail to acknowledge and analyze the White privilege of participants or how mixed-race people with lighter skin benefit from colourism (i.e. Mahtani, 2001; 2002; 2005; 2006). At the same time, MRS scholar Zack (2010) has argued that anti-racist scholars might avoid discussing mixed-race identities because these can complicate anti-racism strategies. For example, many mixed-race people do not fit nicely into anti-racism workshops where participants are asked to join either a White or non-White group. In general, however, critiques of MRS occur when Whiteness and colonialism are minimized or ignored and these critiques have strengthened MRS theory (Christian, 2004).

The MRS age of critique has produced international studies that question the “political limitations of a ‘Multiracial’ Movement” (Ifekwunigwe, 2004, p. 8), moving beyond celebrations of identity to provide more nuanced understandings of race and racism in the context of mixed-race identity construction (Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Mahtani & Moreno, 2001; Saavedra & Nymark, 2008; Song, 2010). Critical MRS mirrors CTR in that it draws from the counter-stories of mixed-raced people to reveal racial purity ideology that sanction the boundaries of patriarchal White supremacy, colonization, and globalization (Christian, 2004; DaCosta, 2007; Glenn, 2009; Spencer, 2006). Like CRT, critical MRS scholars argue that race is a social construction (Shih, Bonam, Sanchez, & Peck, 2007) and examine the salience of Whiteness (Rockquemore & Arend, 2002). For example, CRT studies regarding colourism, racism based on skin tone among racially oppressed populations, document the power of purity ideology in maintaining ongoing White supremacy (Hunter, 2004; Burton et al., 2010; Hochschild & Weaver, 2007).

Critical MRS has advanced primarily from research conducted in America, Canada, and Great Britain (Caballero, Haynes & Tikly, 2007) and has contributed to more in-depth understandings of the experiential knowledge of those constructed as mixed, such as Métis peoples within Canada. For instance, colourism and passing as White within Métis communities has been documented in Canadian research with Métis peoples. In their survey with 52 Métis individuals, Barsh, Gibbs, and Turner (2000) found that while most participants claimed to have

not experienced racial discrimination they also reported hiding their racial ancestry or passing to avoid persecution and to protect their children from racism. Similarly, Richardson (2006) found that Métis families and communities can experience colorism or light skin privilege. Richardson also highlighted how Métis have resisted and survived racism through tactical responses when encountering racism such as using “aplomb [to defuse hostile situations], passing, sharing stories, and creating community in a Métis ‘third space’” (p. 68). Not referring specifically to Métis, Lawrence (2004) found similar processes among ‘mixed-race’ urban Indigenous peoples who experience light skin privilege. As discussed in chapter one, this documentation is not limited to modern examples but is rooted in colonization and Canadian racialization practices.

This research with Métis teachers seeks to use MRS theory as a response to the erasure of mixed-race experiences with racism and Whiteness to expose how racism operates in K-12 schools, thereby expanding anti-racism education theory. As Zack (2010) argued:

This erasure of racial identity is odd in a society where everyone is categorized by race, so the task for the critical theorist of mixed race is to examine what the erasure implies about the public imaginary of race...the invisibility of mixed race might reveal something about what is still believed about the presumptively pure races, but no longer explicitly stated. (p. 879)

Because false beliefs in racial purity and mixture underpin White supremacy and racialization, it is necessary to identify and disrupt such constructs in anti-racism-education as, “Time and again contemporary studies fail to deal with the history of White supremacy in terms of connecting it to the contemporary sociological aspects of multiracial identities” (Christian, 2004, p. 304). American CRT scholars have since used CRT to theorize mixed racialization processes. Harris’s (2016) theory of MultiCrit utilized and revised CRT tenets to examine the experiences of multi-racial (mixed-race) students. Similarly, Anderson (2015) used CRT to examine mixed racialization after President Barack Obama was elected in 2008 to disrupt claims that America had entered a ‘post-racial’ era. As with this research with Métis teachers, both scholars framed their research in CRT while also drawing from valuable theory conceptualized in critical MRS.

Relevance to the Research

A history of MRS was presented in this literature review to demonstrate why MRS was selected to strengthen this CRT study with Métis teachers. CRT was used to frame the study and was a powerful tool of analysis, but MRS strengthened this framework as CRT has not often

considered mixed racialization processes. Theories conceptualized within MRS informed the study's framework significantly, particularly those that deconstruct racial purity discourse, such as colourism or racism privileging light skin tones within families and communities of colour (Burton et al., 2010; Hochschild & Weaver, 2007; Hunter, 2004); and theory examining mixed-race 'White passing' (Ginsberg, 1996; Kennedy, 2001; Rockquemore, 1998). MRS was utilized because Métis have historically and continue to be racialized as mixed-race. In addition, MRS supports an historical contextualization of the research as it can be used to better understand the history of Métis in Saskatchewan, which was essential to this study and is integral to CRT. As described in chapter one, the stories shared by participants are situated in a historical racialized context that continues in various forms. MRS assists with understanding how Métis racialization processes were legitimized through government and institutionalized ideologies and practices that upheld patriarchal White supremacy in Saskatchewan in purposeful ways. For example, examining the history of MRS was useful as this assisted with contextualizing the racist laws and norms Métis endured and contended with throughout the history and formation of Saskatchewan. As discussed earlier, CRT provides rigorous analyses of historical legal processes that rendered Black African bodies property and Indigenous land as the property of Whites (Harris, 2002). These colonial strategies were utilized to maintain White patriarchal dominance but also relied on the construction of racial mixture and mixed-race children as deviant. Controlling who had access to land and citizenship rights through careful regulations of 'racially pure' divisions enabled the continuation of observable White patriarchal power. For example, interracial marriage was illegal in the United States in many states until 1967. Such anti-miscegenation laws prevented mixed-race children from inheriting White property, citizenship rights, and resources. In Canada Indigenous women who married White men could not inherit Indigenous status until 1985 which prevented mixed-race Indigenous children from obtaining access to Indigenous land and federally regulated Treaty rights.

In addition, unlike other racially oppressed populations, the racialization of Indigenous identities regulates access to democratic *and* Indigenous land and sovereignty rights. In this way, mixed-race peoples of Indigenous ancestry are often racialized differently than mixed-race people of colour in colonial projects. According to Mawani (2010), "under the one-drop rule, the progeny of African-Americans and Whites were considered to be Black, increasing the numbers of slaves and ensuring a surplus and exploitable population" (p. 490). Racial mixture of

Indigenous peoples, conversely, has been used to restrict access to land and rights. Simply put, while an *increased* Black population benefitted the colonial economy a *decreased* Indigenous population benefitted the same economy. In this way, resulting from the colonial desire to reduce Indigenous claims to land and resources, “Native American is a racialization that portrays contemporary Indigenous generations to be less authentic, less Indigenous than every prior generation in order to ultimately phase out Indigenous claims to land and usher in settler claims to property” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 12). In other words, as Indigenous peoples mix with White and other racialized populations, this mixture is used to construct Métis as culturally and racially inauthentic, which justified barriers to Indigenous rights. Yet as people who are not fully White, Métis have faced racial persecution in White culture, as discussed in chapter one. In the case of many Métis, mixed racialization has led to the dispossession of land, nationhood, culture, and ties to families and ancestral communities—often forcing Métis to pass as White in racially hostile conditions as the only means to gain access to social material power.

Métis racialization and racial consciousness, however, has remained largely absent within anti-racism education and in some ways this absence has reified historical racial purity and mixed-race pathology theories. Critical MRS therefore adds to CRT to provide a more thorough interdisciplinary theorization of Métis experiences with racism which occurs in distinct but familiar ways. By examining Métis teachers’ counter-stories, this study disrupts the silencing of mixed-race peoples and complicates what is known about how racism and Whiteness operate in schools. Beyond ‘building bridges’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations, this study uses the interdisciplinary tenet of CRT to draw from MRS to analyze more effectively Métis teachers’ counter-stories with the purpose of strengthening anti-racism theory as it is applied to K-12 education in Saskatchewan.

Teachers and Racism

A growing body of scholarship has utilized Critical Race Theory (CRT) to examine White supremacy and education, particularly the experiences of White teachers. The following section presents the themes identified within literature examining teachers and racism in White English dominated spaces such as Canada. I examined empirical research found primarily in peer-reviewed journals located through on-line database searches. Although a wide body of work has examined teacher candidates and racism (Duquette, 2007; Goulet & McLeod, 2003; Kohli, 2008; Picower, 2009; Schick, 2000; Soloman, Portelli, Daniel & Campbell, 2005) this review only

considers research with practicing teachers. In 1991, King called for “systematic research to determine how teachers are being prepared [to teach about and against White supremacy] and how well those whose preparation includes critical liberatory pedagogy are able to maintain their perspectives and implement transformative goals in their own practice” (1991, p. 144). This pivotal work has spurred a wide body of research examining teachers and racism. Similarly, Carr and Klassen (1997) stressed a need for researchers to examine White teachers or face “a great risk of antiracism being trivialized” (p. 78). The next section of the literature review “pay[s] attention not only to how people [teachers] talk about race, but to the multiple ways that racial boundaries get produced and reproduced” in schools (Lewis, 2001, p. 782). In particular, four strands of ‘race talk’ or the ways in which teachers understand and respond to racism were identified: liberal racism; deficit racism; minimization; and critical anti-racist action.

Liberal Racism

As Castagno (2009) explained, current Western education systems are predicated on liberalism and the rights of individuals:

An individual’s rights are of utmost importance under a liberal framework, so rights such as freedom of speech, thought, conscience, and lifestyle are viewed as fundamental and worth protecting at almost any cost. Equality of opportunity is another liberal mainstay. Value is placed on ensuring that individuals have equal access to various opportunities in society, but liberalism is not concerned with ensuring equality of outcome...And finally, liberalism generally opposes too much government regulation. (p. 756)

Echoing the liberal ideology of individualism, many studies point to teachers’ beliefs that racism is the result of individual actions of irrational people (Lewis, 2001; McCreary, 2011; Sleeter, 1993; Stoll, 2014; Young, 2011). Even White teachers who are aware of White privilege were found to often see racism as a personal failure of individuals rather than as a structural system of White dominance, viewing racism as the result of intentional actions of perpetrators. For instance, Vaught and Castagno (2008) described how many teachers who came to recognize White privilege after anti-racism training, did so only at an individual level or believed that “racial dynamics were defined by the isolated numerical presence of one race or another in a specific location” (p. 100). Johnson’s (2002) research with six White teachers nominated as racially aware further revealed that participants “did not discuss how they continue to benefit

from White privilege, even when they acknowledge its existence” (p. 162). As such, teachers often placed racism ‘out there’ in the actions of other deviant individuals rather than in the structures of society (McCreary, 2011).

Teachers that identify as and are racialized as White often view racism in contradictory ways that work to maintain liberal ideologies. For example, the literature suggests that teachers, primarily White teachers, often claim racism no longer exists. Hollingworth (2009) found that White teachers “focused class conversations about racism and prejudice in the past” (p. 33) but, as other studies found, did not connect historical examinations of racial injustices to current day racial inequities and oppression (Chandler, 2009; Lewis, 2001; Vaught, 2012). Consequently, conversations about racism are often limited to social studies and history classrooms at both elementary and high school levels (Bolgatz, 2005; Castagno, 2008). In spite of teaching students about slavery, Lewis (2001) found teachers continued to hold ahistorical understanding of present-day racism equating racial inequality to the individual choices of racially oppressed peoples.

Other teachers, according to the literature reviewed, hold liberal colour-blind ideology and believe that seeing and talking about race causes racism (Castagno, 2008; Vaught, 2012). This is especially true when teachers stress the importance of caring for all students, regardless of colour (Marx, 2008; Pennington, Brock & Ndura, 2012). For example, even teachers that had come to understand race as a social construction continued to stress the importance of ignoring race to see all students ‘as humans’ with equal potential (Pennington, 2007). Chapman (2007) found that while teachers claim seeing race was synonymous with being racist, the same teachers displayed racist perceptions of non-White students and teaching practices in their classrooms. Significantly, White teachers often claim not to see race even when presented with contrary evidence, such as students’ testimonies (Lewis, 2001). According to the literature, for many teachers, seeing race was equated with not only racism but also with impoliteness, which is frowned upon in the teaching profession where schools are expected to be safe and neutral liberal spaces where ‘everyone is equal’ (Hollingworth, 2009; Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Young, 2011). Lewis (2001) explained, however, “far from really believing that “everyone is the same” these adults have views of people of colour, particularly Blacks...as undesirable if not inferior” (p. 793).

Liberal understandings of racism were also located in teachers’ claims of ‘race neutrality’

(Lipman, 1997; Marx, 2008; Vaught, 2012). Cooper's (2003) case study with three female primary school teachers showed that teachers were able to recognize overt racism in hiring practices for example, but responded to racism in schools through taking a neutral or colour-blind stance. Through focusing on the common humanity and national identity of all, some teachers asserted that everyone experiences racism in the same way and thus responded with empathy towards White students who were also perceived as experiencing racism (Chandler, 2009; Hollingworth, 2009). Another study found that when students, parents or teachers do name racism as directed specifically to people of colour, these teachers are perceived as un-patriotic due to liberal ideology that pressures individuals to believe in meritocracy and that everyone has equal opportunity to succeed if they work hard enough (Lewis, 2001). The literature indicates teachers routinely teach students not to see skin colour and claim race neutrality when teaching about historical and contemporary acts of racism, often asking students to see 'both sides of the story' and to empathize with oppressors (Jewett, 2006; Dickar, 2008; Lewis, 2001; Sleeter, 1993). Similarly, teachers may accuse Indigenous students and students of colour of playing the race card in a world where race is assumed to no longer be an issue (Lewis, 2001; McCreary, 2011). Dickar (2008), however, argued that teachers' claims of colourblindness mask more complex understandings of White supremacy. In order to be colour-blind, one must first recognize colour (Vaught, 2012). The implication here is that most teachers carry implicit knowledge that people of colour experience discrimination and that there are material effects of being racialized as a certain colour or race, but this consciousness is denied or repressed and thus White power is preserved through assertions of colour-blind racism.

Much of the literature also underlined how White teachers utilize liberal racism to see themselves as victims in a society where everyone can experience disadvantages based on race (Buehler, 2012; Kailin, 1999; Young, 2011). For example, using autoethnography, Pennington (2007) uncovered how her awareness of her White privilege led her to believe her Whiteness disadvantaged her when trying to advocate on behalf of non-White students. Johnson (2002) emphasized that White teachers seemed most aware of their Whiteness when feeling uncomfortable in the presence of a large group of people of colour. Research also indicates that some White teachers believe that historical racial oppression has led to the oppression of White people, particularly men, as Whites must now pay for the sins of their ancestors through affirmative action legislation for instance (Chandler, 2009). Many White teachers felt they had

been victims of racism in schools where they perceived themselves as minorities, blamed for historical atrocities, and accused of racism (Dickar, 2008; Johnson, 2002; Kailin, 1999; Sleeter, 1993; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). In other studies, White teachers felt victimized by hostile and racist youth, parents and staff of colour (Dickar, 2008; Kailin, 1999; Sleeter, 1993).

Fear of offending others and a need to be ‘politically correct’ as supported by liberal ideologies was also cited as one reason some teachers might avoid challenging racism (Chapman, 2007; Cooper, 2003; Pennington, 2007; Yoon, 2012). In this way, teachers avoid challenging racism to protect themselves from accusations of being racist (Buehler, 2012; Dickar, 2008; Castagno, 2008) or if they feel the intention of racist perpetrators (e.g. students, staff, parents) cannot be proved (Pearce, 2003). To protect the perceived rights of others to feel comfortable, teachers who do challenge racism are often evasive in their responses. For instance, teachers may use de-racialized language (Yoon, 2012) and go to “extreme rhetorical lengths to avoid saying words that they believed might offend others” (Haviland, 2008, pp. 44-45). As a result, White teachers often used code words to talk about racially oppressed students and communities such as ‘because of who she is’ (Dickar, 2008), ‘those people,’ ‘the tall skinny one’ (Kailin, 1999), ‘language minority students,’ ‘ESL,’ ‘Westside,’ ‘refugee’ (Castagno, 2008), and ‘poor kids,’ ‘deprived’ ‘at-risk’ (Lipman, 1997). Other teachers have used terms such as multicultural or race to avoid labeling Black students as Black (Lewis, 2001). Code words such as culture are further used to explain racialized academic achievement rates and to discuss racism in general (Castagno, 2009; Hollingworth, 2009; Vaught & Castagno, 2008; Kohli, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2005; Skerrett, 2011; Sleeter, 1993). Teachers also use code words such as ‘derogatory language’ or ‘put-downs,’ to describe racism as a form of bullying (Lewis, 2001). Another evasive strategy used to challenge racism occurs when teachers lower their voices, stumble when trying to say the right thing, mumble answers, (Dickar, 2008), use ‘false starts,’ change the topic, assert ignorance or uncertainty (Haviland, 2008), and use humour to defuse observed moments of racism (Buehler, 2012). As Dickar (2008) pointed out, most White teachers are skilled “at talking about race without talking about it” (p. 126). But, “students are being schooled in both the ideological and institutional aspects of Whiteness even when teachers don’t say a word” (Castagno, 2008, p. 324).

Deficit Racism

Deficit racism, racism that takes attention off of schools and teachers and instead blames

students, families, and culture as the cause of racialized inequitable learning outcomes, was also identified in the literature as a primary way in which teachers understand and address racism. For instance, Kailin's (1999) analysis of 189 teachers found that many teachers position racism as a Black issue, often blaming parents of colour for their children's school failure. According to the literature reviewed, teachers racialized as White often believe students, families, and colleagues of colour cause racism through taking advantage of the system, blaming White people for their failures, and not caring about their children or education in general (Vaught & Castagno, 2008). For example, Hyland (2005) found that some teachers believe students of colour are lazy due to a lack of education. Deficit views also include gendered language used to describe male and female students of colour, such as assumed passive or aggressive cultural characteristics that lead to school underachievement (Vaught, 2012). Other studies found that teachers hold deficit views of students of colour when students are believed to have low self-esteem (Buehler, 2012; Lipman, 1997; McCreary, 2011). In this way, it is assumed that White teachers would not be racist if people of colour worked harder, had higher self-esteem, complained less, and valued education. For example, Sleeter's (1993) interviews with 26 White teachers demonstrated how many of the participants justified their racism towards people of colour because their White ancestors were able to overcome adversity with hard work. Not all students of colour, however, have been found to be racialized consistently through a deficit lens. For example, teachers in Lewis' (2001) study perceived Asian students as hard workers while African-American and Latino/a students were constructed as lazy. Regardless of how deficit views are justified, such perceptions influence how teachers teach students. Numerous studies have found teachers who have low expectations for students provide sub-standard instruction and this leads to poor student achievement (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Khalifa, 2011; Ready & Wright, 2011). Yet, as Marx's (2008) study found, White female teachers of Latino/a students, although holding deficit views of students and families, remained popular amongst students. That is, the teachers in the study were found to care about their students and the students perceived these teachers as kind and compassionate. This compassionate caring, however, masked the teachers' deficit views of students and families of colour, thus justifying the teachers' substandard education and instruction. This unawareness of how Whiteness normalizes deficit racism is deceiving when assessing teacher performance as Marx (2008) stressed, "even as they contributed to this warm environment where students felt cared for, they continued to hold very

negative images of the students' homes and cultures that were rooted in racism" (p. 59). These teachers believed their deficit views did not affect their pedagogy, instruction, or the quality of education they provided.

Similar to deficit views, research has found White teachers often believe racism and racial inequality are the result of cultural differences (Castagno, 2009; Sleeter, 1993; Lipman, 1997) often intertwined with classism (Vaught, 2012). Such understandings are grounded in White normative standards that measure 'difference' as inferior, assume cultural conflicts are natural, and erase White dominance. Using auto-ethnography and conversations with other White teachers over a period of four years, Pearce (2003) found the teachers in her study believed racism is a natural result of different cultures coming into contact in a multi-cultural world. Through interviews with four self-proclaimed effective White teachers of Black students, Hyland (2005) found one participant claimed racism is caused when students of colour refuse to assimilate into the dominant White culture, while another stated racism is caused by teachers' refusal to learn and imitate the culture of students of colour. Similarly, Johnson (2002) used autobiographical narratives to examine six White teachers nominated by anti-racist educators as aware of race and racism and observed how participants understood racialization processes, yet continued to stress cultural differences as the cause of racism. Other studies (Castagno, 2008; Vaught & Castagno, 2008) found that teachers blame cultural differences for racial academic achievement inequities. Interestingly, some teachers perceived students with 'too much' cultural pride as causing racism and others viewed racism as the result of the 'ghettoization' of specific cultures (Vaught, 2012).

As such, teachers often use multicultural material to respond to racism (Hollingworth, 2009; Hyland, 2005; Rivière, 2008). Researchers suggest that multi-cultural approaches are designed primarily to assist students of colour in overcoming racism, leaving White teachers and students unaccountable and perpetuating deficit racism that places the blame for racial inequality on student's lack of culture; either White mainstream, heritage cultures, or imagined racialized culture. For instance, students of colour are expected to excel in a racist society through acquiring White normative skills and customs such as Standard English (Castagno, 2009). Other teachers respond to racism through incorporating African-American content during Black History month or other national holidays (Lewis, 2001). Teachers that take multi-cultural approaches also present role models of colour, encourage all students to celebrate cultural differences, and

learn about the history, leaders, and contributions of people of colour (Pearce, 2003; Sleeter, 1993; Vaught & Castagno, 2008).

Minimization

According to the literature, White teachers who acknowledge that Whiteness and racism exist often minimize their own responsibility to learn about and challenge racism. Instead, White teachers often situate racism as something that only people of colour can address. For instance, White teachers commonly feel it is the responsibility of racially oppressed teachers, counselors, and administrators to confront racism in schools (Castagno, 2009; Kailin, 1999; St. Denis, 2010; Vaught, 2012). In one study, the only Black staff member of a school was expected to purchase resources for Black History Month (Lewis, 2001). Furthermore, Vaught and Castagno's (2008) extensive study demonstrated how White teachers generally assume teachers of colour will address racism and racial conflict among students. In some cases, White teachers also rely on students of colour to address race and racism in classrooms (Skerrett, 2011), while students of colour may also expect and assume only teachers of colour can address racism in schools (Dickar, 2008). White teachers also avoid challenging racism in other ways. Castagno (2009), for example, found many teachers who claim to believe that White privilege is real also argue that social change must occur slowly and naturally, thus warranting avoidance of anti-racism action. There is also a belief among White teachers that though racism exists, it is not a problem in schools where the majority of students are White or, ironically, in racially diverse schools where White students are a minority (Lewis, 2001).

The literature also suggests White teachers use numerous strategies to avoid talking about racism even when aware of racism and White privilege (Castagno, 2009; Chandler, 2009; Henze, Lucas & Scott, 1998; Kailin, 1999; Haviland, 2008; McCreary, 2011). For instance, in a study with a grade-nine drama class, the White male teacher acknowledged the existence of racism but only taught his students about sexism and heterosexism (Rivière, 2008). Castagno (2008) further uncovered how White teachers remain silent when students of colour try to talk about or report school experiences of racism while Pearce's (2003) study revealed even teachers who recognize White dominance and structural racism often do not know how to react to such claims. Research indicates that White teachers may feel that by avoiding discussions about racism they are protecting the feelings of students of colour (Bolgatz, 2005; Chandler, 2009; Haviland, 2008; Hollingworth, 2009; Skerrett, 2011).

Young (2011) used the term ‘deceived perpetrator’ to describe White teachers who claim to be race conscious and describe themselves as activists, radicals, or supporters of social justice. While openly against racism, such teachers try to help and increase the self-esteem of students of colour (Sleeter, 1993; Lipman, 1997; Pearce, 2003). Other teachers attempt to help families of students of colour and stand up against public acts of racism (Hyland, 2005). At the same time, teachers who take this role often do not engage in critical self-reflection or consider how they are implicated in and benefit from educational structural racism (Harding, 2005; Jupp & Slattery, 2010; Young, 2011). Deceived perpetrators might also collapse the experiences of all students of colour and understand race only through a Black White binary (Johnson, 2002; Vaught, 2012).

Deceived perpetrators predominantly respond to racism by acting out against perceived injustice, asserting themselves as appalled by racism and praising colleagues who make confessions of racism (Haviland, 2008; Yoon, 2012). Confessions of racism by deceived perpetrators are minimized as common amongst all people, as committed in the past, and humor may be used to minimize feelings of guilt (Haviland, 2008). Further, an emphasis on caring, comfort, and politeness in schools, while well meaning, makes it difficult for students and teachers to challenge their personal beliefs about racism and openly disagree (Marx, 2008). As Yoon (2012) found, teachers generally compliment colleagues who try to address internalized racism even when efforts produce no real ideological change. In general, the literature suggests that self-proclaimed racially conscious White teachers may also minimize their professional accountability by avoiding personal reflection and avoiding open discussions about racism with students and colleagues (Buehler, 2012; Johnson, 2002; Ulluci, 2010).

Critical of Whiteness

More recently, studies have revealed some White teachers and a majority of Indigenous and teachers of colour hold critical perspectives of racism, White supremacy, and colonialism. These teachers connect racism to White supremacy and understand that racism is real, systemic, historical, and often reproduced unconsciously (Lynn, 2002; Skerret 2011; Young, 2011). While some studies did report White teachers with critical views of structural racism and White privilege (Buehler, 2012; Ullucci, 2010), these teachers were often outnumbered by unsupportive staff and thus lacked the power needed to work towards racial justice in schools (Lipman, 1997). Other teachers’ awareness of racism shifted between critical and uncritical understandings of racism that led to inconsistent anti-racist pedagogy (Young, 2011). For instance, in her work

with 17 White teachers who demonstrated race consciousness, Skerrett (2011) found the participants lacked “knowledge about how and why teachers should engage in sustained anti-racist education” (p. 323). According to Pennington, Brock and Ndura (2012), limited institutional support often leads White teachers to rely on teachers of colour as mentors.

Unlike deceived perpetrators, teachers who are critical of racism are honest about their racialized identities, social positioning, and privilege (Michie, 2007), which leads to professional accountability to work towards pedagogical change, learn from teachers and parents of colour, challenge institutional racism, advocate for oppressed students, and hold high standards for all students (Lawrence & Tatum, 1997). Such teachers hold unassuming yet critical views of racism that acknowledge all responses to racism are limited, situational, and can improve as one comes to better understand how racism operates and how racism is interconnected with gender, class, and other systems of oppression (Hyland, 2005; Philip, 2011; Lipman, 1997). Teachers with more critical approaches to racism, however, often feel like outsiders in their schools (Buehler, 2012; Castagna, 2008; Carr & Klassen, 1997; Lipman, 1997). Lensmire further (2010) described how ‘would be teacher allies’ are often policed by White authorities in schools.

Overall, the literature exposes a lack of institutional support for teachers who risk their professional reputations to challenge racism (Buehler, 2012; Pennington, Brock & Ndura, 2012). Haviland (2008) used the term “White educational discourse” to define how “the cultural model of Whiteness [is] brought to life regarding issues of race, racism, and White supremacy” in ways that “deflect possibilities for educational and social change” (p. 44). As Sleeter (1993) stressed, structural change cannot occur solely through changing White teachers’ attitudes as school divisions must also hire more teachers and administrators of colour whose experiential knowledge of racism may more effectively inform strategic responses to racism.

Experiential-Based

CRT scholars argue the experiential knowledge of racially oppressed teachers provides a lens to racial injustice that can lead to critical responses to structural racism in education (Adkins-Coleman, 2010; Buehler, 2012; Dickar, 2008; Foster, 1990; Jewett, 2006; St. Denis, 2010; Lynn & Jennings, 2009). Research highlights how teachers who have experienced a lifetime of racism take similar approaches to educational racial inequality as those listed by teachers who ascribe to liberal and deficit racism, such as teaching students about history, caring about students, and incorporating multicultural content. Such approaches, however, are situated within a worldview

that acknowledges “the role that the racial structure plays in contributing to the problem of race and gender inequalities in education and society” (Lynn, 2002, p. 126). Experience-based responses to racism are often diminished or interrupted by institutional power dynamics that marginalize racial minority teachers and cause teacher fatigue (Jay, 2009). In such cases, overwhelmed teachers may choose to ignore or not respond to overt racism (St. Denis, 2010). In other cases, Indigenous teachers and teachers of colour address racism in respectful and professional ways and emphasize a need to respond immediately and assertively after taking time to reflect if initially angry (Buehler, 2012; Janis, 2012; St. Denis, 2010). Kohli (2008; 2012), however, stressed, that experiencing systemic racism does not necessarily lead to effective anti-racist pedagogy. Instead, Kohli argued that all teachers require anti-racist education to speak about, understand, and learn how to counter their racialized experiences.

Based on limited research, the literature suggests teachers of colour may have less critical understandings of gender and class oppression, or racism directed towards other racially oppressed groups outside of their own group, but largely understand their experiences of racism as systemic, historical, and structural (Foster, 1990). This knowledge is derived from a lifetime of experiencing racism and White supremacy. For instance, Black teachers must contend with racist assumptions about their professional qualifications, especially when educated in non-White teacher education programs, and are often not hired, consulted on policy and curricula initiatives, or perceived as the best teachers by parents (Dickar, 2008; Foster, 1994; Jay, 2009; Lynn, 2002; Morris, 2001). As well, teachers of colour report being dismissed by ‘deceived perpetrators’ who often lead anti-racist and cultural education committees and organizations (Michie, 2007). Research with Indigenous teachers has identified similar racialized experiences in schools (Kitchen, Cherubini, Trudeau & Hodson, 2010; Young, Chester, Flett, Joe, Marshall, Moore, Khea, Payntere, Williams & Huber, 2010). For instance, Indigenous teachers across Canada endure daily racial micro-aggressions and must challenge systemic racism within schools often with little or no support from colleagues (St. Denis, Bouvier & Battiste, 1989; St. Denis, 2010). Kohli’s (2009) research with 12 Latina, Black, and Asian American female teachers supports such findings. Other studies stress how Indigenous teachers and teachers of colour are often positioned as cultural experts (Jay, 2009; Reid & Santoro, 2006) and feel a need to prove themselves as good teachers (Cherubini, Niemczyk, Hodson & McGean, 2010; Jay, 2009). Intersected experiences of oppression also influence how Indigenous and teachers of colour

experience racism, as well as teachers who lack Standard English Language proficiency and those who have ‘accents’ or dialects racialized as non-White (Jay, 2009; Lapayese, 2007; Spolsky, 2002; Suina, 2004).

Relevance to the Research

While a growing body of scholarship has examined teachers and racism in schools, this work is situated within paradigms that have overlooked mixed-race teachers, colonization, and how racism intersects with other systems of oppression. The literature also indicates a majority of anti-racism education researchers identify as White, examine White teachers’ practices, and center White female teachers’ relationships with students of colour (Jupp, Barry & Lensmire, 2016). Given the current over representation of White teachers in American and Canadian schools, this knowledge is essential. Yet, there is a clear need to expand this body of scholarship as is the intention of this research study. The literature reviewed for this chapter revealed how researchers and their participants often view race through a racial purity lens that minimizes and silences the experiential knowledge of teachers racialized as mixed-race. While searching for literature, I could not locate any research that examined teachers who identify as mixed-race other than one autobiographical study (Janis, 2012). Scholars who did interview Métis teachers, did not distinguish Métis experiential knowledge from other teachers who are racialized as ‘racially pure’ such as First Nations and Inuit in Canada. In this way, this study with Métis teachers responds to a gap in the literature concerning mixed-race, in this case, Métis, teachers’ racial consciousness.

In addition, and as demonstrated in the literature review, White teachers are invested overwhelmingly in the denial and minimization of Whiteness and how racism operates in schools in ways that contribute to the racialization and educational outcomes of K-12 students. Further, the literature reveals how White teachers often trivialize and essentialize the racialized experiences of teachers of colour and Indigenous teachers. As discussed in this literature review, research indicates that White K-12 school administrators, teachers, and staff often justify or minimize institutionalized racism, creating racially hostile learning and teaching spaces. In Saskatchewan, the context in which Métis teachers must teach is shaped by their professional experiences working with White teachers and administrators who are their colleagues and superiors, and compose approximately 90% of the teaching force (SME, 2010). As teachers racialized as mixed-race, Indigenous and White, Métis teachers must contend with the Whiteness

of schools while working with colleagues who benefit from but also deny the salience of racism. This unique positioning has shaped the racial consciousness of Métis teachers but has not been examined in anti-racism theory thus providing a further rationale for this research.

Particularly disturbing in this literature review was the finding that many teachers identified by students or professionals as good, caring, and exceptional teachers rarely challenge racism experienced by their students and often hold racist deficit assumptions about the students they supposedly care so deeply about. This finding underlines an essential need to reevaluate effective teaching criteria. CRT research with Métis teachers contributes to this goal as the counter-stories shared by the participants can be used to conceptualize strategies that counter racialization processes. Furthermore, the literature emphasized a need to call on school systems to challenge racial inequities and injustices rather than individual teachers. This finding is congruent with the purpose of this study which analyzes Métis teachers' counter-stories to identify how to create effective institutional change that can lead to racial justice in K-12 education. Without institutional support, the research clearly indicates that teachers cannot challenge structural racism, regardless of their racialized identity. As demonstrated throughout this review, a CRT analysis of Métis teachers' counter-stories, supported with MRS, can expand what is known about racism and Whiteness and how these operate in and are reproduced by school systems.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL RACE METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter three provides a review of critical race methodology (CRM) and how it was used as a framework to answer the research question: *Using a CRT analysis, what can Métis teachers' racialized experiential knowledge reveal about how racism operates in K-12 schools?* To begin, chapter three describes why CRM was selected to frame the research and how CRM shaped the data collection, organization, coding, and ethics processes. To conclude, chapter three outlines specific CRT and MRS theories used to analyze the data, revealing the theoretical analytical lens in which the interviews were examined. Each of the theories reviewed were identified in the data as described in chapters four and five.

Critical Race Methodology Framework

This section of chapter three provides an overview of the research design and summarizes the CRM research methods utilized for the study. CRM was first utilized in the 1990s as legal and education scholars began to use CRT to guide research frameworks. Those who first used CRM to frame their research expanded CRT as a theoretical tool of analysis, enabling CRT to frame research in fields including healthcare, social work, and the justice system. CRM takes a problem-centered approach where research methods are determined by the problem. Most studies have been qualitative (Brainard, 2009; Chapman, 2007; Chavez, 2012; Duncan, 2006; Fernández, 2002; Malagon, Huber & Velez, 2009; Smith-Maddox & Solorzano, 2002; Torre, 2009; Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009) and have presented “various forms of political artistic expressions and literary presentations of ‘racial data’” (Parker, 1998, p. 50) such as storytelling, narratives, and fictional dialogues. Using CRT to guide the research process, CRM has provided “a framework to understand the centrality of racism in school and university settings” (Parker, 1998, p. 49) that must be “consciously organized around the important themes of CRT” (Williams, 1997, p. 763) and refuse theory that “implicitly restates the Enlightenment idea that only certain kinds of minds (White, male, privileged) can make theory” (Strega, 2005, p. 213). Qualitative CRM was selected as this study’s framework because I was interested in the experiential knowledge of Métis teachers—which cannot be quantified and by nature is constantly shifting and transforming (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Creswell (2007) described

qualitative research as “the *process* of research as flowing from philosophical assumptions, to worldviews and through a theoretical lens, and onto the procedures involved in studying social or human problems” (p. 37). In this way, qualitative research allows for standpoint theories that explicitly state biases such as CRM’s commitment to racial justice. Qualitative research enables researchers to use a theoretical lens or standpoint to take an inductive approach that does not assume to discover truth, grand narratives, or make generalizations about findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Rather, qualitative inquiries aim for transferability as “the study’s findings [should] be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions of practice” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 252).

Qualitative CRM was also chosen because it requires the research purpose and motivation are made visible and are of value to participants by disclosing the subjectivity of researchers (Carter, 2003; Hermes, 1999), which was described in chapter one and communicated with the participants. Within CRM, taking a subjective perspective towards racial justice means trusting and giving authority to one’s own senses, voice, and experiences; valuing one’s work to the degree that it is emancipatory or challenges oppression; and positioning one’s self as subjective (Lawrence, 1995). As a CRM researcher, I have an obligation to acknowledge how my subjectivity and social positioning might influence the research in ways that undermine or strengthen racial justice (Duncan, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2005). CRM researchers must struggle “more for social transformation and self-respect than social acceptance” (Calmore, 1995, p. 321). CRM is thus a “conscious political, economic, and personal conduit for empowerment. Educational research could then be a catalyst to support and complement larger struggles for liberation” (Tyson, 2003, p. 24) through “uncover[ing] the ongoing dynamics of racialized power, and its embeddedness in practices and values” (Crenshaw, Gotana, Peller & Thomas, 1995, p. xxix). CRM is unapologetically biased in its quest for racial justice as is this research project (Hidalgo, 1998). Suggested by Hermes (1999), CRM requires a ‘situated response,’ as methods selected must be flexible and align with the central tenets of CRT. CRT is less concerned with the methods used to gather knowledge and more concerned with how knowledge is interpreted and disseminated (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Hermes, 1999; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Before describing the analytical framework, however, the following section outlines key data organization stages including participant recruitment, ethics processes, and data analysis.

Participant Recruitment

Participants were recruited through purposeful and snowball sampling (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I began by emailing an invitation to Métis teachers and administrators I know and to the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP). Although I had met some of the participants previously and have worked with two participants who agreed to interviews, I do not hold a position of power over the participants that could have influenced the collection of data. At the outset of the study I had intended to interview a range of teachers regarding years of experience and social positioning regarding gender, sexual orientation, ancestry, and knowledge of anti-racism. This diversity, even within a relatively small sample, was sought to reflect the varying experiential knowledge of Métis teachers. Six male and seven female participants were interviewed. Over half of the participants identified as living in poverty or lower class family conditions as defining aspects of their childhood. Two of the male participants who look White identified as growing up in upper-class neighborhoods. None of the participants stated their sexual orientation verbally other than those who indicated they are or have been in heterosexual relationships. Several of the participants did refer to learning disability diagnoses while in elementary school, and these were all participants who also grew up in low socio-economic households, but none identified as having disabilities presently. A majority of participants have children of their own who attend Saskatchewan schools and several had taught at various schools across Saskatchewan. Two participants also taught in Alberta, two taught overseas, and six participants have held administrative or post-secondary positions (two female and four male participants). Only four participants, from my subjective perspective, are visibly Indigenous, although all participants spoke about abilities to pass as non-Indigenous (e.g. Italian) in varying contexts. All thirteen participants have a Saskatchewan teaching certification, experience teaching in K-12 Saskatchewan schools, and identify as Métis with their school system. Nine of the participants graduated from SUNTEP programs and four graduated from a Saskatchewan university teacher education program. The participants' teaching experiences ranged from two to twenty-six years of experience with the provincial education system. Three participants had two years of teaching experience at the time of the interviews, four participants had four years of experience, two had spent eight years, and four had been working with school divisions between fifteen and twenty-six years. Most of the participants have experiences teaching at various schools and teaching multiple subjects and grades. Six participants taught as

elementary school teachers and seven as high school teachers. The participants' teaching history and placements at the time of the interviews largely took place in community, alternative, rural, and First Nations schools.

Gathering Data

The interviews took place in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, at settings suggested by the participants and interviews were 60 to 120 minutes each, with most lasting two hours. When I first met each participant I provided a brief summary of the purpose and motivation of the study and self-located with the participants; that is, I told them about myself, my academic experience, my ancestry, and the motivation to complete the research. The participants were also provided an opportunity to ask me questions. Participants were provided an invitation and consent form outlining rights to confidentiality and to withdraw from the study with no penalties (see Appendix A). I further explained that the interview would be recorded and transcribed with all identifying information removed, outlined the timeline to withdraw and make changes to transcripts, and gave the participants an opportunity to read the invitation and consent form. I also explained why I was using a conversational informal style interview and that it could be stopped at any time during the interview. I proceeded by asking a series of questions (see Appendix B) and, following the conversational style method, sub-questions at various points in the interviews. Following Indigenous protocol, at the conclusion of each interview the participants were offered a small gift to give thanks and acknowledge the formalized exchange of knowledge. Interviews were recorded electronically and a transcriber was hired to transcribe ten of the interviews while I transcribed the remaining three. The identities, dates, and locations of participants were protected in the transcriptions and individuals were given codes. Each participant was given the opportunity to review an electronic copy of the transcription with all identifying information removed before providing written or electronic consent through email.

To center the experiential knowledge of Métis teachers, I utilized Kovach's (2010) approach to relational conversational style interviews to collect rich data grounded in the experiences of participants. Conversational interviewing aligns with CRM as it calls on researchers to listen seriously to and validate research participants' experiential knowledge, feelings, and perspectives (Calmore, 1995; Pizarro, 1998; Williams, 1997). Conversational interviews also complement the CRT imperative of creating space for participants to speak as honestly as possible through the use of non-hierarchical methods (Delgado Bernal, 2002;

Solorzano, Ceja & Yosso, 2000; Tanaka & Cruz 1998). At the same time, Crenshaw (1995) has warned that ideology is important to consider when examining and sharing counter-stories. For example, participants may understand their stories of racial oppression through meritocratic explanations. Consequently, rather than expose the participants' ideas that are complicit with racism, I purposely identified counter-stories and embedded these within the tenets of CRT to ensure the Métis stories shared do not cause further harm to the participants through damaging their reputations by constructing them as individuals who are racist (Carter, 2003; Williams, 1997). It was therefore important that I "listen[ed] seriously to the concerns, priorities, and experiences expressed" by the participants (Calmore, 1995; Pizarro, 1998; Williams, 1997). Thirteen intensive interviews were found to be sufficient for data saturation (Mason, 2010).

Data Organization

The data were organized using memoing and NVivo software. Memoing is comparable to taking field notes in ethnographic studies and was used throughout the research process through a feature provided in NVivo. Memos—my thoughts, reflections, observations, and questions about the data—were recorded as I noticed comparisons, contradictions, patterns, gaps and emerging themes. Memoing through NVivo software assisted me with identifying codes and categories in narrative form early in the analysis process. This method was significant as I might have missed codes and abstract meanings without memoing and re-reading memos. Bracketing was also used at times to separate my understandings and experiences from those of my participants. I used NVivo software as the primary way to organize the data through a thematic analysis. I relied on systematic coding procedures where data were placed into categories through open, axial, and selective coding stages using a repetitive process (Boeije, 2010).

During the open coding stage, I used NVivo to code large samples of data into broad conceptual codes such as 'Whiteness,' 'colourism,' 'teachers,' 'friends,' and 'jokes.' Hundreds of NVivo codes were created during this first stage of coding. Throughout the first stage of coding, I read each interview several times through a rigorous, repetitive process until saturation was reached and no new codes were identified. After completing a list of codes, I started the axial coding stage. Axial coding was used to establish patterns and relationships among the open codes to "[d]escribe and delineate categories, determine relevance of categories, [and] increase [a] level of conceptual abstraction (Boeije, 2010, p. 114). To do so, I organized the codes into more specific categories congruent with the tenets of CRT and critical MRS theory, narrowing

the codes into 23 CRT conceptual categories. Codes found to be of interest but that did not appear to directly answer the research question were saved for future reference. To conclude the axial coding stage, I reread the transcripts to ensure data saturation and added codes to categories not previously recognized. During the final stage of coding, I used selective coding by “[d]etermining important categories and possibly a core category, formulating the theoretical model, reassembling of the data in order to answer the research question and realize the research aim” (Boeije, 2010, p. 118). Using selective coding, I analyzed the codes and grouped these into more specific CRT theories to answer the research question. To conclude selective coding, I reread the transcripts at various points until I felt confident I had reached data saturation.

Presenting Data as Counter-Stories

As described throughout this dissertation, the data are presented through the participants’ counter-stories. Briefly explained earlier, the following section provides a more detailed description of counter-stories and how they are used in CRT and this research study. CRT scholar Richard Delgado (1989) first used the term counter-stories to describe how critical race theorists used narratives, chronicles, and parables to expose White supremacist ideology, inequitable power relations and “the way out of the trap of unjustified exclusion” (p. 2415). Delgado explained that counter-stories consist of collective knowledge systems shared among racialized groups that name and reveal racial injustices and White supremacy. The use of counter-stories within CRT was inspired by W. E. B. Du Bois’ (1903/2009) theory of double consciousness. As mentioned previously, double consciousness refers to the complex ontology of people of colour whose lived experiences are viewed through the worldview of their oppressors—who perceive Black people as inhuman—and a personal sense of agency as fully human. This double consciousness, often described as resisting Whiteness while striving and hoping for racial justice, provided an invaluable lens in which to observe and understand White supremacy. Matsuda (1987) explained:

The dissonance of combining deep criticism of law with an aspirational vision of law is part of the experience of people of color. These people have used duality as a strength, and have developed strategies for resolving this dissonance through the process of appropriation and transformation. W.E.B. Du Bois noted long ago the resiliency of the consciousness of Black Folk. The consciousness he described includes both main-stream American consciousness, and the consciousness of the

outsider.

As Calmore (1995) stressed, CRT comes from “a sense of reality which reflects our distinctive experiences as people of colour” (p. 316) and thus moves “toward very personal expression that allows our experiences and lessons...to convey the knowledge we possess in a way that is empowering to us and, it is hoped, ultimately empowering to those on whose behalf we act” (p. 321). I argue that Métis teachers’ counter-stories hold this same potential.

Following the work of CRT scholars such Solorzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2001), who analyzed the counter-stories of Latino/a graduate students to reveal how the students experienced campus racial micro-aggressions, this study highlighted the counter-stories of Métis teachers to reveal various ways in which structural racism has operated in Saskatchewan K-12 schools. Informed by the race consciousness of racially oppressed peoples, counter-stories illuminate how stock or majoritarian stories reified through institutionalized narratives preserve Whiteness (Baszile, 2008). For example, within the education system stock stories construct racially oppressed youth and communities as deficit in intellect and/or culture (Yasso, 2005). Such stories inform policy, curriculum, pedagogy, and evaluation methods (Soloranzo & Yasso, 2002) that stream racially marginalized students into remedial classes and label youth as ‘at risk’ (O’Conner, Hill & Robinson, 2009; Ready & Wright, 2011). Leaving systemic inequalities intact, stock stories “lead to fluid but fixed notions of racial identity” (Parker & Lynn, 2002, p. 16).

Counter-stories, in contrast, respect the epistemological agency of those oppressed historically (and presently) and excluded from academia (Carter, 2003; Gonzales, 1998). Such stories “provide alternate ways of viewing people of colour and how they successfully negotiate the world” (Chapman, 2007, p. 160). Through a CRT lens, counter-stories exemplify the strength and multiple consciousness of racially oppressed peoples who have utilized the tradition of storytelling to survive generations of White supremacy and colonization (Lawrence, 1987; Witherspoon & Mitchell, 2009). Counter-stories can build community, create solidarity and reveal pathways to racial justice for racially oppressed communities (Yasso, 2005) but can also “serve an equally important destructive function” (Delgado, 1989 p. 61). Exposing the inconsistencies, contradictions and fallacy of stock stories, counter-stories disrupt, document, provide testimony and encourage resistance to White domination and structural oppression (Carter, 2003; Gonzales, 1998; Huber, 2009; Parker, 1998; Pillow, 2003; Tyson, 2003).

The power of a counter-story “lies—most importantly—in its ontological divergence from the typical European-centered autobiographical project” (Baszile, 2008, p. 255) that celebrates meritocracy and individuals who have overcome adversity solely through hard work. Instead, counter-stories take attention away from the ability of a select few who have overcome oppression by exposing the unseen racial codes, practices, and patterns derived from a shared experience of White supremacy (Calmore, 1995). Through counter-stories, individuals begin to question beliefs about their experiences and participation in oppression (Parker, 1998). Counter-stories can take various forms including, but not limited to, personal testimony, other peoples’ stories, and composite stories (fictional based on actual events) (Solorzano & Yasso, 2002). Crenshaw (1995) warned, however, that it is important to frame counter-stories in critical race theory worldviews and ideologies. Telling stories about racism without framing the stories within the tenets of CRT can undermine the story’s intent or contribute to liberal and deficit understandings of racism which uphold stock stories and blame victims.

Researchers must therefore embed counter-stories clearly within the tenets of CRT and identify “the structures and practices to which [an individual] has access, makes use of, and reinscribes” (Vaught, 2008, p. 584). To this end, I used the tenets of CRT to frame the participants’ stories about racism and considered the structures and practices the participants were able to access while interpreting and theorizing the data. I have a responsibility to make the participants’ counter-stories matter in ways that influence institutional change and lead to racial justice for Métis people, while not causing further harm to my participants or the Métis community (Carter, 2003; Williams, 1997). The aim of my research is not to analyze how Métis teachers may contribute to racism and racial injustices but rather to position their experiential knowledge as counter-stories. Through this process, I was able to analyze their stories in ways that enabled me to identify how racism operates and is embedded within Saskatchewan K-12 schools. Each participant was given a corresponding number and thus the counter-stories presented in the findings are followed by the participants’ number (i.e. participant one = P1).

Ethics Processes

The history of unethical, dehumanizing, and racist research with and about Indigenous peoples necessitates a need to scrutinize all research paradigms (Battiste, 2000; Deloria, 2004; Kovach, 2009; Smith 1999; Wilson, 2001). Fundamental to CRT ontology is an understanding that the current world order is an outcome of ongoing historical White supremacist patriarchal

imperialist nation building (Allen, 2001; Arat-Koc, 2010; Leonardo, 2002; Razack, 2004) as Whiteness continues to determine global distributions of wealth and access to socio-political power (Dhruvarajan, 2005; Glenn, 2009; Stewart-Harawira, 2005; Vaid, 2009). CRM must therefore incorporate theories and methods outside of CRT that can lead to racial justice in specific contexts and from particular epistemological viewpoints of racially oppressed peoples (Calmore, 1995; Delgado Bernal, 2002). Responding to ethical considerations concerning research with and about Indigenous peoples, CRM explicitly examines race and White supremacy and how these normalize and rationalize ongoing colonization processes oppressive to Indigenous peoples (Buendia, 2003; Hildago, 1998). Because CRM is shaped by the tenets of CRT, its main purposes are to counter White supremacy and work towards racial justice through “what we do, why we do it, and how we do it” (Solorzano & Yasso, 2001, p. 474). Within CRM “race is just not an additional variable in the equation; instead it is at the center of the research enterprise” (Lazos Vargas, 2003, p. 1). CRM’s ontological position is thus subjective in that researchers purposely work towards racial justice through identifying the shifting conditions of White supremacy and creating theoretical counter strategies (Baszile, 2008; Hermes, 1999; Lawrence, 1987). Subjectivity in CRM requires the valuing and centering of racially oppressed peoples’ experiential knowledge in all aspects of the research program while contributing to the broader goal of ending all systems of oppression (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Pizarro, 1998). In this sense, the identities of the participants are protected in this study through processes of anonymity and identifications have been assigned to quotations presented in the study. For example, the first participant is referred to as (P1).

Given the study’s focus it is important to emphasize the necessity of conducting ethical research when interviewing Indigenous peoples (Schnarch, 2004; Indigenous Research Ethics Initiative, 2008; Ermine, Sinclair & Jeffery, 2004). While little scholarship has specifically explored research with Métis communities and individuals, the National Indigenous Health Organization’s Métis Centre (2010) stated that research with Métis peoples must adhere to six principles: 1) Reciprocal relationships; 2) Respect for individual and collective autonomy; 3) Safe and inclusive environments; 4) Recognition of diversity; 5) Give back to Métis peoples; and 6) Contextual accuracy. While interviewing participants and analyzing data I aimed to respect these six principles while considering why the “spatiality of Métis communities demands a more nuanced approach to the notion of community” (Evens et al., 2012, p. 62). In other words, the

diaspora and urbanization of Métis peoples, largely due to racialized federal and provincial government policies that forced Métis to identify as First Nations or White or to literally live on the boundaries of either society, has led to displaced communities and in many cases, disconnections within families. Identifying as Métis, therefore, is not always an indication of connections to Métis communities. To respect the ethics of conducting research with Métis teachers, informal interviews were conducted with three Métis community representatives who provided guidance concerning the appropriateness and purpose of my research topic as well as ethical Métis research protocols. These meetings were very valuable and assisted me with carrying out the research in ways that were reflective of the needs and rights of Métis peoples. I also applied for and was granted ethical approval from the University of Saskatchewan to conduct research with Indigenous peoples and answered all questions to ensure the research adhered to the University of Saskatchewan ethical standards when conducting research with Indigenous communities. For example, I explained how the research would contribute to Métis communities as I plan to give back by sharing the findings with the participants and Métis organizations such as SUNTEP and Gabriel Dumont Institute. I also explained the necessity of and how participant confidentiality would remain protected.

Theoretical Analysis

The following section describes how specific critical race theories were used to analyze the data. The theories described in this section differ from the six CRT tenets listed in chapter one in that they hone in on specific ways to identify how racism operates and reproduces Whiteness in and through K-12 schools. Although the CRT tenets must inform all CRT studies, they, on their own, do not provide distinct strategies in which to identify and challenge racism and Whiteness within institutions and society. For example, the first tenet, that racism is endemic, is a broad general understanding of racism and does not necessarily assist with identifying the specific ways in which racism operates and normalizes racial injustices in K-12 schools. In addition to the CRT tenets listed in chapter one, CRT legal scholars have conceptualized theories within CRT that directly identify and deconstruct structural institutionalized racist practices. Although the majority of theory I utilize was conceptualized originally within American legal scholarship, all of the theories listed below have been applied to CRT analyses of education. It is, however, essential to understand the legal scholarship in which CRT theories originate. As Ladson-Billings (1998) explained:

As excited as I may be about the potential of CRT for illuminating our thinking about school inequity, I believe educational researchers need much more time to study and understand the legal literature in which it is situated. It is very tempting to appropriate CRT as a more powerful explanatory narrative for the persistent problems of race, racism, and social injustice. If we are serious about solving these problems in schools and classrooms, we have to be serious about intense study and careful rethinking of race and education. (p. 22)

The following section therefore describes the CRT theories used to analyze the data and, when appropriate, frames each review within CRT legal scholarship. The theories presented have been categorized alphabetically for accessibility when reading chapters four and five.

Colourism

Although MRS scholars have theorized and explored how colourism operates within racially oppressed communities and families, this knowledge has not always been at the forefront of anti-racism education. As Hunter (2004) explained:

Discussions of skin colour hierarchies have frequently been swept under the rug and avoided by public speakers and scholars for years. Considered by many to be “airing dirty laundry,” public conversations about inequality and skin tone were glossed over in favour of discussing racism and discrimination against African Americans and Mexican Americans in general. However, over the past twenty-five years, scholars and public intellectuals have developed a significant body of literature that investigates the specifics of skin tone stratification in communities of colour. (p. 23)

According to Herring (2004),

“Colourism” is the discriminatory treatment of individuals falling within the same “racial” group on the basis of skin colour. It operates both intrracially and interracially. Intraracial colorism occurs when members of a racial group make distinctions based on skin colour between members of their own race. Interracial colorism occurs when members of one racial group make distinctions based upon skin colour between members of another racial group. (p. 3)

While the focus of colourism scholarship has tended to examine the benefits that come from having light skin tones, some scholars such as Hunter (2004) have also discussed intergroup disadvantages that come from light skin such as membership rejection from communities of

colour. While having White skin as a mixed-race person may lead to specific disadvantages regarding membership and acceptance within communities of colour constructed as ‘racially pure’—such as First Nations in Canada—Herring explained that, “colorism—much like the notion of race itself—is historically contingent on supremacist assumptions. In the United States [as with other western European colonized territories such as Canada] color preferences are typically measured against putative European (i.e. White) standards” (p. 3). In this way, colourism, while appearing to benefit or oppress individuals within racially oppressed populations, foundationally works to preserve and protect White supremacist culture and institutions. Skin tone, however, is not the only indicator of racial superiority or inferiority within communities of colour (as in all communities). Rather, hair texture, lip, nose and eye shape, non- standard English language dialects, and even how one dresses, where one lives, the cultural codes one ascribes to, and the level of an individual’s’ education, including the educational institutions one attended, all contribute to varying degrees of colourism.

Critical Race Parenting

Although the advice racially oppressed including mixed-race parents give their children regarding how to navigate and respond to racism holds incredible potential to add to anti-racism, critical race, and Indigenous education policy and scholarship, little work has explored this important interface of knowledge. The lack of academic knowledge concerning how parents and family members teach Indigenous children how to respond strategically to structural and overt racism is due partially to deficit views in which parents of colour are perceived in general. As Chapman and Bhopal (2013) stated, “Parents of color have suffered from distorted common-sense views, held by education researchers and practitioners, that position them as uninvolved and unmotivated parents” (p. 563). At the same time, scholarship that emphasizes the strengths of parents of colour and mixed-race families, has overlooked the crucial role parents play in preparing their children to counter and survive racism. An exception to this absence is a new field of CRT research called critical race parenting. The importance of CRT bringing this knowledge to the surface of educational discourse was emphasized by DePouw and Matias (2016):

Frankly, to literally survive racism and the violence brought about by White supremacy, communities of color have long recognized the need for instilling in their/our children a critical understanding of institutional racism, as well as the

strategies and identities essential to collective and individual health, safety, and endurance. These are the race-conscious parenting skills passed down for generations that are necessary to not only survive, but thrive within the racial micro-and macroaggressions of (neo)colonialism and White supremacy. (p. 237-238)

Race conscious parenting is needed because schools have failed to provide (or succeeded in not providing) K-12 students with the knowledge and skill needed to understand, in many cases survive, and counter Whiteness. For instance, Chapman and Bhopal have utilized CRT in their work with mothers of colour who advocate for their children in racially hostile schools. Documenting how mixed-race and parents of colour teach their children about racism and how to survive and counter it can advance anti-racist education as this process provides valuable information regarding what resources parents and K-12 teachers need to prepare children and youth to respond to racism in effective and racially just ways.

Deficit Racism

Deficit racism is grounded in assumptions that poor school performance can be attributed to deficiencies within the families and culture of students of colour. According to Yosso (2005), Indeed, one of the most prevalent forms of contemporary racism in US schools is deficit thinking. Deficit thinking takes the position that minority students and families are at fault for poor academic performance because: (a) students enter school without the normative cultural knowledge and skills; and (b) parents neither value nor support their child's education. (p. 75)

In essence, deficit racism relies on engrained assumptions that schools are neutral, caring, and equitable sites of learning that work when students, parents, and communities conform to an already effective system (Yosso, 2005). Following such assumptions, teachers aim to fill up passive students with cultural knowledge deemed valuable by and which preserves the power of White society. Deficit approaches to teaching begin with racist overgeneralizations about family backgrounds and essentialist beliefs about identity that construct students of colour, their families, and as culturally incompatible with White institutions. As Yosso (2005) explained, "As part of the challenge to deficit thinking in education, it should be noted that race is often coded as 'cultural difference' in schools." (Yosso, 2005, p. 175). Ladson-Billings (2006) further explained how deficit racism is often embedded in 'cultural difference' discourse as the culture of students of colour culture is rationalized as the cause of educational inequities:

But the problem of culture in teaching is not merely one of exclusion. It is also one of over determination. What I mean by this is that culture is randomly and regularly used to explain everything. So at the same moment teacher education students learn nothing about culture, they use it with authority as one of the primary explanations for everything from school failure to problems with behavior management and discipline. (p. 106)

For instance, Wiltse (2011) found that, “[Indigenous] students whose community language patterns are different from those of the mainstream community have often been diagnosed as having disorders of various types” (p. 65). Such beliefs, while harming Indigenous students, also protect Whiteness through constructions of White teachers as innocent, good, reliable, brave, intelligent, and compassionate who try to save students of colour from the deficiencies of their families and communities. Ladson-Billings (2007) further argued that educational statistics contribute to deficit racism as underachievement “constructs students as defective and lacking. It admonishes them that they need to catch up” (p. 321). Such social constructs of students have been found to prevent teachers from seeking or accepting positions at schools with high ratios of students of colour (Picower, 2009) and affect directly in adverse ways how students of colour are taught and treated (Philip, 2011; Soloman et al., 2005). Ultimately, deficit racism minimizes teachers’ professional responsibilities to refine and strengthen their practice, question assumptions about students’ abilities, advocate for students’ rights, and provide quality meaningful education to all students. Deficit racism targets students of colour regardless of class and family situations. Yet, even when students do struggle with poverty or family dysfunction—as students of every racial identity do—teachers have a responsibility to teach ensure all students meet provincial curricula outcomes. This responsibility requires a willingness to question personal views shaped by deficit racist ideologies about student success.

Essentialist Racism

Essentialist racism is foundational to deficit racism. Angela Harris (1990) and Richard Delgado (1993) are credited as theorizing critiques of racial essentialism that have become foundational to critical race analyses. In particular, CRT scholars critique essentialism or ideology that assumes racialized populations have innate traits and characteristics that are biologically determined. Such ideology informs deficit thinking. Ladson-Billings (2012) explained, “Critical race theory scholarship decried essentialism. Essentialism is a belief that all

people perceived to be in a single group think, act, and believe in the same things in the same ways” (p. 40). Anti-essentialism is influenced by feminist theory that critiqued gendered essentialist ideology which constructed males and females as innately different physically and according to temperament, character, and abilities. When applied to race, essentialism is a form of racist discourse as it constructs racially oppressed peoples as biologically or genetically deviant from the White norm, who are assumed to be driven naturally to behave in ways that lead to lower social standings. In this sense, essentialism is connected to the racist ideology of social Darwinism as it can be used to explain social inequality as the natural order as the ‘fittest’ will naturally rise to the top of social hierarchies.

Race-based essentialism is grounded in historical constructs of race supported by ongoing racialization processes (Omi & Winant, 1994). As Grillo (2003) explained,

Suffice to say that although ‘race’ and racism are frequently used in popular and public discourse in the Anglophone world and beyond in looser fashion, classic racism...the kind which emerged strongly in the 19th century to play a large part in 20th-century politics, was grounded in biological essentialism and determinism, the idea that human beings could be placed in groups based on physical characteristics, or more deeply, their genetic make-up, and that an individual’s personality and likely behavior could be read off from that membership. (p. 62)

CRT scholars refute essentialism and view racial identity as constructed through complex, varying, and fluid socio-economic processes and contexts. Ladson-Billings (1998) explained, “The creation of conceptual [racial] categories [as used in CRT] is not designed to reify a binary but to suggest how, in a racialized society where Whiteness is positioned as normative, everyone is ranked and categorized in relation to these points of opposition” (p. 9). For example, although at one time classified as White, “the social construction of Whiteness relegates Latinos, as a multiracial people, to an inferior status on the social hierarchy” (Hidalgo, 1998, p. 104). Anti-essentialism recognizes differences among racialized groups in terms of nation, culture, status, language and histories that racialization processes attempt to erase (Hildago, 1998). In addition, anti-essentialism recognizes the ways in which intersecting identity constructs based on race, class, gender, sexuality and other categories affect one’s experiences.

Essentialist ideology is oppressive because it justifies the unfair and unjust treatment of those constructed as inferior (e.g., men who justify abuse of women on the grounds that women

deserve it or teachers who punish Indigenous students on the grounds that Indigenous people cannot be trusted). Furthermore, essentialist ideology can be used to shame or punish those who do not conform to essentialist discourse (e.g., men who are gentle are not perceived as real men).

Interest Convergence

To better understand how White supremacy remains normalized at an institutional level, CRT scholars have utilized Derrick Bell's interest convergence theory (Bell, 1980). Bell theorized racially oppressed peoples can and have only acquired socio-economic and political gains when such advancements corresponded with the interest of Whites. For instance, the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which called for racial desegregation of American schools, was hailed as a monumental achievement for people of colour in America. There is evidence, however, that anti-segregation was legislated to place a positive light on America during the cold war (Dudziak, 1998). Interest convergence explains why Civil Rights legislation could bring about 'formal equality' through the law (Crenshaw et al, 1995), but not racial justice as the racist ideologies and structures that held White supremacy in place remained intact. Consequently, 'informal' segregation "persists today in the form of private clubs and de facto segregated schools and neighborhoods" (Matsuda, 1993, p. 23). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) further explained how interest convergence occurs through multicultural education that, "offers no radical change in the current order" (p. 25).

Theorized by Bell (1980), interest convergence occurs when the demands and rights of racially oppressed peoples align with the interests of the White population. Bell explained,

Here as in the abolition of slavery, there were Whites for whom recognition of the racial equality principle was sufficient motivation. But, as with abolition, the number who would act on morality alone was insufficient to bring about the desired racial reform. (p. 525)

Consequently, and according to the interest convergence principle, while a portion of the White population may feel morally obligated to struggle for racial justice, a majority of White people have historically granted rights to racially oppressed peoples only when such rights align with the interests of White people. As Ladson-Billings (2012) argued,

We cannot expect those who control the society to make altruistic or benevolent moves towards racial justice. Instead, civil rights activists must look for ways to

align the interest of the dominant group with those of racially oppressed and marginalized groups. (p. 38)

Referring to the *Brown* decision, Bell argued Black people had fought for desegregation for 100 years, yet these demands were not considered seriously until “whites in policy making positions [were] able to see the economic and political advances at home and abroad that would follow abandonment of segregation” (p. 524). In the same way, Indigenous education has been implemented federally and provincially when this policy has served the economic and political interests of the dominant White Canadian and Saskatchewan populations.

Intersectional Oppression

Tate (1997) credits Crenshaw as conceptualizing intersectionality as one of CRT’s central analytical constructs. Unsatisfied with one-dimensional anti-racist and feminist responses to inequality that address either race or gender exclusively, Crenshaw (1991; 1993) developed a framework to examine the experiences of Black women through intersecting theories of gender and race oppression. Crenshaw (1991) and others (Caldwell, 2000; Harris, 1996; 2000) perceived how women of colour experienced institutionalized racism through the law, for example, in distinct ways. Because feminist analyses of oppression are often designed from White normative views that exclude women of colour and anti-racist approaches to justice often excluded gender and class analyses, these theorists argued that women of colour are therefore further victimized by anti-racist and feminist advocacy groups (Roberts, 1995). As a result of intersecting experiences of oppression based on gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, and class there is a “need to account for multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed” (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1245). Crenshaw (1991) therefore theorized three types of intersectional oppression (pp. 1245-1251): 1) Structural intersectional oppression which occurs through institutional policies and programs that do not account for overlapping experiences of racial violence; 2) Political intersectional oppression which is located within groups such as governments and advocacy coalitions that oppose only one form of oppression; and 3) Representational intersectional oppression which occurs when one-dimensional images and discourses are used to construct and deconstruct racially oppressed peoples.

CRM must therefore include analyses of intersectional experiences of racial oppression. As Tanaka and Cruz (1998) found in their study, the intersection of race, sexual orientation, gender and class oppression complicated conversations about homophobia in unexpected ways,

leading to deeper understanding of oppression. Other CRT scholars have uncovered how class divisions within racially oppressed groups often threaten racial justice when upper class groups fail to challenge classism and in this way comply with White supremacy (Delgado, 2011; Parker & Lynn, 2002). Recognition of intersectional oppression CRM must also allow space for the representation of multiple intersected perspectives and experiences of raced, classed, and gendered researchers and participants (Calmore, 1995). There has been some critique of intersectional analyses in CRT, however, based on concerns that intersectional approaches may reduce every form of racial oppression to the point that no commonalities exist, making meaningful structural change impossible (Deldado, 2011). For example, by using an intersectional lens, it may become difficult to identify White supremacist ideology and theorize how racism functions through common patterns. It is important to take this caution seriously and remain committed to racial justice even as gender and class, for example, is interlocked with race.

Critique of Liberal Racism

The critique of liberal racism, or what is often referred to as colour-blind racism, involves recognizing and challenging contradictory discourse that allows individuals and groups to claim they are fair and believe in equality while simultaneously minimizing or justifying systemic power, privilege, Whiteness, and oppression (Parker, 1998). Liberal racism originates from Western ideology that privileged egalitarianism, individualism, universalism, and meliorism and was thought of as emancipatory for the rising White middle class during the Enlightenment (Bonilla-Silva, 2013). Critiques of liberal racism challenge ahistorical perceptions that reduce racism to individual acts of overt racial hostility by “challenging the story of White supremacy” (Dixon & Rousseau, 2006, p. 4). In schools, for instance, racial slurs are often perceived ahistorically and treated as isolated individual acts that are somehow disconnected from a history of White supremacy and ongoing Whiteness (DeCuir & Dixon, 2004). Consequently, when individual students are disciplined for being ‘racist’ this punishment, while seeming to be fair and racially just, does little to challenge the Whiteness of K-12 education systems and racially inequitable academic outcomes for students of colour. Liberal racism can be difficult to recognize and thus informs policy, curriculum, and pedagogical methods that appear emancipatory but blame communities of colour for inequality (O’Conner, Hill & Robinson, 2009; Ready & Wright, 2011). Liberal racism asserts that hard work, determination, and cultural pride of people of colour is all that is needed to overcome systems founded on White supremacy.

Revisionist History

Although the term revisionist history has taken on negative connotations in popular discourse and is associated with inaccurate perceptions of history that benefit the biases of specific groups, CRT scholars have referred to revisionist history as integral to CRT. The deconstruction of history which has been told, written, and institutionalized by those who uphold Whiteness and therefore patriarchal colonial power, is critical to CRM. Parker (1998) explained, CRT seeks to reveal the “legal history of racial subordination” including the historical events, policies, laws, ideologies and discourses connected to current institutional systems (p. 45). The term ‘revisionist’ is used by CRT scholars because the majority of institutionalized history taught in schools, for example, has been historically grounded in and framed by White supremacist ideology (Gillborn, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2005). According to Delgado and Stefancic’s (2012) definition of revisionist history, which can be applied to Canada, revisionist history “reexamines America’s historical record, replacing comforting majoritarian interpretations of events with ones that square more accurately with minorities’ experiences. It also offers evidence, sometimes suppressed, in that very record, to support those new interpretations” (p. 24). To understand how White supremacy operates and how this knowledge has been concealed within historical data, CRT theorists “look to things like profit, labor supply, international relations, and the interest of elite Whites” (Delgado & Stafancic, 2012, p. 24) and “engage texts in ways that counter their oppressive and subordinating features” (Calmore, 1995, p. 319). Through re-examining history, CRT scholars have revealed more accurate depictions of history which have been obscured to justify systems of racial oppression such as colonization (Harris, 1993; Matsuda, 1987; Olivas, 2000; Williams, 2000b). CRT scholars recognize that revisionist interpretations of history are required to right present racial injustices (Matsuda & Lawrence, 1993; Torres & Milun, 1990). For example, White supremacists who distribute images of racial caricatures and burn crosses on people of colours’ lawns are more likely to be found guilty through the judicial system when ahistorical or whitewashed versions of history are exposed and contested (Matsuda & Lawrence, 1993). Such actions, while obviously hostile, hold a more disturbing and threatening meaning when positioned within an historical context that is honest about the history of White supremacy. Revisionist historical accounts of racial oppression, however, have been found to be limited in countering White supremacy without personal testimony. For example, W. E. B. Du Bois recognized that the “rigorous interrogation of history” in itself was restricted in creating radical

change because “that the problem of race in America almost defies logical argument” (Baszile, 2008, p. 259). Consequently, Du Bois included personal narratives in his later work to strengthen his theoretical arguments. Like Du Bois, Derrick Bell (1987) found providing evidence of historical race oppression without personal testimony did little to advance racial justice. In the same way, stories of racial oppression hold more meaning and power when contextualized within revisionist interpretations of White supremacist histories. Due to the misappropriation of the term revisionist history in popular discourse, and its association with false history, I will instead use the term anti-colonial history when referring to historical revisionism throughout my study.

White Property Rights

Harris (1993) first theorized Whiteness as a type of property to which White men have had access traditionally in White supremacist societies. The property value of Whiteness consists of a set of formal and informal rights that come with identifying and being identified as White as a result of physiological characteristics. Like access to higher education and proficiency in Standard English literacy, Whiteness increases the ‘property value’ of individuals. Historically in Canada and other colonized nations, White identity gave men citizenship and voting rights; rights to own land, property, and businesses; rights to education, health care, and legal representation; rights to control institutions, knowledge production, and distribution; and permission to profit from other humans sanctioned as property by law. That White upper class males had access to power in which others were denied, was authorized by legal conceptions of property as Harris (1993) explained:

The legacy of slavery and the seizure of land from Native American peoples is not merely a regime of property law that is misinformed by racist and ethnocentric themes. Rather, the law has established and protected an actual property interest in Whiteness itself, which shared the critical characteristics of property and accords with the many and varied theoretical descriptions of property. (p. 1724)

Although theorized within an American historical context, Harris’ theory can be applied to Canada as property rights were granted historically to males identified as White.

Harris (1993) further explained that although property is often thought of as ‘things’ or ‘objects,’ economic theorists have conceptualized property as a set of rights. Property rights may be attached to tangible objects but also to intangible property such as inheritance rights. In this

way, Whiteness has historically and legally been recognized as property while also serving to produce “self-identity and personhood” (p. 1725). In this way,

The law’s construction of Whiteness defined and affirmed critical aspects of identity (who is White); of privilege (what benefits accrue from that status); and, of property (what legal entitlements arise from that status). (p. 1725)

Harris theorized how Whiteness meets the functional criteria of property because “the law has accorded “holders” of Whiteness the same privileges and benefits accorded to holders of other types of property” (p. 1731). For instance, only White men were granted the right to own land, which was a requisite to citizenship rights including the right to vote and own property including slaves, women, and children (Ladson-Billings, 2009). As a property of free human beings, Whiteness was strictly regulated as it granted an “absolute right to exclude” (Harris, 1993, p. 279). For example, historically, White slave owners habitually raped female slaves, considered property under the law, to create a free pool of labourers (Harris, 1996). The White ancestry of the children produced through this violence was erased by law through the ‘one-drop’ rule (Zack, 2010). At the same time, poor, working class, and females racialized as White, who were also oppressed, rarely united with racially oppressed populations as the “subordination of Blacks [and others] seems to reassure [all] Whites of an unspoken, but no less certain, property right in their “Whiteness”” (Bell, 2000. p. 7). At the very least, White property rights provide social power to White individuals regardless of ancestry, economic status, and gendered positioning (Bell, 2000b).

Whiteness as property has also been documented through the experiences of African American men and women who can pass as White, such as Harris’ grandmother who was Black but could pass as White and thus was hired to work at a department store under a false racial identity that, if exposed, would have led to the termination of her employment (Harris, 1993). As Gotanda (1995) explained, “The situation that bares most fully the subordinating aspect of the moment of racial classification arises when a Black person is at first mistaken for White and then recognized as Black” (p. 259). Although a mixed-race person who is visibly White may have access to White property rights, the property value of his or her Whiteness diminishes when the individual’s ‘contaminated White racial purity’ is made known. For example, populations such as the Irish, now racialized as White, were at one time racialized as non-White and thus inferior (Roediger, 2007) as were Ukrainian Canadians (Diakiw, 1994). This inferior racial status

legitimized oppressive policies and practice that maintained the power of ‘real’ White individuals just as the inferior status of Black and Indigenous peoples authorized White supremacy. In this way, it could be argued that due to historical patterns of shifting constructions of Whiteness, “none of us—no matter our prestige or position—is more than a few steps away from a racially motivated exclusion, restriction or affront” (Bell, 1992b, p. 374).

White expectations to White property rights have been embedded in Western institutions such as schools and education systems founded on White supremacist ideologies and structures (Harris, 1996; Dixon & Rousseau, 2005). Consequently, as Ladson-Billings (1998) stressed:

It is because of the meaning and value imputed to Whiteness that CRT becomes an important intellectual and social tool for deconstruction, reconstruction, and construction: deconstruction of oppressive structures and discourses, reconstruction of human agency, and construction of equitable and socially just relations of power. (p. 9)

Harris (1993) further conceptualized how Whiteness meets the functional criteria of property as the law has granted holders of White property four White property rights: 1) Disposition rights; 2) Use and enjoyment rights 3) Reputation and status rights; and 4) The absolute right to exclude. These four rights are discussed in greater detail below.

Disposition rights. Harris (1993) described how property has been theorized traditionally as alienable or as a possession that can be transferred to new ownership. How then, can Whiteness be considered a form of property when it cannot be transferred to others and is inalienable? To this end, Harris argued property is not always alienable, providing examples such as medical and law school degrees that serve as property, increase the property value of individuals, and cannot be transferred to others. Whiteness operates in a similar way and, as Harris argued, it is its inalienability that makes it more valuable as a form of property. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), however, in their application of CRT to education, explained that Whiteness can be conferred to student performance, making it alienable. They argued, “When students are rewarded only for conformity to perceived “white norms” or sanctioned for cultural practices (e.g., dress, speech patterns, unauthorized conceptions of knowledge), white property is being rendered alienable” (p. 59). This definition of disposition rights, or rights that come from conforming to perceived White norms and cultural practices, is useful when identifying how Whiteness as property operates in K-12 schools. The term ‘perceived’ white norms acknowledges how Whiteness has constructed specific norms and practices as ‘White’ regardless

of the accuracy of such assumptions and as a way to maintain binary oppositions amongst racialized groups. Perceived white norms and cultural practices are products of social constructs assigned to the White race including cleanliness, studiousness, natural organization skills, leadership abilities, rationality, and others characteristics and abilities. When students of colour adhere to such norms, they are thus granted disposition property rights.

Use and enjoyment rights. Use and enjoyment rights are a second type of property derived from being a holder of Whiteness. Referring to the United States, Harris (1993) theorized:

The state's official recognition of a racial identity that subordinated Blacks and of privileged rights in property based on race elevated Whiteness from a passive attribute to an object of law and a resource deployable at the social, political, and institutional level to maintain control. (p. 1734)

In this way, White people use and enjoy Whiteness when taking “advantage of the privileges accorded white people” by “exercising any number of rights reserved for the holders of Whiteness” (p. 1734). Similar legal processes occurred in Canada and Saskatchewan that gave White settlers and those who could pass as White use and enjoyment rights such as the right to own land, attend provincial schools, and vote in elections. Just as those who own property have the right to use and enjoy that property without disturbance, so too have White people been granted the right to use and enjoy their Whiteness as they please. Use and enjoyment rights are similar to what Peggy McIntosh (1989) conceptualized as White privileges or the cultural, social, economic, and political conditions those with White skin benefit from simply by virtue of being White. Use and enjoyment rights derive from being perceived as White and thus holders of the property value of Whiteness are afforded these rights regardless of racial identity. For example, Métis who look White are granted use and enjoyment rights until their identities are made known. In schools, use and enjoyment rights are enacted as “Whiteness allows for extensive use of school property” and “can be interpreted as the difference between those who possess the right to use and enjoy what schools can offer and those who do not” (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 59).

Status and reputation rights. Another set of property rights attributed to Whiteness as theorized by Harris (1993) are status and reputation rights. Status and reputation rights are grounded in early conceptions of property which included material possessions, income, and “one's life, liberty, and labor” (p. 1735). Just as an elevated income can increase the status and reputation of individuals, so too can Whiteness. Harris further highlighted how “the law's

legitimization of Whiteness as reputation” (p. 1735) existed until the late 1950s as a White person who was called Black could sue for defamation. This law was based on the premise that labeling a carrier of Whiteness as Black led to defamation as even the association with Blackness diminished the property value of White individuals. In this way, “Whiteness as interpersonal hierarchy was reorganized externally as race reputation. Thus, Whiteness as public reputation and personal property was affirmed” (p. 1736). For instance, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) explained how libel and slander cases rely on conceptions of reputation as property. In this way, “to damage someone’s reputation is to damage some aspect of his or her personal property. In the case of race, to call a White person “black” is to defame him or her” (p. 60). This defamation of reputation through racialization processes is similar to calling a man a ‘pussy,’ ‘girly,’ or ‘queer’ as a means to emasculate the reputation of men through feminization processes.

In the same way, racial designations diminish or increase the property value of specific social practices and spaces according to classifications of Whiteness. In other words, the reputation and status of the *same* or similar social practice or space will increase or decrease according to designations of Whiteness. For example, whereas White alcohol consumption is portrayed and perceived as glamorous, fun, or a normal part of life for hard working individuals, Indigenous alcohol consumption is portrayed through a negative, inferior, dangerous, dysfunctional, and pathological lens. This same analysis can be applied to K-12 school-based social practices. For example, a White student who speaks out in class may be perceived as engaged whereas an Indigenous student might be perceived as interfering with the abilities of White students to learn. In the opposite way, a White student who is quiet in class might be considered a ‘good’ listener while a quiet Indigenous student might be considered disengaged. Similarly, White parents who inquire about their children may be perceived as good parents who advocate for their children whereas Indigenous parents who advocate for their children may be perceived as complainers. Reputation and status rights are also applied to spaces as schools with increased White student populations, who are thus granted increased status and reputation property rights.

Absolute right to exclude. Harris (1993) called the final right derived from the property value of Whiteness the absolute right to exclude. The absolute right to exclude results from and protects or reinforces the first three rights. Simply put, the absolute right to exclude provides those who hold White property rights the power to exclude racially oppressed people, knowledge,

rights, and access to power at their discretion. The absolute right to exclude is evident within K-12 schools in multiple ways as a result of the overrepresentation of White teachers and administrators. For example, White teachers have the right to exclude certain knowledge from being taught in their classrooms and exclude students from advanced academic programs and extra-curricular activities. Administrators can exclude teachers from employment, exclude parents from the culture of the school, and exclude unfavorable critiques of their schools.

Conclusion

This section of chapter four outlined CRT theories used to analyze the data to ground the research in CRM. When viewed through the lenses of these theories, the participants' counter-stories reveal evidence of various dimensions of racism in K-12 schools. To this extent, the framework I used determined what I found as this study does not seek to understand if racism exists in K-12 schools but rather how it exists. CRM was chosen purposely because it provides a useful framework in which to identify and name processes of Whiteness as they are reproduced in and through K-12 schools. As CRT scholar Melanie Carter warned, "a methodological approach alone will not protect our communities from harm" (2003, p. 33). This warning is important as there is danger in using CRM without understanding and adhering to CRT's tenets and theories (Carter, 2003; Delgado, 2011). More important than methods, researchers must have a commitment to expose and confront racial injustices and White supremacist patriarchal colonialism in emancipatory ways that serve the communities represented. In the case of my research, it is imperative that I use CRM to advance the counter-stories of Métis teachers in ways that serve Métis people and racial justice for Indigenous peoples. The theories discussed above provide effective ways in which to reach these goals as will be discussed in chapter four, which highlights the participants' prior teaching counter-stories, and chapter five, which focuses on the participants' experiential knowledge derived from teaching in K-12 schools.

CHAPTER 4

PRIOR K-12 TEACHING EXPERIENCE COUNTER-STORIES

Introduction

This chapter will examine and discuss how the participants experienced racism prior to becoming teachers as represented through their counter-stories. As reviewed in chapter three, counter-stories are a CRT method used to represent the experiential knowledge of racially oppressed peoples in ways that counter White patriarchal dominant narratives (Delgado, 1989). This knowledge is valuable to the study and can assist with answering the research question: *Using a CRT analysis, what can Métis teachers' racialized experiential knowledge reveal about how racism operates in K-12 schools?* The counter-stories examined in this chapter have been organized according to specific CRT theories, as described in chapter three, representing three contexts: Childhood and youth counter-stories from outside of K-12 school experiences; K-12 counter-stories; and post-secondary teacher education counter-stories. While reading the findings, it may be useful to refer back to the last section of chapter three to review the CRT theory (which was presented in alphabetical order). Following chapter four, chapter five presents a CRT analysis of the participants' counter-stories representing K-12 teaching experiences.

Childhood and Youth Counter-Stories

This section examines the participants' experiences with racism as children and youth outside of K-12 schools, as well as stories about family members' experiences with racism, and provides a broader understanding of the racialized context in which the participants experienced, witnessed, and were taught about racism outside of the Saskatchewan K-12 system. Tracing how the participants and their family members have experienced racism in Saskatchewan offers valuable knowledge regarding connections between the findings and what has occurred in Saskatchewan K-12 schools throughout multiple generations. In this way, the normalized intergenerational racism Métis have endured reflects the failure of Saskatchewan schools to counter institutionalized racism. This section is organized according to four CRT theories: colourism; passing and white property; intersectional oppression; and critical race parenting.

Colourism

Discussed in chapter three, colourism is the privileging of light skin tones within a racially oppressed group. The majority of participants witnessed or experienced colourism during their childhood and youth. Although the participants did not have the language to name such experiences, as this was not discussed when they attended K-12 schools, an awareness of colourism was evident in the interviews. Most counter-stories highlighted experiences with interracial colourism from White perpetrators (interracial colourism occurs between two racialized groups). For example, one visibly Indigenous participant shared, “I always felt that my seven siblings that were White coloured, like lighter-coloured skin, had it made because they didn’t experience what I did” (P2). Another participant shared, “I have some cousins who look First Nations and I know they have experienced a lot of racism” (P8). Similarly, when thinking about a cousin with darker skin, this participant who is visibly White remembers, “When we would go into a restaurant I would get better service than he would” (P4). This same participant further explained:

When I walk down the street I am perfectly fine. I am not going to be pulled over by the police and I am not going to be picked up for shoplifting. I am not going to be the one who is going to be pulled over because of my skin colour and it doesn’t matter what I wear. My cousins and other people who are visibly Aboriginal don’t have that luxury. (P4)

In addition to family members with darker skin, participants also recalled how family members with ‘Indigenous English’ dialects experienced colourism. For instance, this participant explained:

I made friends with somebody and she started coming to my house and we were really good friends and we still are friends but the way she had been raised was, “something is wrong with First Nations people.” So, she would notice the way that my dad spoke and would say, “your dad sounds Native or your cousins sound Native, why are there little Native kids running around your house?” (P5)

In this case, the participant benefitted from colourism through securing a friendship with a White friend yet the participant’s father was racialized as inferior through an assumption that something was ‘wrong’ with him because of his Indigenous English dialect. Although the participant was

able to maintain the friendship, the security of the friendship was interpreted as under threat when the friend first became aware of the participant's racial identity.

In the same way, interracial colourism was apparent in stories about visibly White Métis whose White property rights diminished when spending time with visibly Indigenous friends and family. As this counter-story demonstrates:

I was about fourteen and I was in the [mall] and of course there were people standing around visiting and I ran into two of my friends who were First Nations. We were standing there and visiting but we were the only ones that the security guard came up to and were told we could not loiter in the [shopping mall]. (P8)

Another participant shared a similar counter-story about an experience in an urban shopping mall: "there were times when my cousins would come in from up North, my first cousins, and they were a lot darker than me...My mom used to work at [a department store] and I remember being followed around by security. There would be 3 or 4 of us together" (P11). This experience occurred regardless of gendered identity. Interracial colourism (between two racialized groups) stories, particularly when participants experienced colourism from White individuals, were also experienced by family members. For instance, this participant was told a story about interracial colourism experienced by a parent: "I remember one story my dad told about when he and my mom were traveling and trying to get a motel room and he went in to ask for a room and they wouldn't give him one so then my mom who is White went in and she got a room" (P3).

Fewer stories about intraracial colourism (colourism within a racially oppressed group such as children with lighter skin who are privileged within a Métis family) were shared, although several participants stressed that this absence of memories does not mean intraracial colourism did not occur within their families and Métis communities. One participant, however, witnessed intraracial colourism or racial hostility toward First Nations family members who were darker and racialized as inferior to Métis. This participant shared:

My uncle married a woman who was from up North and I think that speaks volumes to the racism between First Nations and Métis...I knew about racism when I was little and I can remember, especially toward specific groups of people, I can remember them saying, even my grandpa saying things about my auntie. (P1)

This story was a powerful memory for the participant, but was also an exception in the counter-stories although another participant shared, "I am the dark one out of my sisters so I have always

kind of been a little bit the different one” (P9). In general, the findings indicate that witnessing and experiencing light skin privileging of Métis within family and social circles contributed an understanding of colourism through informal learning.

Passing and White Property

Participants also shared family counter-stories concerning how their family members passed and/or identified as White throughout generations. Passing as White has been examined in MRS and Métis studies as outlined in the literature review and is presented here as evidence of Métis who are able to access varying degrees of White property rights. As discussed in chapter three, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discussed how White property rights are alienable or transferable through disposition rights which are granted to those racialized as non-white who conform to perceived White norms. Disposition rights, then, enable Indigenous peoples access to White property rights. According to the theory of disposition rights, Métis who act, dress, speak, and look more White, according to racialized character traits, are socially and economically rewarded though this is always limited and shifting according to the needs of White citizens to preserve carefully regulated racialized boundaries and White access to power and resources.

Reflecting a desire for disposition rights, family stories about hiding or minimizing Métis identities were identified throughout the interviews. For instance, several participants shared stories about Métis family members who passed as White and denied their Indigenous ancestry. For example, “Most of my family don’t identify as being Métis. It was not a proud thing growing up. I would say my grandfather who is not here anymore would still not be proud of that” (P9). In addition, some Métis family members who married White spouses were reported as being socialized or pressured to ‘behave White’ as demonstrated in this story: “I think life was very difficult for him [grandfather] because I think grandma desperately wanted him to be like a White man (P8).” Although participants may have understood passing strategies as the result of being ashamed to be Métis, framing the stories as counter-stories suggest the participants were in some ways aware of the strategic purpose of passing as White. For instance, this participant shared,

[M]y grandma said don’t tell people you’re an Indian. You know, shuu. You know, it was kind of on the hush, hush and I would come home and I would be like, you know we are Métis or we are half breeds and she would say oh yes, no but we are French, we are dark French people. (P6)

In this way, counter-storying about passing can be reconceptualised as a purposeful decision made to protect families from racial violence and to secure economic, social, and political rights. As this participant explained: “I don’t know if they just stopped all the cultural things because they wanted us to blend in as much as we could in White society. Because I am sure that is why...I am almost one hundred percent certain that is why they didn’t speak to us in Cree” (P7). Such stories demonstrate an awareness from a young age of the dangers associated with identifying as Métis.

Other participants were taught to be proud of their Métis ancestry but to minimize this in public White spaces. For example, this participant emphasized the pride he was taught to have in his ancestry from a young age while also being taught not to announce this information:

Dad was proud of it and Mom was proud of it. Mom actually speaks Michif but the only time we ever heard that was when she was on the phone because we moved to the city when we were quite young. So it was something I always identified with and was proud of, yet at the same time it was something back in the early 80s growing up in [city] I think people wouldn’t necessarily know if I was or I wasn’t...I think my mom probably struggled with identifying being Native and I think a lot of older people like my parents’ age struggled. That generation that is just a little bit older—because of residential schools and all the treatment and the racism and the stereotypes and all the negative things regarding Aboriginal people. (P11)

Similar to the story shared above, several participants shared stories about family members who could speak Michif but did not pass this knowledge onto their children and only spoke in private Métis spaces. This purposeful strategy of hiding Métis identities, culture, and language is the direct result of an awareness of the socio-economic rights that stood to be lost by publicly disclosing Métis identities. Such processes reveal how racism operates through disposition rights in ways that preserve a colonial order premised on White purity.

Other participants told counter-stories about being instructed to ‘not talk about it.’ Stories about family members enforcing the strategy of not discussing family Métis identities can be understood as a passing strategy meant to increase access to White property rights even for those who are visibly Indigenous or have visibly Indigenous Métis parents. ‘Not talking about it’ stories were often shared by those who grew up knowing they were Indigenous but not knowing they were Métis until later in life. As this participant explained:

I definitely haven't always known about it. I always knew that I was part Native or Aboriginal but I didn't really know more than that until I applied to go to SUNTEP and then we needed some evidence of ancestry, Métis status or non-status. (P3)

In this way, participants accepted their Indigenous ancestry as a fact but were not granted permission to discuss their Indigenous ancestry, which led to increased disposition rights. Another participant who is visibly Indigenous talked about a similar experience: "I knew we were Aboriginal; I knew that we were different because the elementary school I went to was predominantly White" (P7). An awareness of having Indigenous ancestry without family connections to Métis communities led to increased disposition rights. As one participant shared:

We always knew my dad had a bit of Indian blood in him. But it was never really discussed. My parents grew up in a time where that was something that would be swept under the rug, it was embarrassing and it was not something that you wanted people to know about you. Even our mother, who was White, if we ever did try to ask our dad about it, she would say, 'oh don't talk about that.' (P10)

The condition of 'not knowing specifics' contributed to the intergenerational strategy of passing as White, which Métis families used to survive the racialized conditions of Saskatchewan. For instance, this participant explained: "My dad is Native and looks very Native or Métis I guess you could say. But, it was never something that was talked about or brought up and I didn't really understand or even acknowledge it" (P1). Passing counter-stories highlight how the property value of Whiteness lead Métis to hide or minimize their Indigenous ancestry.

Intersectional Oppression

Childhood and youth intersectional racialization experiences outside of K-12 schools and amongst their family members was identified throughout the interviews. Discussed in chapter three, Kimberly Crenshaw (1991) theorized intersectional oppression to counter institutional, political, and cultural advocacy groups and policies that represent women of colour but challenge only one system of oppression. In this study, Métis experiences with intersectional oppression were identified primarily through intersections of race and class oppression. Class oppression, and the perception of having fewer material objects and resources than White people, intersected with racism. Only two participants indicated growing up in an affluent neighborhood and these two also had at least one working-class parent. The participants' ability to notice how economic status is racialized—that White is an indication of higher economic status—corresponds with the

intergenerational institutionalized barriers Métis have endured as described in chapter one as well as the wealth White families have inherited from colonial processes meant to preserve Whiteness. Having less than White people was thus often described as a marker of racial inferiority. For instance, one participant who is visibly Indigenous shared several stories about experiencing racism as a child interwoven with class-based oppression. The participant shared, “Well, at a very young age I was treated different because of my skin color and because we came from, you know, an impoverished family and a big family. So we were already being treated bad because of being poor” (P2). Here, experiencing class discrimination was perceived as an additional layer of oppression complicating the participants’ early awareness of suffering from racism.

Another participant, who is visibly White, also understood this process, saying, “I grew up quite poor as well so that was another thing, right, a poor Métis family” (P6). Those who shared stories of poverty also stressed a desire to have more material possessions like their White counterparts who held socio-economic and political power. The following passage from another participant demonstrates an early awareness of the intersection between racism and class oppression:

It always seemed that my parents, because they didn’t have an education, were always working on a farm and it always seemed that the person that they were working for was always a White person...I remember always thinking why can’t we have a life like this, because they had a boat and they had all this cool stuff. I always remember wishing that I could be part of that family. (P7)

This counter-story reveals how Whiteness operates through intersectional oppression in two ways. First, the story reveals how wealth is racialized as an attribute of White people as the participant made a connection between the employer’s White race and having a higher income. Second, education was perceived as a marker of Whiteness, which was assumed to lead to increased wealth. The lack of educational attainment of the participant’s parents, however, cannot alone explain their economic status and why they consistently worked for White farmers. As described in chapter one, many White families inherited land through colonial mechanisms such as script, the Indian Act, dishonoured Treaties, and other processes. Therefore, educational attainment alone does not explain why White people have more access to wealth and power. In addition, the participant’s Métis parents’ lack of education is not a personality flaw but the outcome of institutionalized racism directly linked to the history of Saskatchewan provincial K-

12 school policies. Several participants shared stories reflecting this historical process saying: “My grandmother never went to a residential school. She didn’t get any schooling. I am actually the first person in my family to finish my grade 12” (P10). Another participant shared “I know my grandpa went to a residential school, but I don’t know how far he went with his education. My dad...I don’t think he finished his grade twelve but he was always a hard worker” (P13). Similarly, this participant shared: “lots of them were not able to go to school in residential school they all contracted tuberculosis, so they were in the hospital for years and years” (P6).

Other participants whose parents were employed in what are often considered professional positions such as with government, social services, and the education system, also remembered a sense of not economically fitting in with their White peers. For these participants, their parents’ employment, which required post-secondary education in professional colleges, did not lead to a stable middle class status. For instance, this participant shared:

My dad worked for the government so they were able to provide us with what we needed. I was really lucky that way but our house was never as nice as my friends. My parents didn’t drive...we drove a van. Those typical things like, we went to the lake but we had a trailer...You know, it was weird when you think of it because it’s like, you’re in that in-between you’re not in poverty but you’re on the tail end of middle class. If Dad lost his job, shit would get real. I think my parents and my grandparents really struggled and they were hardworking people. (P1)

An awareness of the intersection of race and class oppression was also highlighted in a story shared about a conversation with a childhood friend about why Indigenous peoples are poor:

And, I have no idea how this happened but, we started talking about why Aboriginal people were poor and marginalized, although we didn’t use that language. And he just said, well they’re conquered, there was a war and they lost and that’s just how it is kind of thing and I was just like...that just didn’t make sense to me. (P3)

In this story, the participant did not live in poverty but struggled to make sense of why many Indigenous people do. Another participant who grew up with parents who had professional positions of employment observed the intersection of race and class oppression. As a teenager, this participant noticed, “a difference between the power...a lot of the Indigenous students lived in poverty, couldn’t afford certain things like to play on hockey [teams] or to play certain sports...and yet I recognized that they were good athletes” (P11).

Although class oppression was evident within the interviews, gender oppression was rarely identified by the participants. Rather, a partial awareness of patriarchy as well as recognition of ableism and homophobia was evident in the interviews with some of the female participants. Two participants told stories regarding experiences with or observations of misogynist practice. These practices, however, were perceived as examples of racism. For example, one participant shared: “When I was really young I could remember being called squaw humper and welfare bum and dirty Indian (P2).” Similarly, another participant told a story about her Kokum who was in an abusive marriage with a White man, saying: “Her husband was a very, very, racist man to her and she left him at the age of 82 or 72. I would go pick her up [and hear him say] ‘Ah you’ he was a drunk ‘you Indian, you this, you dirty little’” (P6). Although overt memories of gender oppression were not often shared, the data suggest gender played a role in the participants’ ability to recognize racial oppression at an early age. All of the female participants shared stories about racism in their childhood and youth, regardless of economic status and racial appearance, whereas the male identified participants did not.

Sporadic stories about ableism and homophobia were also shared. For one participant, having a family member with a disability opened a pathway to understand and question how race and ability oppression intersect within institutions, causing additional barriers Indigenous families must overcome such as relocating their families. This participant shared, “it seems that there is a disproportionate amount of First Nations children that end up deaf or hard of hearing (P5).” Another participant spoke about a First Nation boy who was gay and thus experienced racism and homophobia, saying, “he was, I think we knew then, homosexual as well and so he struggled with many things” (P6). As with class, gender, and ability oppression, oppression based on sexual orientation was depicted in the counter-stories as a contributing factor to experiences with racism and not as an isolated incident or as a form of discrimination disconnected from racialization. As with colourism and passing counter-stories, stories about intersectional oppression were not examined when the participants attended K-12 schools. Thus their understandings of intersectional oppression are outcomes of racialization experiences as individuals constructed as mixed-race.

Critical Race Parenting

Critical race parenting (CRP) is an unexpected finding that emerged while analyzing the data. As discussed in chapter three, “CRP is defined as an educational praxis that can engage

both parent and child in a mutual process of teaching and learning about race, especially ones that debunk dominant messages about race” (Matias, 2016, p. 3). Considering the mixed race status of Métis, this knowledge is important as little is known academically about how and what Métis parents teach their children about racism. CRP not only considers biological mothers and fathers but also the broad network of adults and other family members and friends who play a role in parenting racially oppressed children and youth (Matias, 2016). For example, in this study, one participant expressed, “I was lucky because I was able to speak to my older brothers and sisters, especially once I started high school, about our life and growing up and how hard it was” (P7).

A common theme in the interviews were stories shared about parents encouraging a sense of pride in being Métis as a way to resist racism. For example, this participant shared:

They just sort of said, you need to be proud of who you are and we are all different and I remember Dad—Mom was very much quiet, didn’t hear many stories from her—but heard a lot of stories from Dad and he would always say, ‘Yes we are different, but you know what? That difference is a great thing and it makes us special and it makes us unique and makes us who we are.’ (P11)

Similarly, another participant talked about the profound difference her mother made through teaching a sense of Métis pride, saying, “You stand up for yourself, you are proud of who you are, we are proud people, Métis people are clean people, we are humble people” (P6). This statement is interesting as it directly counters racist discourse which historically and continues to construct Indigenous peoples as dirty and unclean. The strategy of instilling pride within children as a means to counter the effects of systemic racism was shared by several participants. For example, one participant’s mother protected her children from racism within their White family by emphasizing the need to instill pride within the children:

My mom told us she sat my grandparents down and told them, “My girls will not grow up to feel ashamed of being Aboriginal. So you have a comment, you keep it to yourself, they will not feel any of this shame, that is not how I am raising them.” My mom is White and she recognized that and that is why we didn’t grow up feeling shameful. (P9)

Compassion for racist perpetrators was also identified as a way in which Métis parents taught their children to overcome and survive racism. For instance, this participant, who grew up Catholic, explained: “I would come home and ask my mom, ‘Why do we go to church with these

people on Sundays with the way they treat me?’ And she would say, ‘You have to pray for them’” (P2). This advice was empowering as it provided the participant to have compassion for perpetrators of racism while not denying the salience of Whiteness. At the same time, while this participant’s experiences with racism as a child were validated, there was also an underlying theme of being discouraged by family members to ask too many questions about racism, as explained here: “[my mom] used to always ask me not to ask so many questions. Even my uncles, my dad’s brothers, because I was always reading into everything very, very, early on in my life and I couldn’t understand why the treatment was so bad [for Métis]” (P2). In this way, the participant’s family validated her experiences as real but did not encourage ongoing discussions about racism.

Another story shared included parents who taught their children to treat everyone equally and not to judge people based on their skin tone, essentially taking a color-blind approach to parenting. For example, this participant shared a story about her mother who identifies as White but is of Métis ancestry, “my mom always did teach us that you don’t treat people any differently. She doesn’t care if you’re black, white, brown, pink, orange, green. She taught us to love everybody the same or to treat everybody the same no matter what or where they come from” (P1). Teaching Métis children to love and respect everyone regardless of skin colour, or a liberal colour-blind approach, validated racism as real while at the same time diminished the power of Whiteness. That the participants’ parents, both White and Indigenous, at times relied on colour-blind approaches to parenting reflects the limited options made available to parents who seek to protect their children from racism.

Participants who identified their parents as having an interest in directly challenging racism, however, were offered more practical strategies to counter racism as evident in this story about a participant who was racially profiled by a mall security guard while shopping with friends:

At fourteen, I didn’t really know how to handle that. My mom worked with mental health so she [worked downtown]. I went and I told her what happened. She said you should go back and see if you can find him and get his name and report him to Human Rights. But I never found him. (P8)

This participant was empowered by her mother to challenge the perpetrator and defend her human rights. Similarly, another participant shared stories about her White mother who is a social worker:

[Because of] the nature of her work she asked me questions like, “How do the kids in school treat so and so?” So I guess it was in my consciousness that probably had me thinking about things that other people weren’t thinking about like, how are we treating somebody. She didn’t bring up skin colour but maybe it made me aware that [Indigenous] kids might be treated differently. (P5)

From a young age, this participant who looks White was taught to recognize racial exclusions and stand up for students who were treated unjustly. Such advice, however, was not offered regularly.

It was also inferred that some parents avoided talking extensively with children about racism because of painful traumatic memories associated with such conversations. For instance, one participant explained how traumatic memories of racism caused his father, who is visibly Indigenous, to teach his children to avoid racist people and try to ignore it:

There were definitely things that happened to my dad but again it wasn’t until poking him and prodding that those stories kind of came out. So I think...that was just my dad’s way of coping with it, was just some people are just assholes. (P3)

This parent may not have been able to discuss racism but at the same time validated racism as real and constructed those who are racist as undesirable. Another participant shared how her dad, who is visibly Indigenous, also did not openly discuss his experiences while at the same time acknowledging and stressing the reality of racism and racial violence: “My dad always says, “Oh you have your rose coloured glasses on” because he obviously experienced racism and lived with it probably in different ways I cannot even imagine” (P1).

Adding to this were family stories about the injustices and racial violence families experienced and survived. Several participants spoke about family who survived residential schools, lived through extreme poverty, lost land through script, lived on road allowances, experienced extreme physical violence at the hands of White perpetrators, and are the last in their lineage to speak Michif. For instance, one participant shared:

Her [participant’s mom] Grandfather was beat up by the RCMP on the side of the highway and my Grandma saw that and that was very traumatic and my mom told me

that story a number of times. I think that's the kind of, those are the things that I remember a bit more, the stories of Grandma not being served in a [department store], like at the Bay, they wouldn't sell her a broom, they ignored her, and just stuff like that, and I think if I was to interpret that I would say those were the significant experiences for her as a child seeing her parents very upset about that, seeing her mother not being treated the right way. (P12)

Hearing stories about family members' struggles to fit into a racialized binary world as Métis people was also found to be a method that taught participants about racism and how it affects Métis in distinct ways, as stressed in this memory:

My dad describes his experience as he knew he was different, he didn't know how he fit, and he always used to say, "I felt like I was a grey cat in a black and white world" was his definition of it and he struggled with that, coming from a little community and then coming to Saskatoon. He was proud of who he was and what he was but I have heard him talk many times and that was one of the things that really sticks out is he felt like this grey cat in a black and white world and he didn't know where he belonged. If he should be Native or if he should be White. (P11)

Aligning with CRP, a need to talk with family members who recognize how Métis are racialized and are honest about racism as a genuine threat was a common theme in the interviews.

The counter-stories shared indicate that the participants depended on family members and others for validation, education, and guidance regarding how to survive and challenge racism, even when passing as White. Due to the racist conditions in which Métis parents must raise their children, family members have used various strategies in the attempt to counter the racism experienced by Métis children and youth. The findings of this research indicate that family validation of racism as a real experience, contributing to critical race parenting, heightened the participants' racial consciousness through informal lessons.

K-12 Student Counter-Stories

This section of chapter four highlights counter-stories that reveal institutionalized practices observed or experienced during the participants' time as K-12 students, again answering the first research question: *Using a CRT analysis, what can Métis teachers' racialized experiential knowledge reveal about how racism operates in K-12 schools?* This section highlights how the property value of Whiteness theory, as described in chapter three, was used to identify and

theorize school practices discussed by the participants which were found to reproduce Whiteness throughout the 1970s until the late 2000s when the participants attended Saskatchewan K-12 schools. The knowledge presented in this section is valuable to this study because, as Delgado Bernal (2002) argued, “The Eurocentric perspective has for too long viewed the experiential knowledge of students of color as a deficit or ignored it all together” (p. 121). Like the first section of this chapter, the participants’ experiences with racism as K-12 students in Saskatchewan schools provides a broader contextual framework in which to position the participants’ experiences with racism as practicing teachers, which will be discussed in chapter five. The counter-stories shared in this section provide valuable information regarding the history of racism experienced by Métis K-12 students in Saskatchewan schools and the conditions in which Métis students have been forced to learn. The following section presents the participants’ counter-stories that demonstrate how racism was experienced while attending K-12 schools and have been grouped into four CRT theories: disposition rights; use and enjoyment rights; status and reputation rights; and the absolute right to exclude.

Disposition Rights

As discussed previously, disposition rights are derived from the property value of Whiteness and comprise a set of social and material rewards granted to those who conform to perceived white norms, regardless of racialized identities or skin tones. For example, individuals who speak English and wear name branded clothing are often socially rewarded for doing so and are thus granted disposition rights. A desire to acquire disposition rights while attending K-12 Saskatchewan schools was identified throughout many of the participants’ counter-stories. As this participant explained, “I guess I wasn’t aware of [White privilege] until I started going to school and the kids had really nice clothes. Then I was crying to have really nice clothes too” (P1). In this way, the participant believed that conforming to the perceived White norm of wearing nice clothes would lead to an increased White property value. This example further reveals how class and race oppression intersect as Indigenous peoples can gain White disposition property rights through an elevated class status, even if only through the appearance of a higher socio-economic standing.

Attempts to gain disposition rights were also identified in the story below, which depicts how a visibly Indigenous participant coped with racially hostile schools through ‘pretending to be someone else’:

But, when I got into high school I got really, really cocky because I didn't know how to deal with it anymore. I started to get really cocky and thought that the only way I can survive in this high school is to be another person. Just so I can get through it, I pretended to be somebody else... just to try to get away from how people were being treated in class and how the curriculum didn't even bring any of our benefits to the table. How Aboriginal people were depicted as troublemakers, as people we had to pay the bill for, a worthless group of people. I had to try to hide it somehow so that's how I would hide it. I would be this other person. (P2)

Like the above quotation, other participants discussed how they coped with and protected themselves from racism through trying to becoming someone else and trying to fit in with White or popular students. For example, one participant was able to remain friends with White peers but did so while feeling 'different' and downplaying her racial and cultural identity. Other participants, those with darker complexions, were not able to or did not attempt to become friends with White students. This participant explained, "You get those comments and so I started hanging around with more Aboriginal people in high school. I gravitated toward the light group I guess" (P7). Although this participant decided to befriend Aboriginal students, 'gravitating to lighter students' can be perceived as a type of disposition or an action one takes to increase one's White property value as social rewards are associated with such actions.

Purposely 'performing' perceived White norms to enable disposition rights was also identified in multiple stories about K-12 social segregation experiences in high school and this process was often connected to colourism or the privileging of racially oppressed peoples who have lighter skin tones. For example, this participant shared:

I would imagine there were a lot of White Métis students that wouldn't associate with us because we were a little bit darker Métis. Quite honestly I think for those students, if they could blend in, they would blend in. Because they probably knew how hard it would have been if they would have self-declared themselves as being Métis. (P7)

Other White or fairer skin Métis participants expressed similar understandings. As one participant stated, "Because by that time [in high school] I knew how people thought and how people operated and what was best for me to do at the time. If you can pass for White, you probably should" (P10). It was further noted by another participant who is visibly Indigenous that many White students who attended high school at the same time have only recently

identified as Métis. This awareness reflects the counter-stories shared about Métis who tried to pass as White to obtain disposition rights. Social segregation that resulted from Métis who attempted to gain disposition rights also occurred through participation in extra-curricular activities. For instance, this participant who is visibly White explained, “I wasn’t overly involved with extra curricula stuff and I just kind of did drama or choir and those were White spaces, they were people who all had the same interests” (P12). In this way, the participant’s white property increased by spending time in White spaces and engaging in what are perceived as White practices such as drama and choir. This participant’s disposition rights were also enhanced by befriending mostly White and non-Indigenous peers as other participants who can pass as White did as well. For example, one participant who had many White friends in high school explained, “Luckily, I was able to deflect a lot of that [racism]. But I think I denied a lot of my [ancestry]...being from...kids would tease me, ‘Oh you look Native’ and I said ‘Nooo, I’m not’” (P1). In this sense, denying Métis ancestry is one way to access disposition rights. As discussed in the previous section, Métis K-12 students often enter schools with an increased racial consciousness and have been taught from family members, even if indirectly, to protect themselves from racism by denying or minimizing their ancestry and culture.

While attending elementary school, fewer participants shared stories about social segregation as several remembered playing with diverse groups of racialized students including White students. At the same time, I identified specific disposition rights in their stories that allowed such conditions of desegregation to exist. As this participant shared: “There were probably 5 of us and we got along and we did well in school and we were the athletes and I think stuff like that helped. If we were quiet, shy, it might have been a different story” (P11). From a young age, this participant realized that being an extravert, doing well in school, and being athletic increased the ability of visibly Indigenous students to fit into White social spaces. Such characteristics have been constructed as White norms (ignoring the racialized conditions of schools and society) and therefore increased the White property value of Indigenous students, even if in limited ways.

The interviews also suggest that Métis students, especially those who can pass as White, often participate in or are bystanders to racist jokes and comments about Indigenous peoples, enacting the perceived White norm of being racist and ‘acting’ racially superior. For example, one participant shared a story about an Indigenous girl who was called racial slurs by a White

boy in elementary school: “I knew it was wrong. I kind of felt like, why did he say it? I didn’t stand up for the girl though, I just sort of let it pass and whatever happened to him happened to him and...I feel a little bit embarrassed about it but we were all so young” (P13). Another participant shared, “At that point I was definitely more of the just kind of hide or pretend to be White...I wouldn’t laugh but I wouldn’t say anything either. I would just kind of keep my mouth shut I guess” (P3). The numerous stories shared about hearing ‘Indian jokes’ in the interviews, especially by those who minimized their Métis or Indigenous ancestry, were perceived consistently as hostile yet many of the participants did not confront this racial hostility. Intentionally or not, the failure to confront racist jokes increased the participants’ access to White disposition rights.

Status and Reputation Rights

Status and reputation rights, derived from the property value of Whiteness as discussed in chapter three, were also identified in the participants’ counter-stories. Status and reputation rights are granted to those who are identified as white through the process of granting increased social status and reputation to White individuals who participate in the same social practices as those constructed as non-White. Increased status and reputation rights are also granted to spaces deemed as White and where White people congregate. In terms of social practices, most of the participants recognized that, ‘The non-Aboriginal kids could get away with more’ (P8). For instance, two participants, one male who has darker skin but also had some disposition rights and one female who can pass as White, chose to physically fight students who attacked them with racial slurs. Status and reputation rights were evident in these stories as the participants remembered being punished less harshly than visibly Indigenous students or Indigenous students who lacked disposition rights. One participant shared, “You know, I had buddies who are the same age as me but they were darker and so got kicked out of schools for getting into fights yet I got into fights and I was still in that school” (P11). In this way, the social practice of fighting did not diminish the participants’ reputation to the same extent as other Indigenous students nor lead to the same consequences. This same participant also remembered how White students felt entitled to intimidate and physically harm Indigenous students and that this act of racial hostility did not diminish their social status or reputation:

If two people got into a fight and they were both Ukrainian there was nothing ever said about it but if there was somebody who was fighting an Indian it was, “oh let’s

kill that fuckin Indian or, let's go fight that Indian" or you know. There was a lot of fights in high school and I remember hearing or seeing things like that. (P11)

This story demonstrates how status and reputation rights in K-12 schools enabled White students to racially harass and target Indigenous students without being expelled or socially ostracized.

Status and reputation rights granted to White students were identified in the data as materializing primarily in high school but began to be applied to students in elementary school. For instance, several participants talked about their White elementary teachers and students who often assumed Indigenous students were responsible for missing classroom items presumed to be stolen. As one participant explained:

I can remember seeing certain kids, they were always the 'naughty ones.' They were always the ones in trouble, I remember that. It would be...I remember him, oh that kid again, you know that little rascal and it was always, he was always mischievous and if anything happened in the class it was always his fault. (P6)

The counter-stories shared indicate that status and reputation rights disproportionally and unjustly constructed Indigenous students as 'bad' students beginning in elementary school. As a result of decreased status and reputation rights, such students, including some of the participants, were often streamed into modified programs or provided substandard instruction from teachers. For example, one participant remembers: "I saw a very high number of the darker complexion Aboriginal students in the resource room being identified as the slow learner or needing the resource or extra support" (P11). Another participant recalled:

I definitely felt like the teachers expected less of [visible Indigenous students]. It was like it was expected that they would not do as well in class. Other people expected them to not do as well. They were treated differently by the other students and by the teachers. I think the expectations were lower and probably, not just academically, but they had certain expectations about their families and their parents. (P10)

At an early age many of the participants recognized Indigenous students and their parents and families were perceived regularly by teachers as incapable of behaving in school and of achieving academic success. The participants' memories of low expectations for Indigenous students reflects how White students and families are afforded a type of reputation and status right within K-12 schools that is not always granted to Indigenous students and families.

Use and Enjoyment Rights

As discussed in chapter three, use and enjoyment rights are granted to those who are holders of White property. Use and enjoyment White property rights are similar to one's right to use and enjoy other types of property free from disturbance. In this way, White property use and enjoyment rights work to ensure White individuals can use and enjoy their Whiteness as they please. Use and enjoyment rights ensure White individuals can 'use and enjoy' institutions, social spaces, and citizenship rights freely and without disturbance. In this way, use and enjoyment rights are connected to status and reputation rights as the former set of rights lead to advanced abilities to use and enjoy White spaces.

Use and enjoyment White property rights were found to operate in K-12 schools through an analysis of the data. For example, intersectional oppression was identified as leading to use and enjoyment rights for White students as the following counter-story demonstrates:

My mom taught us how to sew using a needle, and with hand soap and sewing machines when we got older. I was sewing little doll outfits for broken dolls that were in the garbage because we didn't have money to buy them. And I remember I was very anxious and I didn't tell anybody but I was very, very anxious because, I knew it was going to be my row that had 'show and tell' that week and I kept on wondering what I was going to bring. Because everybody else had brand new stuff they would buy and they would go up and do this great big show about these great things that they got from town. So, I dressed up a little doll's head with moss and grass and sticks and I put arms in the dolls head so it wouldn't fall out and I made the doll's head to look like it was brand new. I sewed a little green velvet moss dress over this little girl and I brought it to school and I told them that it was my doll that I bought from town. And, the teacher said "You go sit down, you are nothing but a liar." And I was so embarrassed and I just didn't know how to hold back the tears but I had to because I had to sit quietly in my row all the time. And I said to myself, I am going to do so well in school and I am going to leave this town. So I did, I aced everything. (P2)

This story provides an example of how the intersection of race and class oppression limited a participant's ability to enjoy and use school as a grade three student. Although a poor White child may have had the same experience of scarce resources, being a poor Indigenous child likely

led to this hostile experience. Drawing from the property value of Whiteness theory, a White child who lived in poverty would have had status and reputation rights which the participant lacked. For example, rather than accuse the participant of being ‘nothing but a liar,’ echoing historical racist discourse used to construct Indigenous peoples as morally inferior to White people, the teacher may have had more empathy had the participant been a poor White student.

Some participants also described stations that suggest social segregation instilled barriers to full participation in the academic and social aspects of K-12 schools. For example, a male participant who is visibly Indigenous recognized the racial divisions at his high school and how these affected his social relationships and involvement in school activities and clubs. He said:

Definitely knew the divisions between White and dark...Never really got involved in anything because I just didn't feel, it's not that I didn't feel it was my right, but I just didn't feel comfortable getting involved in the things that they, the committees, have in high school for students...I did the minimum just because if I didn't feel like I belonged in elementary school or if I felt a little bit different, I definitely felt like I didn't belong in high school. (P)

In this story, the participant recognized that the right use and enjoy extra-curricular opportunities was reserved primarily for White students and those who can claim disposition rights.

In addition, and as discussed previously, many participants remembered school environments infused with anti-Indigenous rhetoric including racist jokes, which limited their ability to use and enjoy engagement in K-12 learning. For instance, one participant who looks White shared, “Definitely all the way through elementary school, jokes about lazy Indians and that kind of thing I would hear from time to time” (P3). Several participants also remembered receiving substandard education while often blaming themselves for their poor academic progress. This process occurred regardless of skin colour but was predominantly shared by participants who identified publically as Métis and came from lower-class families. One participant shared:

I always had a great relationship with my teachers but I didn't have somebody along the way to help me with my literacy. I was very far behind. I can remember my mom had to read me books and I would cry because I couldn't read. People would say maybe she should be held back. But I could never read or write, I was never a good writer and it wasn't until [after high school] that I got the help I needed. (P6)

This story is interesting as it reflects Marx's (2008) finding that popular teachers of Latina/o students often care outwardly about students and have positive relationships with students while holding deficit views that prevent such teachers from providing quality instruction. Using the theory of use and enjoyment White property rights, it can be argued that the participant didn't receive the instruction she needed to learn how to read until she attended SUNTEP. Barriers to use and enjoy schools because of teachers' low expectations for and a lack of quality instruction provided to Indigenous students was apparent in several of the interviews. Another female participant shared:

I never have felt like I am smart. I still have huge anxieties about that. I can be a good principal, but I don't feel smart in school. I don't know if that has anything to do with, I don't know what that has to do with, I don't know. I didn't get bad marks in [K-12] school but I didn't get good marks and I really had to work hard to get where I was and so no, I don't feel smart when it comes to school at all. (P9)

In the case of this study with Métis teachers, it can be argued that the condition of not feeling smart in high school regardless of the grades one earns, is an outcome of reserving use and enjoyment rights for students who identify or are identified as White. This process, however, seemed to affect female students from lower socio-economic statuses regardless of skin tone, but particularly for those who also identified openly as Indigenous. This finding suggests that rights to use and enjoy K-12 schools as valuable and empowering places of learning are not distributed evenly according to White skin tone as intersectional oppression—in this case, race, gender, and class oppression—played a significant role in who was granted use and enjoyment rights.

Another use and enjoyment right identified in the participants' counter-stories included barriers encountered as high school students when considering post-secondary education opportunities. For example, one participant who is visibly White and lived in an affluent neighborhood, remembered a guidance counsellor providing incorrect information about prerequisite classes needed to attend university:

I called my counselor over and said that we talked about this earlier in the year and you said I didn't have to do this and he didn't really have time for me. He just kind of shrugged his shoulders a little bit and walked away. And I was really disappointed with that and so basically I couldn't get into university. (P13)

It is unlikely this unprofessional behavior would have occurred had the participant identified as White as White students are granted the right to use and enjoy academic counsellors in empowering ways. As discussed earlier, similar situations were identified in several interviews as participants left high school feeling unintelligent or without the prerequisites needed to attend post-secondary institutions. In fact, many interviews highlighted how participants became teachers because they were encouraged to attend SUNTEP by Métis family members and others. None of the participants were told about SUNTEP while they were high school students. The K-12 high schools they attended did not provide information about Métis post-secondary education programs as one participant stressed: “I mean I didn’t know anything about SUNTEP in high school. Nobody ever told me about SUNTEP in high school” (P9). In this way, the right to use and enjoy knowledge regarding K-12 prerequisites for post-secondary programs and programs developed for Métis students, was not granted to many of the participants.

The right to use and enjoy schools with teachers of a similar racialized identity was also reserved for White students according to the interviews as few participants had any Indigenous teachers. Yet, all of the participants stressed why being taught by Métis teachers as well as other self-identifying Indigenous teachers would have enhanced their learning experiences. As one participant explained:

My two Aboriginal teachers were [names] and then the other one and that is all. That was it, those were the only two school-related role models I ever had. I don’t think I really had a super awesome relationship with a teacher except for with [Métis teacher]. I just loved her and I think that she made me feel better in her class. (P9)

Indigenous teachers who were hired, however, also experienced reduced use and enjoyment rights to teach as a result of status and reputation rights used to preserve the Whiteness of schools. This participant shared a story about an elementary Indigenous teacher, “I can still remember when we got our first Aboriginal teacher. The way the parents talked was pretty horrific. There was a lot of backlash from parents. I remember that was the first visible Aboriginal teacher and he had the class from hell” (P6). For some participants, use and enjoyment rights also took place through how their parents felt when visiting their school. In this case, Métis students’ parents’ right to use and enjoy schools is not always granted to visibly Indigenous parents as this participant shared:

My parents never got involved period, probably because they had such a limited bad experience. I remember my mom would not even come to parent/teacher interviews. I had to force my mom to come to my grade eight grad...I mean that was the biggest thing is I think they just didn't feel like they belonged. (P7)

Use and enjoyment rights operated in the K-12 provincial Saskatchewan schools attended by the participants through multiple ways and were also reflected in status and reputation rights granted to K-12 students who identified as White. An increase in status and reputation permitted and led to increased right to use and enjoy schools. Together, and including disposition rights which reward individuals who conform to perceived White norms, the first three rights identified authorize the absolute right to exclude as highlighted in the following section.

Absolute Right to Exclude

The final right derived from the property value of Whiteness as theorized by Harris (1993), is the absolute right to exclude. The absolute right to exclude is just as it sounds as it consists of the absolute right of White people to exclude the culture, knowledge, history, and perspectives of non-White people and the people themselves at their whim. The absolute right to exclude was identified in the participants' counter-stories as operating in K-12 schools in several powerful ways. For instance, overall, participants recognized from an early age that Indigenous students with darker skin were socially excluded from White normative spaces. All of the participants, regardless of skin tone, could remember visible Indigenous students being excluded from social groups. For example, one participant noted a memory from elementary school: "It was a small school but they [visibly Indigenous students] were often excluded. They didn't fit in in the same way" (P10). Another participant shared a story about a First Nations boy in her grade two class who was teased and excluded by White students:

I think kids made the connection between his behavior and his skin colour without being able to actually verbalize it. I think it is just put in your head to connect those two things and at that age I don't think we had the terminology to say it but definitely he was made to be the outcast because of that connection. (P5)

In this case, status and reputation rights which were denied to the student in the story above, enabled White children to exclude Indigenous students from social circles. Similarly, another participant observed how First Nations and White students were segregated at recess and other social activities: "I remember they wouldn't be included in a lot, even at recess they would be

sort of by themselves” (P7). At the same time, this same participant didn’t necessarily understand why the social segregation occurred as an elementary student, as he stated: “I remember knowing there was something about us that was different in elementary school. I couldn’t pinpoint what. I remember my younger sister crying because she was teased” (P7). Many participants, regardless of skin tone, were also excluded from White social spaces in schools. For instance, participants who look White and those who look more Indigenous remember being invited to friends’ homes only to be disinvited once the participants’ racial identities were made known to their friends’ parents. One visibly Indigenous participant explained, “Some of the kids wanted to be my friend but they were told by their parents that they couldn’t be” (P2). Similarly, the following participant who looks White but has a father who is visibly Indigenous, shared this story from elementary school, “You would have your new little friend in the new small town where everybody is White and you are hanging out with your new little friends and then the next thing you know, you are not allowed to go to somebody’s house anymore and you are like, was that because you met my dad?” (P10). This story is interesting as the participant knew instinctively to question if her social exclusion was the result of having a visibly Indigenous father. Another participant remembers White friends who were not allowed to befriend First Nations students: “I do believe that those [First Nations] girls were judged more than I was and I think they were awesome. They were just like anybody else to us and I think the parents were the ones making an issue out of it not necessarily the kids” (P9). In each case, K-12 students were excluded by White students who were granted the absolute right to exclude and this was preserved by the school system.

Participants also spoke about the exclusion of Indigenous, anti-colonial, and anti-racist content and perspectives during their K-12 experiences. With the exception of one participant who demonstrated a lack of racial consciousness, participants overwhelmingly recalled receiving little or no content about Indigenous peoples and knowledge systems nor did they learn about systems of patriarchal colonial oppression, racism or White supremacy. Furthermore, the Indigenous content that was taught by some teachers, especially the few Indigenous teachers, rarely focussed on Métis peoples. For example, the memory shared below reflects a common theme in the interviews: “There wasn’t much of a Métis focus in Native Studies in high schools. I have worked at Wanuskewin as well [and] it is very Cree-centric” (P6). When asked if Métis perspectives were included in her K-12 education another participant did say yes but then

explained: “Yes, about Louis Riel the traitor. See that was back when you know words like savage were very prominent in textbooks and things like that and Louis Riel was a traitor and so the slant on the history was very European” (P8).

For some participants, connections between school content and Indigenous peoples came through indirect inferences and not direct teacher instruction. For example, one participant explained: “I do recall something when I was in about grade 6 or 7 and we did this outdoor cooking; it was sort of like an outdoor education with our principal. We went snowshoeing, we cooked out in the open fire, and things like that, I sort of felt that I identified with. But, I don’t recall anything specifically being taught about First Nation or Métis in the schools” (P11). Other memories were of very superficial racist and dehumanizing representations of Indigenous peoples:

When I was in school that is when they used the term Indian because I remember in elementary school, I cannot remember what grade it was, how the alphabet, they had the alphabet on the wall. It was like, I do remember that ‘I’ is and they had a picture of a fully dressed, headdress and you know and it did, it said Indian on there. (P7)

For some participants, the limited amount of Indigenous content worked to construct their own sense of racial identity as many of the participants’ families did not identify as Métis. For instance: “I had an Aboriginal teacher in grade 4 and we sang this song in Cree and then I remember thinking, “I think I am Cree or I think I am something”” (P9). In addition, the ability to take Native Studies, for most participants, was also not offered while in K-12 education: “I don’t remember, not in the curriculum, I don’t remember any of it...so that would have been in 2011 was the first time they offered Native Studies” (P1). While some participants did learn about Indigenous history, this was not presented through an anti-racist/colonial perspective as described here: “We watched a video on the Beothuk and their extinction and we had to answer a question, was it genocide? And, that started my thinking. I didn’t have the word colonization. I didn’t have that knowledge yet but it started my thinking that there was some injustice inflicted on people when Europeans started to come over” (P5).

In addition to the right to exclude Indigenous and anti-racist content in schools, the participants’ counter-stories also reflected White administrators right to exclude Indigenous teachers from employment in K-12 school. All of the participants reported having very few, or no, Indigenous teachers when attending elementary and high school. As one of the older

participants in the study who graduated in the late 1980s shared, no identifiable Indigenous school staff were employed at the schools he attended including custodial employees. Participants who graduated from high school nearly twenty years later reported having perhaps only one or two teachers who were visibly Indigenous or who openly identified as Indigenous. As one participant said, “Actually I don’t ever once remember having an Aboriginal teacher, I really don’t” (P7).

Post-Secondary Teacher Education Counter-Stories

This section of chapter four features the participants’ post-secondary teacher education program counter-stories that contribute to answering the research question: *Using a CRT analysis, what can Métis teachers’ racialized experiential knowledge reveal about how racism operates in K-12 schools?* All of the participants attended teacher education programs delivered through Saskatchewan universities and ten attended SUNTEP programs. Questions about the participants’ post-secondary teacher education programs were asked to better understand the context in which the participants experienced and witnessed racism as practicing teachers. Furthermore, learning about how teacher education programs prepare Métis teachers to identify and challenge racism in K-12 education or, conversely, reproduce racism in K-12 education is helpful to this study as this knowledge can complicate and expand anti-racist educational theory from Métis mixed racialization perspectives. In addition, little is known about the racialized experiences of Métis teacher candidates in teacher education programs as anti-racist scholarship has focussed primarily on White teacher candidates (see Jupp, Berry & Lensmire, 2016). This section therefore contributes to documenting the experiences of Métis teacher candidates from the 1980s until the early 2010s when the participants completed post-secondary teacher education programs. The participants’ counter-stories presented in this section have been organized according to two CRT theories as described in chapter three: anti-colonial (revisionist) history and essentialist racism.

Revisionist History: Anti-Colonial Interpretations

Although the SUNTEP graduates reported a lack of direct anti-racist education, they each talked about the impact of learning Métis history, which the participants who did not attend SUNTEP were not offered through their teacher education programs. For the SUNTEP students, revisionist or anti-colonial history, as discussed in chapter three, was experienced through introductions to anti-colonial interpretations that served to reveal how racism has operated in

Saskatchewan and affected their families' experiences. Anti-colonial interpretations of history, and coming to understand a more accurate and humanizing version of Métis experiences further demonstrates how racism has operated in K-12 schools through the absolute right to exclude as none of the participants were taught about Métis history in detail while attending K-12 schools.

Significantly, anti-colonial Métis history enabled many participants who attended SUNTEP to begin to understand and recognize racialization processes. As one participant explained:

I think that is where I really started to learn where some of the stereotypes came from and I really started to learn a lot more about myself and the history and I felt some of that anger that I had, it was subsiding, and I could now articulate to other people why things were happening rather than become defensive about it. (P11)

The participants' counter-stories indicate that learning about Métis history and rights heightened the racial consciousness of most of the participants who attended SUNTEP and led to an ability to question and understand how colonialism is reproduced. Another participant shared:

Really, when I look back at it now, it was SUNTEP that really pushed me to recognize who I am, where I belong, how I fit into this colonial world because then it all started making sense and you can start. That is where I started to decolonize myself really because my parents and, well most people want to just be a status quo Canadian family. That is what we are taught to desire right? So if you can pass and fit in for that then most do, lots of people do. (P1)

Like the previous quotation, the story above reflects the K-12 education system's failure to teach Métis history through an anti-colonial perspective to Métis and all Saskatchewan students. For example, all of the SUNTEP students told stories about learning valuable knowledge concerning their family history for the first time as this knowledge was not discussed as K-12 students.

In another way, some of the participants for the first time started to recognize how they grew up with Métis cultural practices and traditions but did not recognize this until attending SUNTEP. As one participant shared, "I guess one of the things I didn't realize was that little things like the food, the fiddle...okay that is Métis. You know, I never realized all the connections and how much I lived it" (P6). Such counter-stories highlight how government processes and policies have institutionalized and forced many Métis families to practice a 'sanitized' Métis culture for many families, making culture invisible and not identified as such. For instance, learning about traditional Métis parenting practices assisted one participant with

identifying how her father raised her according to Métis values. Another participant echoed this understanding: “So, the twenty of us would have our head up really, really proud that we started recognizing that we were a people and that the things we did at home was actually a culture” (P2). In addition, participants felt validated as Métis in SUNTEP, which they did not experience while attending K-12 schools. One participant was taught that Métis are, “Not something to be frowned upon or, it was actually something that was part of a people. You know, a certain group that came together years ago. But, I never had an opportunity to learn any of that until I went to university” (P2). Finally, most participants also shared stories about learning from other students who identified openly as Métis for the first time while attending SUNTEP. Anti-colonial historical learning often took place through listening to Métis teacher candidates’ stories and identifying common experiences of racialization. As this participant shared, “I didn’t really learn any of that until I was in SUNTEP and took Native Studies courses and just spent time with other Métis and non-status Aboriginal people” (P3).

The three participants who did not attend SUNTEP were not provided with education concerning anti-colonial Métis history but were offered anti-racist education which was not provided while they attended K-12 schools but contributed to anti-colonial accounts of Canadian nation building. This knowledge assisted the participants with understanding how racialization processes affected their families as well and also provided valuable knowledge concerning Whiteness and the role of race in Canadian history. This knowledge enabled the participants to begin to understand how racialization processes continue through society and the education system. For instance, one participant shared:

I think it is just through my education in university. I didn’t have exposure to the terminology or the language of racism in high school or even through Native Studies classes. Now, looking back on certain events I can analyze them differently and maybe it is all speculation but I think using the theory it definitely, you can understand things differently and bring in that critical sociological element. (P5)

In general, the participants’ counter-stories regarding their post-secondary teacher education suggest that anti-colonial history played an important role in advancing their racial consciousness as this knowledge was not offered through the K-12 education system.

Essentialist Racism

Essentialist racism was identified in many of the participants' counter-stories regarding their experiences attending post-secondary teacher education programs. Discussed in chapter three, essentialism consists of a set of beliefs and practices that assume individual traits, abilities, and characteristics are biologically determined and shaped according to identity constructs such as race and gender. In particular, cultural essentialism was highlighted in many of the counter-stories. Cultural essentialism consists of a set of ideas and practices that accept one must look a certain way, practice certain cultural traditions, speak ancestral languages, and hold specific beliefs to be 'real' or biologically authentic in one's claim to an Indigenous or other racially oppressed identity (Grillo, 2003). Cultural essentialism is connected to essentialism but differs in that it is not often applied to the dominant population such as gender and race-based essentialism. For example, race-based essentialism assumes White and non-White individuals are born with predetermined abilities. Cultural essentialism, however, is not applied to White people in the same way. For instance, White people are considered 'authentic' regardless of language, traditions, or norms. Race-based and cultural essentialism, however, are both racialization strategies influenced equally by racial purity theories first theorized in the 1700s by racial scientists as discussed in chapter one.

It can be argued that a lack of anti-racism education provided to the SUNTEP graduates contributed to a certain degree of cultural essentialism in spite of the anti-colonial history they were taught. As highlighted in the previous section, the SUNTEP graduates were not offered the same anti-racism education, or anti-oppressive education from a similar framework, as the participants who did not attend SUNTEP. One participant explained:

A lot of the education I received at SUNTEP, we didn't really talk about race or racism and those kinds of things so it wasn't something that I was aware of...I hadn't experienced a lot of racism directed toward me as a person at that point and I was kind of ignorant about that side of things I think when I started teaching. (P3)

Another SUNTEP graduate shared bluntly: "SUNTEP didn't have anything having to do with anti-racist education. I didn't learn about it until I started going through my masters" (P7). One participant assumed that SUNTEP students were not taught about racism because "the individual who was teaching the class assumed we all knew about racism" (P4). In other words, the

instructor relied on essentialist notions of racial identity by assuming Métis teacher candidates must understand racism because they have experienced it.

The lack of anti-racist education offered to SUNTEP students was found to contribute in some ways to essentialist beliefs about Métis identities. For example, one participant shared: “All during high school, probably too, probably up until I hit university and started going through SUNTEP, I was probably quite ignorant to who Métis were. I was probably quite ignorant because I didn’t grow up like that” (P7). The idea that knowing one is Métis or being able to identify someone as Métis means individuals must grow up ‘like that’ or in a certain way according to specific traditional norms, is grounded in essentialism. Although often touted as a source of pride, essentialist beliefs about Métis identities can be connected to historical racialization processes which colonial authorities used to determine who is authentic and who is not or who has access to citizenship, Treaty and other rights. Another participant shared:

I don’t think we were mean to each other about any of that [who is an authentic Métis] but I think through our personal stories of talking in class and discussions you knew who grew up knowing who they were and who grew up not really knowing who they are. And, I have to say, the majority of my friends when I think about them and people I went to university with we knew we were different, we have boulettes, we had bannock, we jigged, we had this, but we didn’t really know. You know what I mean, we didn’t really, really, really know until we went to SUNTEP. (P9)

In this way, Métis identity is associated with boulettes, bannock, and jigging rather than common experiences of racialization. It can be argued that ‘feeling different’ is an outcome of racialization processes all Métis must endure, regardless of cultural practices.

While sharing common Métis traditions with others who did not know they were Métis is an empowering experience, associating feelings of difference with knowing or not knowing cultural traditions, rather than racialization processes, contributes to essentialism. As this participant explained:

I’m challenging their concept of what it is to be Métis because I am not wearing a sash, I am not jigging, I am not making bannock, I don’t speak Michif fluently...being Métis doesn’t have to be about being a certain way. There is more than just that small portion of Métis identity. (P4)

Not all Métis practice traditional Métis culture for various reasons, which are often rooted in historical systems of racial oppression. In addition, as expressed in the quotation above, it is problematic to limit who can identify as Métis according to traditional cultural standards.

Essentialism was also reported as experienced through verbal assaults that questioned the participants' Métis authenticity. For example, one visibly White participant who attended SUNTEP discussed an experience with essentialism from visibly Métis peoples:

They were doing the definition of Métis and they had a huge AGM and I remember going down to speak on behalf of students. We went down as SUNTEP and somebody told me to sit my White ass down at a Métis event. I was standing at the mic saying something about students and somebody said to sit my White ass down.

(P6)

Another participant was told by other Métis, "You are not really a true Métis, you are just a wanna be" (P4). In such cases, the participants were racialized as White through essentialist beliefs concerning racial purity that insist individuals who look White cannot be Indigenous. This racial hostility expressed by visibly Métis individuals demonstrates how Indigenous peoples mobilize racist thinking and invoke constructions of White supremacy, which are dependent on beliefs in racial purity, against each other. Essentialism was also experienced by a visibly White SUNTEP graduate who remembered:

I could hear [SUNTEP staff] through the door because back then I had been married before and divorced so my first married name was [name] and I could hear him through the door saying, "What kind of an Indian name is that?" (P8)

In this way, looking 'too White' and having a 'White-sounding' name led to overheard private accusations of inauthenticity within SUNTEP. Whether through private conversations or public accusations, essentialist expectations that all Métis will look Indigenous or have dark skin and hair, will have traditional Métis names, and will practice Métis cultural traditions is informed by racist ideology. Such ideology works to preserve racial boundaries within systems of White colonial oppression and this process protects and reinforces White property rights.

Another participant who did not attend SUNTEP shared stories about experiencing essentialism while attending the mandated anti-racism course with primarily White teacher candidates. This participant endured essentialist discussions about who is a 'real' Métis, saying:

In Education when you take all of those classes about ethics and identity and racism and anti-racism and deconstructionism, I remember discussions about who is Métis. And there are some people who think there is capital 'M' Métis and small 'm' Métis and there are Red River Métis and if you are from the East you are not even really Métis, you are just something else. (P10)

The same participant, who is visibly White, spoke about another memory from the anti-racism course. She asked her White professor if she should disclose her identity as a Métis person when hearing White friends make racist statements about Indigenous peoples. Described below, she asked:

What do you do when you are a person who passes for White and have had situations at various work places or social situations where someone is being racist and talking about Indians? When I say something like, you are being super harsh, don't be so racist, that is really small minded, they say, there are none of them here. Then I personally have that dilemma. Do I say, well actually I am Métis and you are insulting me? (P10)

And so what did the professor say when you asked about that? (CG)

I didn't actually feel like I got an answer. But for the other part about identifying, she talked a bit more about that, that aspect of it, that I should identify as Métis if I want to and be involved in the community. And, people should judge you by who you are and your works and your attitude and your words, not by what you look like. (P10)

This passage points to how the professor used colour-blind ideology to assert essentialist ideas about what it means to be Métis. For example, the idea that what one looks like plays no role in identity formation contributes to colour-blind ideology and therefore led to the essentialist belief that the participant must reach out to a Métis community to be authentic. Moreover, this essentialist assumption enabled the professor to avoid answering the initial question. This finding mirrors Lewis' (2001) study which found White teachers claim not to see race even when presented with students' testimonies. The story emphasizes how essentialism can surface in anti-racism education courses and lead to colour-blind responses to Métis students' testimonies. While the participant found the course empowering, because her positioning as a visibly White Métis was not considered in the course, she was also frustrated. This participant

also shared a story about another visibly White Métis teacher who had a very strong sense of Métis cultural identity and was considered a ‘big M’ Métis:

She had a really positive self-image of herself and her Métisness but she was struggling when these kind of classes came along and there is the [White] privilege...She was struggling with that too and she felt like, “What am I supposed to do?” (P10)

Both teacher candidates left the course feeling confused about how their Métis identity and White privilege can co-exist as a result of essentialist beliefs about race that foreground racial purity and minimize mixed-racialization identity constructs.

Essentialism was also exemplified through stories from the three participants who took the anti-racism course and felt their Whiteness made them less Métis as shared in this story:

Oh, definitely felt that, what I am, how do I fit this, how can I be so White and move through all of these circles with ease and not be judged ever and still say I am Métis?

That was always, that was hard. That was actually a hard one for a long time. (P12)

In general, the participants struggled with the common anti-racism message that insists there is an absolute disconnect between being racialized as Indigenous and having access to White privilege. That is, discussions about White privilege in the anti-racism course did not include analyses of mixed-racialization processes and how these continue to affect Métis in Saskatchewan. The idea that one must either be White and be racist towards Indigenous peoples or be Indigenous and be a victim of racism, from the mixed-racialized perspective of Métis, serves to reaffirm essentialist discourse that promotes a false racialized binary in which many Métis cannot fit. Whether visibly Indigenous or White, the mixed ancestry of Métis complicates binary racial constructs used purposely to preserve the White property value of White people. As people who have been forced to pass as White to gain White property rights or suffer from varying degrees of racial persecution, the idea that Métis who look White cannot experience racism is false and causes confusion for those who are taught this lesson in anti-racism courses. Although the experiences of visibly White Métis differs profoundly from those who are visibly Indigenous, this research complicates essentialist anti-racist premises by arguing Métis experience varying degrees of racism based on appearance and intersections with class but also simply based on their racialized identities regardless of appearance and class. Furthermore, one can be Métis and have access to

White privileges, yet this lesson was found to be missing in the post-secondary teacher education the participants received.

Essentialism was also experienced by the SUNTEP teacher candidates through deficit perceptions about their academic abilities. Many of the visibly White participants experienced overt racism or felt racism more acutely while attending SUNTEP, as they had passed as White while attending K-12 schools. One participant shared:

Even when we were with the mainstream classes, the frustration was unreal because we were looked at completely differently. People talk and I think still to this day think SUNTEP is a joke and that we don't do anything and kind of, you know what I mean. It is just constant and people do look at us differently. (P9)

Some of the SUNTEP students who had passed as White prior to attending SUNTEP were for the first time identified overtly as Métis through associations with SUNTEP and consequently experienced institutionalized racism which diminished the White property rights they had previously carried. Essentialist racism, then, was experienced by many of the participants for the first time as some instructors and university students held essentialist assumptions grounded in deficit racism about Métis teacher candidates. Such assumptions included the structural beliefs that Métis teacher candidates did not receive a rigorous K-12 education, lack intellectual abilities, and were admitted to 'special' teacher education programs such as SUNTEP that are often perceived as marginalizing White teacher candidates who do not have access to these 'special programs.' Essentialist racism, however, was at times countered by SUNTEP instructors as shared here: "I had an opportunity to want to learn because somebody was giving me an opportunity to say, hey, you should be proud of who you are instead of feeling you shouldn't be taught" (P2).

Discussion

Chapter four's findings outlined how the participants experienced racism in multiple ways prior to becoming K-12 teachers in Saskatchewan provincial schools. In the following discussion, I use the CRT theory of structural determinism to demonstrate how the findings reveal various ways in which racially unjust K-12 academic outcomes are reproduced. In particular, I discuss the reproduction of Whiteness and implications for Saskatchewan K-12 education. This discussion will provide a context in which to understand the participants' racialized experiences as practicing teachers to be examined in chapter five.

Structural Determinism

Structural determinism can be used to analyze these findings through an “approach [that] replaces the who of Whiteness with those of how Whiteness operates” (Lavine-Rasky, 2000, p. 285). According to the theory of structural determinism, racist language and ideologies or discourse rationalize oppressive practices that lead to racialized social and material outcomes which then normalize the original racist discourse. Using structural determinism to examine the findings can assist with “exposing, demystifying, and demeaning, the particular ideology of Whiteness” (Roediger, 2000, p. 12) as it operates in K-12 schools. This process is necessary because “our system, by reason of its structure and vocabulary, is ill equipped to redress certain types of wrong” (Delgado & Stafancic, 1989, p. 31). As a result, institutional ideologies and practices “allow the current system to replicate itself” (Tate, 1997, p. 222) even through incentives meant to challenge oppression such as diversity, multi-cultural, and Indigenous education programs. Like all institutions founded within White supremacist societies, it is impossible to make substantial change through the existing system through laws and policies that do not interrupt and challenge the practices and ideologies of Whiteness. Legal scholar Harris (2002) explained “the important contributions of CRT derive from the recognition that law [education] does not merely reflect race as an external phenomenon; law [education] and legal [educational] doctrine constitute an ideological narrative about what race and racism are” (p. 1216). In this sense, the education system determines what knowledge counts as legitimate concerning how to define, and challenge, racism. When racism is not defined accurately or challenged effectively, I argue that such practices lead to the structural determinism of racialized K-12 outcomes. To support this argument, the following sections discuss the findings using the theory of structural determinism to examine how Whiteness is reproduced through K-12 schools and implications for racialized academic outcomes.

Reproduction of whiteness. One of CRT’s primary points of analysis is that the monumental American civil rights *Brown v. Board of Education* 1954 school desegregation federal ruling did not end institutionalized racism and informal segregation in American schools (Bell, 1980; Irvine, 1988; Leigh, 2003; Taeuber, 1990). In a similar way, since the mid-1900s, when Métis were first permitted to attend provincial schools, Saskatchewan Indigenous education policies have led to inequitable academic opportunities for Indigenous students and inconsistent systems of student integration. The findings presented in this chapter demonstrate how racism

has operated in K-12 schools through multiple interconnected and intergenerational ways that reproduce Whiteness. As the findings indicate, Métis K-12 students carry valuable knowledge acquired from witnessing and experiencing White passing strategies and colourism in private, social, and K-12 settings. That Métis and other mixed-race people have purposely passed as White to avoid racial persecution and have privileged unintentionally from colourism have been documented in research examining historical racialization phenomena in places founded on White supremacist ideologies and institutions (Mahtani, 2006; Root, 1996; Zack 1993; St, Denis, Bouvier, & Battiste, 1998; Richardson, 2006). This study expands on such research through a CRT analysis of Métis teachers' counter-stories. Using CRT, colourism and passing stories can be theorized as interrelated in that both are outcomes of the property value of Whiteness (Harris, 1993). Therefore, Métis who can pass as White or have lighter skin tones benefit from the property value of Whiteness in ways that more visibly Indigenous family and friends cannot. For example, participants witnessed oppressive practices where visibly Indigenous K-12 students were disciplined more harshly, sent to the resource room more often, excluded from social groups, and perceived by teachers as intellectually inferior when compared to Métis students who benefit from colourism or pass as White. Yet, at the same time, participants who benefit from colourism or can pass as White and may also experience intersectional oppression—particularly mixed-race, gender, and class oppression—also experienced low expectations and poor quality instruction from teachers. These students, although benefitting from Whiteness, also identified as Métis or were known to be Métis by educators for various reasons such as having a parent who is visibly Indigenous. In another case, one participant who identified as Métis but is visibly White and grew up in an affluent neighborhood was also not supported when attempting to apply to post-secondary institutions. Such findings complicate common approaches to anti-racism education that rely on binary understandings of race and emphasize a need for individuals who look White to accept and challenge White privilege without considering mixed racialization processes. Rather, as reflected in MRS literature (Christian, 2004) and found in this research, the property value of Whiteness is applied inconsistently to visibly White Métis students and teachers. How one is racialized as inferior through language and practices, then, regardless of skin colour, can in some ways create barriers to social and academic success in K-12 schools even for those who look White or privilege from colourism.

The findings also align with previous research demonstrating how Métis who can pass as

White and benefit from colourism must also often do so at a cost. Accessing varying degrees of White property rights has over generations harmed Métis peoples. As Richardson (2006) explained, “passing does not protect the individual from the internal wounds received by witnessing racism towards other Métis people, particularly other family members and loved ones” (p. 61). Furthermore, Richardson argued:

[L]ike many Métis who pass as white in the dominant culture, [Métis students] have had to sacrifice aspects of their cultural pride, or their right to be “who they are,” in order to access the same rights and privileges as other Canadians. Again, the difficult choice of accessing opportunity or risking the denial of that opportunity constitutes another form of the double bind. (p. 63)

Richardson uses the term ‘double bind’ to depict a lose/lose situation. According to the findings, the process of benefitting from White property rights as a Métis K-12 student leads to a double bind situation where students must hide who they are, minimize their identities, hide their darker family members, pretend to agree with racist jokes, befriend White social groups, or participate in racist discourse about their own family and ancestors to gain White acceptance and thus access to White property rights. Authorized by the absolute right to exclude, White students, teachers, and others including parents can exclude Métis students at their whim once a Métis student’s identity is made known regardless of the child’s skin tone. For instance, several visibly White participants discussed losing White friends once their ancestry was made known.

Ultimately, when Métis K-12 students pass as White or benefit from colourism such practices work to uphold the Whiteness of schools. For example, some participants who can pass as White but identified as Métis were pressured to conform to the perceived White norm of ‘behaving’ and not disrupting Whiteness during their internships. For instance, one participant was confronted by her supervising teacher when teaching a unit about residential schools:

I always go back to that lesson on residential schools where she told me, you need to start teaching the positive side, you can’t just teach the bad side, you have to be neutral, you have to teach the good and the bad. (P5)

Another participant shared stories about surviving a racially hostile school while completing her internship at a predominantly White school.

I had a good cooperating teacher but people were not friendly in that school at all. I never went into the staff room once, not one time. People were unfriendly and people

were not very helpful...it was an uncomfortable weird experience and I just worked and worked really hard to get through it...I think that that happens a lot. I think that people think, oh well you are from SUNTEP or ITEP well I don't want to take an intern from SUNTEP or ITEP. I think that happens a lot in fact I have heard it. (P9)

Another visibly White participant discussed how the privileges that come from being able to pass as White were diminished after identifying as Métis while employed as substitute teacher:

I got into one argument with one teacher at a school. It was pretty heated actually and I was never asked to go back there. It just happened to be that I was challenging what he was saying in the staff room. (P4)

To be clear, while passing and colourism can absolutely grant Métis K-12 students, school staff, and families carefully regulated White property rights not provided to more visibly Indigenous students, these practices also preserve the absolute property value of White individuals who have inherited the overwhelming majority of institutionalized power in Saskatchewan K-12 schools. Consequently, it can be argued that Métis K-12 students, school staff, and families who have access to White property rights are exploited to maintain a racialized border which upholds racial divisions of inferiority and White superiority.

In addition, disposition rights can be held in limited ways by visibly Indigenous Métis K-12 students and other students of colour who are rewarded for conforming to perceived White norms and cultural practices (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). For example, the research found that visibly Indigenous Métis students are granted disposition rights when conforming to the perceived White norms of speaking standard English, playing sports, or excelling in academia. This process, however, again works ultimately to sustain the White property value of schools as disposition rights are foregrounded in constructions of White norms which are valued above all other representations of identity and meanings of success. In this way, disposition rights reinforce essentialism or ideology that insists members of 'pure' races are predisposed with common biological characteristics and abilities. For example, just as high school band and choir were identified as White spaces by one of the participants, Ladson-Billings (2005) found that school orchestras are often constructed as White activities due to the false belief that White students are naturally more inclined to participate in band. Through this line of reasoning, Indigenous students who excel in band are 'exceptions' and thus granted disposition rights without the full advantages that come from being a carrier of White property. For instance, while

Métis students might be encouraged to participate in cultural programs, those Métis students who choose to participate in activities constructed as 'White' are rewarded with disposition rights. This contradictory process is supported through essentialist discourse where it is assumed, for example, Métis students will prefer and excel in traditional Métis programming, which is constructed as sub-standard to White programming, rather than extra-curricular activities such as band which are constructed as a White and thus hold more esteemed status and reputations. As Lentin (2005) explained,

Thinking culturally about difference is the default position for not talking about 'race' and avoiding the charge of racism. But this very need for such a substitute covers up the fact that the hierarchy put in place by racism has been maintained. It no longer exists as blatant persecution. It is more ambivalent. It can continue precisely because it has been deleted from official discourse. The ultimate signal that it has been rejected is the fact that it has been replaced: 'benign' culture has taken over from virulent 'race.' Nevertheless, racism persists. (p. 394)

Consequently, schools often use culture as a reason to encourage K-12 students such as Métis to participate in programs that foreground what is sanctioned as acceptable Métis culture rather than White constructed extra-curricular activities such as band or subject areas such as math. If schools were to claim that Métis students are racially 'different' (i.e. inferior) rather than culturally different, and thus should be discouraged from joining band or excelling in math, essentialist racist practices, which maintain White supremacy, would lose their benign effect.

According to the findings, essentialist racism constructs Indigenous K-12 students as more cultural or culturally different and less intelligent and capable than White students. Such beliefs can then be used to rationalize K-12 education outcomes. Essentialist racism was found to construct Indigenous peoples as innately cultural, spiritual, and connected to the land, traditional knowledge systems, and languages. Such beliefs are oppressive when used to regulate 'authentic' Indigenous identities used to rationalize low Indigenous K-12 student outcomes blamed on cultural incompatibilities with Western education systems. In this way, essentialist racism was found to construct Indigenous students as one dimensional through fundamentalist ideology. For example, several participants spoke about 'authentic' Métis as those who practice traditional culture and are accepted by Métis communities. Such criteria can then be used to insinuate racial inequality is the result of Métis students who are assumed to have 'lost' or are

ashamed of their culture. Cultural authenticity standards, however, are not used to regulate White Canadian identities or explain low K-12 achievement of White students. Hence, to suggest White K-12 students struggle in school because they have lost or are ashamed of their ethnic culture would sound absurd. Yet, because essentialist discourse is institutionalized in White supremacist societies, such arguments applied to Indigenous and other racially oppressed populations appear to be sound arguments. Furthermore, racist ideologies and practices target Indigenous children, and children of colour, regardless of their cultural identities. Knowing and practicing one's cultural traditions and internalized cultural and racial pride cannot stop racism because racism occurs irrespective of racially oppressed people's identities. Arguing otherwise is akin to arguing Jewish people could have escaped the Holocaust had they displayed more cultural pride.

The findings indicate that essentialist practices began in K-12 schools through an absence of anti-racist education, a White-washed curriculum, a lack of Indigenous educators and administrators, and racialization processes, which lead to dehumanizing perspectives of Indigenous people. This process was then reinforced in post-secondary teacher education programs where participants were provided anti-colonial history or anti-racist education, but not both, and without examining mixed racialization processes, and were encouraged to identify with essentialist notions of culture. Essentialist practices, supported by disposition rights, are grounded in conceptions of White property and thus do not and cannot lead to equitable academic outcomes among Indigenous and White students. As Ladson-Billings argued (2006b), a majority of people perceive culture as "that exotic element possessed by "minorities." It is what it means to be nonwhite. It is also the convenient explanation for why some students cannot achieve success in the classroom" (p. 107). In this way, cultural education, whether perceived through an essentialist lens or not, can contribute to deficit racism where Indigenous student failure is constructed as a problem of cultural differences or Indigenous students' incompatibilities with K-12 schools' western epistemologies (St. Denis, 2009; 2011). Moreover, St. Denis (2004) argued, "Adherence to cultural revitalization encourages the valorization of cultural authenticity and cultural purity among Aboriginal people and has helped to produce the notion and the structure of a cultural hierarchy" (p. 37). As a result, Métis and all Indigenous students who conform to essentialist constructs of culture are only rewarded for practicing culture if they do so in ways that do not disrupt Whiteness. Such processes can also lead to and encourage identity politics and thus divisiveness and mistrust amongst Indigenous peoples who are concerned with

‘authentic’ Indigenous identities (St. Denis, 2007). Ultimately, essentialist identity politics serve to protect White property rights, which are preserved through K-12 schools and the education system through essentialist discourse. For instance, the idea that visibly White Métis teachers who did not identify while attending K-12 schools should feel ashamed for not identifying previously, which was alluded to in a few of the interviews, is a result of ahistorical understandings of racialization and identity politics, which are supported by essentialist racism.

The findings support research that has exposed how racism is tolerated and survived by students and teachers racialized as non-White and ignored, minimized, and justified on a regular basis by White teachers and administrators (Buehler, 2012; Lipman, 1997; McCreary, 2011; Ullucci, 2010). Maintained by White educators’ absolute right to exclude anti-racist education and anti-colonial interpretations of Saskatchewan history, participants told stories about racially hostile learning environments masked as neutral places of education. For instance, participants remembered not being taught how to respond to racial slurs, jokes, and insults about Indigenous peoples as told by students and school staff. None of the participants could remember school staff trying to interrupt racial hostility nor were the participants encouraged to develop friendships across racial lines. In addition, none of the participants were taught about racism or the history of Whiteness and racialization in accurate ways. The participants had no or few Indigenous teachers, and nearly all of the participants told stories about learning in classrooms that did not include or value Indigenous, but particularly Métis peoples’ knowledge, perspectives, contributions, accomplishments, history, or resistance to colonialism and White supremacy. None of the participants were told about SUNTEP when graduating and many left high school feeling intellectually incompetent.

It was also interesting to find that although some of the participants spoke about sexual orientation and ableist oppression, albeit in limited ways, none of the participants spoke directly about gender oppression as it is intertwined with race oppression. This absence could have resulted from the questions I asked, which focussed on race, or because gendered oppression is normalized in extreme ways. Using a CRT analysis, however, the finding also reflects Crenshaw’s (1991) intersectionality theory that argues racial oppression is often perceived through a one dimensional lens that minimizes how racism is connected with other systems of oppression. For instance, the stories of gendered oppression that were shared, such as being called a ‘dirty squaw,’ were conceived as racialized acts of oppression which White women and

girls do not experience. While this is true, by focussing on racism only, such stories fail to challenge how racism has been utilized to preserve White patriarchal systems. Furthermore, the participants who could pass as White were raised to be cautious when identifying as Métis. The fear to identify as Métis appears to have heightened the participants' racial consciousness, making an awareness of racism more pronounced than that of gendered oppression. From an early age, the participants were taught or heard stories about the need to minimize one's identity to avoid persecution, and witnessed visibly Indigenous individuals' subordinate status, regardless of gender. I also argue, as reflected in Saskatchewan K-12 racialized statistics to be discussed, that in some ways experiences of racial oppression have had more profound effects on the participants than experiences of gender oppression. The participants did not seek to 'pass as males' or to demonstrate 'male disposition rights' because it was recognized from a very early age that being a White female carries status and reputation rights, as well as use and enjoyment rights, that are denied to Indigenous males. Rather, the findings suggest that those who did pass as White did so to protect access to White property rights—granted to all White people regardless of gender, class, sexual orientation, or abilities—which stood to be lost by identifying as Métis.

Reflecting many of the participants' desire to pass as White or 'become someone else' while attending K-12 schools, the data reveals some of the ways in which Saskatchewan schools have structurally determined racialized academic and social K-12 outcomes. In particular, I argue that such outcomes have in many ways been predetermined through White property rights including the absolute right to exclude, which is fueled by status and reputation rights as well as use and enjoyment rights. Through such processes, White property rights have preserved informal and sometimes formal racial segregation in Saskatchewan schools, which can be understood more thoroughly through Lawrence's (1987) theory of unconscious racism. Referring to the American segregated school system, Lawrence explained:

Segregation was not a case of mutual separation but a system that one group imposed on another. Black points to its contextual association with other "indisputably and grossly" discriminatory practices such as exclusion for the vote, and to the manner in which segregation as a pattern of law often combined with extralegal patterns of discrimination. That "separate but equal" facilities were almost never really fully equal is evidence not just of the material inequality they imposed but also of the meaning of segregation to the people who imposed it. (pp. 362-363)

Lawrence further explained, “it is difficult, if not impossible to envision how a governmental decision maker might issue an order to segregate without intending, consciously or unconsciously, to injure blacks” (p. 363). In the same way, it is difficult if not impossible to envision how White teachers, administrators, and superintendents can permit informal or formal racial segregation in K-12 schools without intending, consciously or not, to exclude Indigenous students and uphold the superior status of Whites. For instance, the participants’ counter-stories indicate that school-based segregation has been institutionalized through policies such as racialized academic streaming and hiring practices, the everyday social interactions between students, and instructional interactions amongst Métis students and White educators. Given such findings, it is difficult to argue that schools have the best intentions for Indigenous students as such conditions, it can be argued, predetermine the educational outcomes of K-12 students.

Although this understanding may seem defeatist by some, through a CRT lens, such knowledge enables what Bell (1992b) called a “a bird's-eye view of situations that are distorted by race. From this broadened perspective on events and problems, we can better appreciate and cope with racial subordination” (p. 378) and envision “racial strategies that can bring fulfillment and even triumph” (p. 374). By better understanding how racism has operated in K-12 schools, teachers and others invested in K-12 education can counter the enduring Whiteness of schools more effectively. For instance, as discussed in the findings, the need to recall intergenerational counter-stories of Métis parents as often told through critical race parenting strategies serves to assist with understanding the broader patterns of systemic racism experienced by Métis families and how Saskatchewan schools have contributed to this oppression in direct and indirect ways. The findings also suggest how post-secondary teacher education programs reinforce structural determinism by rarely, if ever, foregrounding the intergenerational Métis counter-stories of resistance to White oppression and positioning such stories in the history of racialization and White supremacy which has shaped Saskatchewan. Nor have teacher education programs seemed to have learned from or contributed to the ways in which Métis parents and family members’ have responded to their children’s awareness of and direct confrontations with racism in schools and society. This study found that Métis children who know they are Indigenous, regardless of racial appearance and culture, arrive at K-12 schools with an ability to identify and interpret racism in ways that non-Indigenous students cannot. At an early age the participants demonstrated an ability to see and feel racism without necessarily understanding what they were

feeling. Learning from overt and subtle social cues and racialized experiences, such as those examined in this chapter, the participants were aware from a young age that Indigenous peoples hold subordinate social positions in Saskatchewan. From a CRT perspective, I argue the mixed-racial consciousness of the participants enabled an ability to see and feel what White students, teachers, and administrators often cannot recognize. This awareness, however, is rarely if ever used to interrupt racialized structural determinism as the participants as Métis people hold little power compared to White teachers, administrators, and superintendents who cannot see racism as easily yet have been granted overwhelming power to create institutional change. As Bell (1992b) argued, “Indeed, the very absence of visible signs of discrimination creates an atmosphere of racial neutrality that encourages Whites to believe that racism is a thing of the past” (p. 374).

Implications of racialization for K-12 schools. The findings presented in this chapter, as examined through the participants’ counter-stories, demonstrate various ways in which structural determinism has operated through Saskatchewan K-12 schools. As discussed in chapter one, White supremacist ideologies rationalized the colonization of Canada, enabling White colonials and settlers to feel entitled to Indigenous lands and resources (Francis, 1997; Willinsky, 1998). Identified in this chapter, such processes are not relegated to the past but continue through numerous overlapping processes of persecution and discriminatory policies that reproduce Indigenous peoples as subordinate within Canadian institutions and society (Razack, 2015; St. Denis, 2011). Although Indigenous scholars have argued education systems must confront racism and colonialism to intervene with the systemic racialized violence forced upon Indigenous children and youth, and to uphold treaty, land, human, and sovereignty rights (Battiste, 2000; Cannon, 2012; Green, 2009; St. Denis, 2007; 2011), these demands have often been dismissed or minimized within K-12 schools as reflected in the findings. For example, provincial responses to educational injustices were nearly non-existent in the late 1970s when nearly half of the participants first attended K-12 schools. More recently, although the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education [SME] has increased finances to support schools with Indigenous students and has implemented the 1990 K-12 Indigenous content integration mandate, the participants in this study, who attended Saskatchewan K-12 schools throughout the 1990s until the 2000s, received no or a tokenized version of Indigenous education.

As reflected in this part of the research, curricular mandates and the legal rights of Indigenous students and families have not led to racially just provincial graduation and academic

success rates for K-12 Indigenous students. While respecting the time, effort, and collaboration with Indigenous people in developing Saskatchewan Ministry First Nations and Métis education initiatives and policies over the last few decades, the lack of attention towards the education system's racialized practices has led to little change for Indigenous students. According to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (2010), 81.2% of non-Indigenous students entering grade ten in 2001 completed high school compared to 51.6% of Indigenous students. In addition, 26% of First Nations and Métis had completed post-secondary education in 2001 compared to 41% of the non-Indigenous population (SME, 2009). In 2013, it was stated by Education Minister Don Morgan that "overall [high school] graduation rates in Saskatchewan are at 74.8 per cent and [A]boriginal graduation rates at 37.4 per cent."¹² Recent statistics remain unchanged as 40.3% of Indigenous grade twelve students graduated in 2014 compared to 83.4% of non-Indigenous students (SME, 2014). Saskatchewan Ministry of Education statistics also point to the disturbing trend of 'losing'¹³ a disproportionate amount of First Nations and Métis students throughout the school year compared to non-Indigenous students. For example, 1.9% of non-Indigenous compared to 9.3% of First Nations and Métis students discontinued after September enrollment in the 2013-2014 provincial school year. In addition, grade level attainment statistics have been demonstrated according to subject areas such as English Language Arts. For example, the 2014-2015 Horizon School division #205 statistics show that 46.8% of Indigenous students are at or above grade three readings levels compared to 77.7% of non-Indigenous students.¹⁴ In the same year, Regina Public School Division #4 reported 46.8% of Indigenous students at or above grade three reading levels compared to 75% of non-Indigenous students.¹⁵ According to Statistics Canada, however, Métis students have higher grade twelve graduation rates than First Nations students, as:

In 2011, 42% of Aboriginal people aged 25 to 64 in Saskatchewan had a certificate, diploma or degree from a trade school, college or university: 38% of First Nations people and 49% of Métis. The comparable percentage for their non-Aboriginal

¹² See: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/saskatoon/2013/10/28/saskatchewan-government-wants-student-input-on-how-to-increase-graduation-rates.html> (Retrieved January 12, 2017)

¹³ The term 'lost' was used in a Ministry PowerPoint shared with me by a Superintendent of Education

¹⁴ See: <https://www.horizonsd.ca/Documents/HSD%202014-15%20AR%20%28Final%20for%20web%29.pdf> (Retrieved January 12, 2017)

¹⁵ See: http://www.rbe.sk.ca/sites/default/files/boarddocs/2014-15_annual_report.pdf (Retrieved January 12, 2017)

counterparts was 60%.¹⁶

Yet, simply obtaining a high school diploma has not lead to racial equity after graduating. For example, only 42.7% on-reserve First Nations high school graduates were able to find employment, 61.6% non-reserve First Nations high school graduates found employment, while 72.2% of Métis and 81.3% of the non-Indigenous population found employment after graduating from high school.¹⁷

Unlike Statistics Canada, Saskatchewan school divisions and the Ministry of Education do not disaggregate First Nations, Métis and Inuit statistics in public on-line sites, nor are non-Indigenous student statistics disaggregated by racial classifications. Yet, after contacting the Ministry of Education through email and given permission to share these statistics in my research, I was told:

- The provincial ‘on-time’ grad rate for 2015-16 for non-Indigenous students was 84.6 % and the provincial ‘extended-time’ [graduating within five years after starting grade ten] grad rate for 2015-16 for non-Indigenous students was 89.5 %
- The provincial ‘on-time’ grad rate for 2015-16 for Métis students was 57.1 % and the ‘extended-time’ grad rate for Métis students was 71.8 % per cent
- The provincial ‘on-time’ grad rate for 2015-16 for self-identified First Nations students was 36.7% and the provincial ‘extended-time’ grad rate for 2015-16 for self-identified First Nations students was 55.7 %

Interestingly, when I asked for Saskatchewan K-12 students of colour graduation rates, in order to understand differences in academic achievement amongst ‘non-Indigenous’ students, I was told the Ministry of Education does not collect race based statistics, pointing to a troubling lack of racial consciousness concerning Indigenous education statistics and how they are interpreted. Still, the statistics shared with me are valuable as they correlate with the findings presented in this chapter. Using a racially-conscious analysis, it can be argued a direct connection exists between the conditions of K-12 schools as emphasized directly and indirectly through the participants’ counter-stories and the racially unjust achievement ‘gap’ highlighted in statistics.

Ladson-Billings’ (2006) CRT ‘National Debt’ analogy is a helpful conceptual tool in which to understand this correlation between the findings presented in this chapter and Saskatchewan K-

¹⁶ See: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-656-x/89-656-x2016009-eng.htm> Retrieved January 12, 2016

¹⁷ Ibid

12 educational statistics. Ladson-Billings explained that a national deficit refers to the monetary shortfall for one budget cycle, whereas a national ‘debt’ refers to “the sum of all previously incurred annual federal deficits” (p. 4). In the case of racialized achievement inequities, Ladson-Billings argued “the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies” (p. 5) over the course of generations of White dominance have contributed to K-12 academic outcomes and thus, “[e]ach effort we make toward improving education is counter balanced by the ongoing and mounting debt that we have accumulated” (p. 9). Ladson-Billings concluded, “We do not merely have an achievement gap—we have an education debt” (p. 10). In the same way, Saskatchewan, as has been outlined throughout this research, owes a cumulative debt to Indigenous K-12 students which has incurred since the time of residential schools.

This educational debt owed to Indigenous, including Métis, people continues today through the preservation of Whiteness which has structurally determined K-12 academic outcomes and thus ensured specific K-12 students have access to power and resources as adults. According to the theory of structural determinism, Indigenous and non-Indigenous students have been predestined to meet specific outcomes in Saskatchewan K-12 schools, regardless of their work ethic or intellectual abilities before even registering for Kindergarten. For example, the participants had few to no Indigenous teachers, no Indigenous administrators, were exposed to dehumanizing or limited Indigenous content and a White centered racist colonial curriculum, endured racist jokes and racialized social segregation, hid their racial identities or avoided White spaces and activities, defended themselves through physical and mental confrontations, witnessed the daily passing on of status and reputation rights and use and enjoyment rights to White students and, in a regulated way, were able to access disposition rights through ‘becoming someone else.’ The participants watched visibly Indigenous children being tormented, streamed into modified classes, and disciplined more harshly, or they experienced this themselves. In such contexts, ability and effort mean little; just as ability and the effort have always meant little in conditions of racial oppression. Thus, before the participants started kindergarten, their chances of graduating grade twelve were diminished by racist conditions such as those identified in this chapter.

Nearly twenty years ago, through 20 interviews and surveys with 106 Saskatchewan Indigenous teachers, St. Denis, Bouvier, and Battiste (1998) found similarly that:

Aboriginal teachers perceive racism as the most significant factor affecting the

education system. Racism is the silent endemic factor that continues to affect individuals and groups, that strains relationships and limits the possibility for individual and collective action to effect change which will benefit all students. Racism, so long as it goes unacknowledged, will continue to affect policy decisions, practice, and the quality of relationships in schools, school systems, and the educational system as a whole. (p. 75)

The authors further recommended that the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education policies, “Pay particular attention to how racism shapes and influences responses to Aboriginal education and educators” (p. ix). The findings presented in St. Denis, Bouvier, and Battiste’s study with Saskatchewan Indigenous teachers align with the findings presented here as many of the participants in this study attended K-12 Saskatchewan schools during the same time period in which the teachers were interviewed for their study. Such overlapping research, conducted nearly twenty years apart, provides qualitative evidence linking the normalized racist conditions of schools with inequitable Indigenous K-12 academic outcomes.

The findings presented in this chapter indicate that racism was experienced by the participants in multiple ways prior to becoming K-12 teachers in Saskatchewan provincial schools. Each of the findings highlight how Whiteness has been reproduced through K-12 schools, even when experiences of racism occurred outside of school. In addition, identifying the participants’ memories of racism prior to becoming teachers provided insight into how racism has operated in and through Saskatchewan K-12 schools since the participants were children. This finding underscores the intergenerational prevalence of institutionalized racism targeted at Indigenous students in Saskatchewan education. The findings also document how Métis K-12 students have experienced racism in Saskatchewan schools since the 1970s, when some of the participants first began kindergarten, until the 2000s, when some of the students graduated from grade twelve. Furthermore, the counter-stories reveal how the participants’ racial consciousness was shaped before becoming K-12 teachers. Consequently, participants who demonstrated a propensity to identify racism before becoming teachers provided more detailed knowledge as practicing teachers regarding the specific ways Indigenous students experience racism as discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

K-12 TEACHING EXPERIENCE COUNTER-STORIES

Introduction

Chapter five presents the participants' counter-stories as practicing K-12 teachers and thus, as with chapter four, integrates the voices of Métis teachers. This chapter is organized similarly to chapter four, starting with a presentation of findings and followed by a discussion. Highlighting the participants' K-12 teaching experiences, this chapter builds on chapter four which revealed various ways in which racism has operated in K-12 schools as found through a CRT analysis of the participants' counter-stories prior to becoming teachers. Chapter five's findings have been organized according to specific CRT theories reviewed in chapter three to assist with answering the research question: *Using a CRT analysis, what can Métis teachers' racialized experiential knowledge reveal about how racism operates in K-12 schools?* When reading the findings, it may be useful to refer back to chapter three to review the CRT theories used to analyze the data.

Deficit Racism

Reflecting the literature review, deficit racism, or ideology that places blame on people of colour and Indigenous students, families, communities, and/or culture for low student achievement and behavioral issues, was identified throughout the interviews (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Khalifa, 2011; Marx, 2008; Ready & Wright, 2011). In particular, several of the counter-stories indicated that White teachers often hold low expectations for Indigenous students and parents as described by this participant, "There are expectations of these families. Some teachers will have lower expectations of them" (P2). Deficit racism was also observed to be held by administrators, who shape the culture and learning environments of schools. For example, this participant shared:

The biggest [racism in schools] where I really see it is amongst our non-Aboriginal teachers and their own judgments on these kids and the things they say...Even the past VP here...the things he says about the school and the students. (P7)

This finding, that teachers and administrators' often hold low expectations for Indigenous students, reflects chapter four's findings as most of the participants, as K-12 students, believed their teachers did not expect Indigenous students to excel academically. For these participants,

becoming practicing teachers confirmed such beliefs while other participants did not become aware of widespread low expectations until they became provincial K-12 teachers and/or administrators.

Deficit racism targeted at Indigenous parents was also identified in many of the counter-stories. Instead of reflecting on their own teaching practice, teachers were reported as blaming Indigenous parents for poor Indigenous student academic performance. This finding again aligns with the literature as teachers' deficit views of parents of colour has been found to be common in K-12 schools (Hyland, 2005; Kailin, 1999; Vaught & Castagno, 2008). For example, this participant connected teachers' deficit views with Indigenous parent involvement at schools:

I believe so because otherwise quite honestly, if [teachers] weren't [holding deficit views] there would be a lot more parents volunteering their time or coming into the school. Why is it that our schools that have high Aboriginal populations still have a problem trying to get parents in? (P7)

Other participants expressed concern that Indigenous parents have few positive experiences in K-12 schools. As one participant shared:

A First Nation's student's parents had their first positive parent interview in seven years. It's the first time they said they felt like they belonged at a school. We just cried, you got to be kidding me. They said, "We never hear our son is good or that [teachers] like him." (P6)

The participant understood clearly that teachers' racist perceptions of Indigenous students led to the parents' negative experiences. Deficit racism directed toward Indigenous parents was also evident in a counter-story told about a First Nation's boy who was bullied at school:

One of our students last year who was First Nations felt as though and he was being bullied and he was going home and saying, "They are bullying me, they are not being nice to me, they are saying rude things" and his parents came in and had a talk with the principal. They said, "You know if this doesn't stop we are going to get the cops involved." Right away the principal's back was up saying, "Well [the father's] experience was residential school and I don't think he has a clear picture of how school is here and that what goes on here is much different than his experience" and he was saying that [the father's] residential school experience colored his vision, colored reality for him. (P5)

In this way, the principal used deficit racism to accuse the parent of over-reacting and as incapable of recognizing bullying thus taking attention off of and normalizing racial hostility and violence within the school. This form of deficit racism is similar to King's (1991) finding with White teacher candidates who believed racial inequity results from intergenerational trauma from slavery which has been passed on through families who are now unable to function in society. Similarly, the principal in the story above assumed that Indigenous parents who attended residential schools cannot comprehend how present day schools function and thus cannot hold legitimate concerns about their children's K-12 experiences. As Gebhard (2017) argued, "The residential school system has had devastating effects on Aboriginal peoples across Canada. However, careful attention must be paid to how these outcomes are transformed into collective deficiencies belonging to Aboriginal peoples" (p. 21). When teachers and administrators cite historical trauma as an excuse for ongoing injustices in K-12 schools, they are essentially protecting their superior status. At the same time, this process silences victims of racism whose concerns are trivialized through paternalistic constructs justified by deficit racism.

Participants also recognized an over-representation of Indigenous students in resource rooms and designated as modified learners, sometimes without formal assessments. Such practices were perceived as often justified by deficit racism rather than legitimate need. As this participant observed, "the modified class—students were grouped there by who came from the reserve and who didn't" (P5). Related to low academic expectations, deficit racism was also identified in stories about teachers' expectations for poor Indigenous student behavior. This observation, that teachers often assume Indigenous students have behavior problems, was also identified in chapter four as the participants remembered visibly Indigenous students being punished more harshly. As this participant shared:

Our First Nations and Métis kids are deemed as having behavior issues which I have a huge problem with. I think Aboriginal kids, it is known within our school system that their reading levels are lower, they are struggling in school. (P9)

The participant further shared:

I feel like some people in the division support us but I believe that a lot of people don't support us and a lot of people look at us differently and well...and a lot of people think that is our job to fix the brown kids. (P9)

In this way, Métis and other Indigenous educators' identities are constructed through deficit racism (as people look at Indigenous teachers 'differently') yet are also assumed to be responsible to 'fix' Indigenous K-12 students who must learn how to conform to a system which is assumed to work. This finding is congruent with the literature as research has found that White teachers often assume it is the duty of Métis and all Indigenous teachers and teachers of colour to attend to racism encountered by K-12 students (Castagna, 2009; Dickar, 2008; Lewis, 2001; St. Denis, 2010; Vaught, 2012). In addition, as this study suggests, Indigenous youth are targeted disproportionately for disciplinary action and labeled as at-risk, dangerous, unstable, and disengaged—as students who need to be 'fixed.' Such constructs can manifest in unjust punishments, shaming, streaming into remedial programs, and exclusion from White property rights including disposition, use and enjoyment, status and reputation, and the absolute right to exclude as examined in chapter four. As Indigenous students and families are also often targeted unjustly and disproportionately by the justice system (Razack, 2015), this dual process has resulted in racialization processes that criminalize Indigenous K-12 students at an early age regardless of the choices they make, such as what occurred in the case of Colten Boushie.¹⁸

The counter-stories shared in this section demonstrate several ways in which deficit racism has operated in K-12 schools through ideologies and practices that reproduce Whiteness and preserve the White property value, or increased worth and access to rights granted to those racialized as White, of those who hold institutional power. Often, however, teachers reported as invested in deficit beliefs also display care and concern for students of colour, which then can conceal the racist ideologies and practices that inform deficit thinking (Marx, 2008). For instance, one participant shared:

It's not as blatant maybe anymore, but the curriculum and how we treat children and how we label children...Are [teachers] going to just come out and say that it is because they are brown? No, but is that still a racist thought? (P1)

This pervasive pattern of White teachers placing blame on Indigenous students and parents for poor academic performance, attendance, and behavior, without examining how schools support such outcomes, replicates historical processes. This finding suggests that deficit racism has operated in Saskatchewan schools throughout generations, continuing from residential schools and when Métis were first permitted to attend provincial schools as described in chapter one.

¹⁸ See: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/colten-boushie/article32451940/> (Retrieved: June 27, 2017)

Liberal Racism

According to Bonilla-Silva (2013), four interconnected strands of abstract liberalism justify and regulate racial oppression: rationalizing injustice in the name of equality; claiming nothing should be forced upon people; using individual choice as an excuse for inequality; and using meritocracy to defend injustice. Variations of each strand were located in the interviews. For the purpose of this section, I use the term liberal racism rather than abstract liberalism to represent how liberalism operates to preserve Whiteness in K-12 schools. Liberal racism shares some similarities with deficit racism in that it can focus on perceived deficits of non-White students, particularly the use of meritocracy to defend injustice or the assumption that poor school performance is always the result of students' weak work ethic. In more specific ways, liberal racism differs from deficit racism. Rather than place blame consistently on students and parents for low academic achievement, liberal racism constructs K-12 schools and employees as fair, equitable, and race-neutral through colour-blind discourse. Liberal racism operates to mask and rationalize K-12 racial injustices through constructions of schools as innocent and caring.

The first and most prominent strand of liberal racism identified in the interviews is the idea that students should not receive 'special rights' because all students must be treated the same or equally. This strand was evident in several stories and aligns with prior research as demonstrated in the literature review (Dickar, 2008; Lewis, 2001; McCreary, 2011). As this participant shared:

I was subbing there and I ran into a First Nations student in the hallway and she was very, very upset. I asked her what had happened and she said one of the [White] teachers had gotten angry at her and said something about what was she doing in the hallway, she should get back to class, and finished it off with, "You can't play up how you are so special just because you are a needy Native kid, go back to class, you don't get any special privilege because you are a needy Native kid." (P10)

When telling this story, the participant remembered feeling as though the White teacher tried to diminish the Indigenous student's experience with racism by claiming everyone should be treated equally. This idea, that Indigenous students don't deserve 'special rights' to sit in the hallway, mirrors the liberal racist belief that Indigenous peoples should not receive 'special race-based' rights which are 'denied' to non-Indigenous Canadians (St. Denis, 2011). Through this line of reasoning, it is perceived that 'special' rights such as Treaty rights are unjust as everyone should be treated equally. This ideology, however, is not applied evenly as it is not argued that White

with White property rights, the informal rights that have been granted historically to those constructed as White in White supremacist societies, should be dismantled and distributed equally. Rather, this strand of liberal racism rationalizes racial injustice (e.g. the teacher's racism, such as calling the student a 'needy Native kid') in the name of equality (ensuring all students are in class).

Rationalizing injustice in the name of equality was also identified in White teachers' excuses to not integrate Indigenous content as mandated by the provincial government since 1990. One participant explained:

You get those comments, "Oh why are we even doing all this [First Nations, Métis, Inuit] stuff anyway, why are we talking about the Native students all the time? If this is about inclusion, then why don't we have whatever day for the Hindu students and a whatever day for the..." "Well, if we are going to make things special for these guys then it should be special for everybody." (P10)

Informed by liberal racism, integrating Indigenous content was not perceived as a curriculum requirement but as a special practice for Indigenous students to the detriment of all other students. Another participant shared stories about the resistance she encountered when integrating Indigenous knowledge into her classroom and throughout her school: "When this first started there were teachers and EAs who thought we should not just focus on Aboriginal students because we had kids from Burma and all over the place" (P8). Still another participant shared a similar story about an experience teaching at a community school that values Cree knowledge systems, saying, "[A teacher] was saying why would we have a Cree influenced value system when there are so many other cultures?" (P12). Liberal racism was also experienced when non-Indigenous parents questioned the participants' focus on Indigenous content as this was perceived by some parents as favoring one group over others.

A second strand of liberal racism—claiming nothing should be forced on people—was also identified in the data and has been documented in the literature (de Heyer, 2007; Kanu, 2005). In the case of this research, this strand of liberal racism was found to operate as a strategy used by teachers, particularly White teachers, to dismiss mandated Saskatchewan Ministry of Education Indigenous education policies. For instance, this participant shared: "I think there's a little bit of push back to the expectation and [teachers] are feeling like they are being harped on that they have to [integrate Indigenous content]" (P3). In the same way, another participant commented:

“It is a little bit different now especially with teaching Treaties in the classroom as a requirement. You see a lot more uneasiness about who [teachers] are when it comes to our non-Aboriginal teachers” (P7). Liberal racism was further identified in the data as fueling teachers’ beliefs that nothing should be forced on teachers and thus teachers should have the freedom to decide how to integrate Indigenous content. Consequently, the Métis teachers’ counter-stories highlighted how teachers use liberal racism to justify reducing Indigenous education to the inclusion of ‘cultural artifacts,’ or generalized representations that exist primarily in the past, reflecting a common instructional pattern found amongst White teachers (Chandler, 2009; Hollingworth, 2009).

Participants further explained that even teachers who excel at integrating Indigenous knowledge and content can use the liberal idea that nothing should be forced on anyone to avoid teaching about racism and colonial violence. For instance, this participant shared: “I think in terms of doing a power analysis and looking at racism and colonization, I still think there would be, other than the other [Métis] staff member, I think that most [teachers] would get their backs up” (P5). Similarly, another teacher explained:

It only brings the people’s cultural beliefs to the forefront and other people can learn from it. About the peace pipe, about pow wow, about certain ways that young people might dress in regalia for a certain dance. It doesn’t bring any social action; it doesn’t bring any transformation. It only brings in...here is this group of people, we need to learn their history. This was their land. We need to bring that into children’s mindsets, where Aboriginal people came from. We need to honor the treaties. We need to teach about residential schools...But, then it stops there. (P2)

Reflecting this same sentiment, another participant stressed, “We do the dance and cultural stuff really well. Do we do the historical identity piece as much, maybe not” (P1). Due to the belief that nothing should be forced on anyone, then, teachers who integrate Indigenous content are often perceived as ‘good teachers’ even as they chose to avoid teaching students about Whiteness and racism. The belief that teachers should not be forced to teach about White supremacy was also reflected in stories about White teachers’ reactions to conversations about racism. Teachers who teach anti-racist content are often constructed as “muddying the waters [and] stirring things up” (P5). When teachers feel they are being forced to challenge Whiteness they can “get their backs up and get defensive” and “there is a feeling that we have to tread carefully so that we don’t piss people off basically” (P10). As one participant stated: “[Racism] doesn’t necessarily

get looked at as much because people don't want to feel any fault or any blame" (P2). This finding is consistent with the literature as research has stressed teachers' comfort levels routinely take precedence to challenging Whiteness (Buehler, 2012; Castagna, 2008; Yoon, 2012).

Liberal racism was also identified in counter-stories as reinforced through the curriculum and resources. For instance, the idea that nothing should be forced on teachers was reflected in stories about Indigenous content being integrated into textbooks and the curriculum in ways that protect Whiteness. As one participant explained, "There are still hidden things in the curriculum but I mean it is not as blatant as it once was. I don't know, I don't know if you get away from it in Saskatchewan, I don't know if you get away from racism" (P8). Another participant expressed frustration with textbooks that appear to integrate Indigenous content but do so in superficial ways that do not challenge Whiteness, colonialism, or Western ideologies:

It needs to be better than these new math textbooks that have the odd question thrown in about, 'Denise is part of a traditional singing group from Salish B.C., she is making a new drum, the circumference is this, calculate how much hide she is going to need to make the drum.' Give me a break. That is a token question. (P10)

Similar findings have been revealed in a Canadian study with Indigenous teachers (St. Denis 2010). Liberal racism based on the premise that nothing should be forced on anyone was also evident in stories about administrators who set the instructional tone for schools. In this way, the idea that teachers should not be forced to challenge racism was perceived as reinforced by textbooks, the curriculum, and administrators.

The last two strands of liberal racism, using individual choice as an excuse for inequality and using meritocracy to defend injustice, are inter-related. Blaming the choice of individuals for inequality (e.g. if she had chosen to go to school she would have been successful) is strengthened when meritocracy is used to defend injustice (e.g. if she would have worked harder she could have overcome the barriers she encountered). For instance, some participants spoke about teachers who make correlations between Indigenous student success and the choices of parents without considering the effects of school practices and policies. For instance, this participant shared, teachers, "blame that [Indigenous students] are not learning and the [educational achievement] gap is because they have moved from school to school" (P2). In this case, teachers believe the choices of Indigenous parents, which are assumed to be isolated from the practices and policies of schools, lead to Indigenous children's poor academic performance.

Using meritocracy to defend injustice was also identified in counter-stories regarding teachers' propensity to tell 'success stories' about Indigenous individuals who have 'beat the odds.' In this sense, meritocracy was used to defend racial injustice as it is assumed Indigenous peoples who are not successful have failed to work hard enough. For example,

People are very happy with the norm. 'Some of my friends are Indians. Some of the greatest football players.' You hear them making up excuses. Well, you know what, we are not here to protect one person out of 1600 kids that made it somewhere. We want all of our kids to make it somewhere. We want you to be able to recognize that there is a problem here. (P2)

By teaching only about the advancements and perceived success stories of Indigenous peoples, liberal racism maintains the myth of meritocracy. This finding was also evident in chapter four, as the participants remembered Indigenous students and families who were blamed for educational inequities, including themselves at times. The first two strands of liberal racism, rationalizing injustice in the name of equality and claiming nothing should be forced upon people, however, were not identified in the participants' prior teaching experiences. This difference likely reflects the insider knowledge the participants hold as teachers compared to their limited knowledge as K-12 students. The difference may also indicate the progress Saskatchewan has made in terms of actualizing the 1990 policy mandating the integration of Indigenous content as some teachers are reacting against the implementation of this policy. Nearly thirty years later, liberal racism continues to enact barriers to integrating Indigenous content as it encourages those who do integrate content to also protect White property rights through excluding knowledge that challenges Whiteness and ongoing colonial power.

Essentialist Racism

Counter-stories about essentialist racism—the false claim that populations have innate biological characteristics and can be categorized according to 'pure' racial categories—were evident throughout the interviews. Similar to chapter four, cultural essentialism was identified in participants' counter-stories as a distinct form of essentialist racism that assumes 'authentic' Indigenous peoples practice traditional ceremonies, can speak traditional languages, and adhere to traditional knowledge systems. This section builds on the discussion presented in chapter four concerning cultural essentialism by describing how essentialist racism was identified through an analysis of the participants' counter-stories as practicing teachers. In particular, and reflecting

racial purity ideology, essentialist racism was found to occur through school practices that ‘lump together’ all Indigenous peoples. For instance, participants stressed that First Nations education is prioritized and that in many cases Métis are assumed to fall into the same racialized category of First Nations. In general, participants’ stories of essentialist racism emphasized school practices that construct Indigenous peoples as one homogenous group with the same traditional beliefs, cultural practices, and knowledge systems. This participant explained, “[Teachers] just think an Aboriginal is an Aboriginal. Even within our First Nations groups, they don’t realize the differences between those tribes let alone between Métis” (P7). In many cases, essentialist racism was identified in counter-stories through Cree focused or Cree-centric ideology, where Indigenous education constructs Cree identities as the only Indigenous identities of value:

You can call it Cree-centric. We are on Treaty 6 Cree territory, yes, but this is also traditional Métis territory. Métis people were here, just because we don’t have Treaties doesn’t mean the histories and the stories and those relationships weren’t there. My God, it was Métis fur traders who were corresponding those, they were the ones that were helping with the translations for the treaties. We played such a huge role in the grand narrative of Indigenous relationships. We are an Indigenous group. We’re recognized [in the] constitution but we do often get forgotten. (P1)

As another teacher stressed: “This is frustrating but confusing to me that we focus on Treaty 6, Treaty 6, Treaty 6 so it is Cree, Cree, Cree, Cree, Cree. That is what we focus on and that makes sense to an extent but then we also have Métis kids and this Métis population” (P9). This same participant further discussed inequitable distributions of Indigenous education funding, reflecting the ways in which racial purity ideology benefits First Nations focused education. When asking administrators for more Métis education, for instance, this participant explained,

The answer we always tend to get is, ‘funding, funding, funding, we can only do so much.’ No, I don’t think there is enough and I think that they just get lumped into one group. I don’t think that is okay because Métis and First Nations are not the same. (P9)

While in many cases First Nations and Métis peoples are related and share the same communities and ancestries, and an individual can be Métis and First Nations, within White supremacist societies, essentialism has historically been used to institutionalize very clear boundaries between the colonized and the colonizers. As discussed in the introduction, such racialized boundaries

marginalize those who cannot fit clearly into racially pure categories. In this way, lumping Métis with First Nations is an essentialist practice that marginalizes Métis peoples. As one participant said, “I think we are kind of in the background. I kind of think we always have been” (P7).

In spite of the emphasis on First Nations education in Saskatchewan schools, it was also found that how First Nations content is integrated can contribute to essentialist racism through programs and instruction that romanticize First Nations’ history, ceremonies, and traditional Indigenous knowledge systems. One participant shared: “The sweats that [school divisions] have, pow wows these are all First Nations events and I think First Nations are a little more exotic than Métis and get a little more press and excitement than Métis” (P3). Another stressed:

And if they want to be nice about it, they romanticize it and they see you as an exotic person and say tell me more about it or even the Pakistan children, they are glamorized. No one really wants to know who they are – they want to be able to say, oh this is delightful. (P2)

Like liberal racism, essentialist racism can comfort or entertain non-Indigenous teachers and students through constructions of Indigenous peoples as innately spiritual and connected to the land. This cultural gazing maintains a sense of White superiority and, as Razack (1998) explained, “the adoption of apparently ‘cross-cultural’ strategies does little to ensure that white teachers will view their [Indigenous] Asian and Black pupils as capable of the same level of achievement and range of desires as their white students” (p. 9).

Accordingly, another way in which essentialist racism occurs in K-12 schools is through the practice of White teachers and others who have assumed the participants are Cree or experts in every area of Indigenous education. For example, one participant shared this experience:

I have also felt that everyone’s shoulder tapping me for something because “we need an Aboriginal person for this thing.” I also have often felt that I am being used to tick a box. I have actually once said, you know what, I am just myself and I do not represent all Aboriginal people, I don’t represent all Métis people. (P10)

In a similar way, those who work with Indigenous committees or at boards of education are often assumed by their White colleagues to be Cree:

I find that the board office people will say, ‘Oh well you are working with the brown team so you clearly have some sort of Aboriginal in you, so you must speak Cree and you must know this and you must know this.’ (P9)

Essentialism then often places pressure on Métis teachers to find resources and build relationships with Indigenous individuals and communities for White teachers—work that White teachers could do for themselves. As this participant feels,

I have to be the First Nation person because if anyone wants to know anything First Nations they come to me and I don't know. So I kind of have to educate myself, right? So, of course I have to do Pow Wow too, so I have singers and drummers. (P6)

At the same time, many participants felt a responsibility as one of a few or the only Métis teacher on staff to bring Métis and all Indigenous perspectives in general into their schools.

Another way in which essentialist racism was revealed in the counter-stories occurred when Indigenous students and others questioned the participants' Indigenous identities, as was experienced when some of the participants attended post-secondary teacher education programs. As this participant explained, some First Nations students would say: "Oh you are not a real Indian" (P11). This participant further explained, "But at the same time there was also some family members or others that [said] oh you are not a real Indian, I have had to deal with that" (P11). This sentiment was shared by another participant who recognized how Métis peoples are often viewed as representatives of K-12 Indigenous education, "I know that I am going to be critiqued and I have kind of accepted it. I have seen it happen to other people—you are not Indian or Métis enough" (P3). Similarly, another participant discussed how visibly Indigenous students at his school questioned the authenticity of visibly White Métis students saying, "you think you are so good, you think you are so White" (P7). In each of these cases, essentialist racism drives assumptions about authenticity. Such ideology places Métis teachers in positions where they must constantly prove who they are to students, parents, colleagues, and, in some cases, themselves, as essentialist racism can cause individuals to question their own authenticity.

While the practices listed in this section may not intend to reproduce essentialism purposely, the K-12 emphasis on traditional languages, knowledges, and histories, as well as programs and curricula that group all Indigenous peoples as one homogenous group, validates essentialist racism and thereby preserves the property value of Whiteness. Essentialist racism, however, is similar to deficit and liberal racism as it is not always obvious or overt. Indeed, Indigenous education is an Indigenous right which most participants were denied as K-12 students and thus learning about Indigenous knowledge systems and colonial history in Saskatchewan, a colonized territory, is necessary and essential. Yet, as this participant shared:

It's great that we are doing sweats and we are talking about pow wow and that's great and it's important and it is definitely part of our identities and talking about jigging and food and you know, it's part of who we are for sure, our backgrounds. But, there's so much more, I think, in the spirit of our peoples. Like, their sense of resistance, their sense of doing what is best for their community. (P1)

Métis resistance to colonialism, as this participant spoke about, was not identified as central to Indigenous education initiatives and programming. Rather, essentialist racism was found to diminish how Métis and all Indigenous peoples are taught about through cultural programming informed by essentialist notions of culture. The process of relying on essentialism in Indigenous education initiatives in turn reinforces deficit racism through claims that cultural differences are innate and thus it is the cultural differences of Indigenous students that leads to academic inequality. Essentialism also maintains liberal racism which constructs schools as good, fair, and neutral while producing blatant racialized inequities. Integrating essentialist content can signify 'progress' even as Indigenous K-12 student success lags far behind that of White students.

Disposition Rights

As with the participants' counter-stories regarding their experiences as K-12 students, disposition rights were identified in the participants' stories from their time as practicing teachers. As discussed previously, disposition rights consist of the social and material rewards granted to those who conform to perceived White norms as a means of acquiring White property rights (Harris, 1993). Disposition rights are enacted in schools when students, families, teachers and others, regardless of racial identity, are rewarded for conforming to perceived White norms. For example, parents who drive expensive cars, attend teacher conferences, regularly communicate with teachers, or volunteer in the classroom are perceived as practicing norms that have been constructed as White and are therefore rewarded in informal ways. Parents who conform to perceived White norms are often also perceived as ideal parents by teachers who then reward the parents' children. Similarly, students who raise their hands before answering questions, listen, volunteer, come to school 'clean' and dressed 'nice,' have healthy lunches, pay field trip fees on time, are cheerful and helpful, and participate in school activities are rewarded informally but also formally through classroom and school reward systems.

An example of disposition rights located in the participants' experiences as K-12 teachers was found to occur when Indigenous educators 'conform to the system,' do not challenge racism, and are thus rewarded with higher status positions. For instance, this participant stated:

First Nations peoples who are very, very intelligent and who have made it in the education world and have become superintendents, status women I know, they are doing everything the system wants them to do and they don't ruffle any feathers. (P2)

In this case, conforming to perceived White norms such as not challenging the racialized status quo, leads to rewards such as promotions, which White individuals authorize. As described by some of the participants, Indigenous individuals who are hired as superintendents and other positions of power may endorse Indigenous knowledge integration into K-12 schools and practice traditional knowledge systems themselves. Yet, by not challenging systemic racism and Whiteness, these individuals who have access to institutionalized decision making, conform to the perceived White norm of claiming neutrality or using liberal, deficit, and essentialist racism to explain racial inequality. That is, because naming and challenging racism and Whiteness has been constructed as radical, impolite, and uncomfortable, to do so reduces one's access to the property value of Whiteness, which in this case includes entry to positions of power.

Similarly, the participants' counter-stories revealed that disposition rights operate in K-12 schools through the process of students who conform to the perceived White norm of 'being racist' and are thus rewarded socially. Participants recognized how Indigenous and students of colour directed racism to each other as a way to 'act White' and gain disposition rights. For example, this participant noted:

They [an immigrant family of colour] were telling me how they were told back at a young age when they first moved to Canada to watch out for Aboriginal people. So there is already that divide being created with new immigrant families. And you think, how would you know anything about Aboriginal people when you just moved to this country? But they are hearing it from those people who clearly are racist. (P7)

Another participant shared stories about how this disposition right, the social rewards that come from performing the perceived White norm of being racist, is enacted in elementary schools:

This year there has been a lot of incidences in our school with EAL [students] coming to Canada hearing the bad remarks about Aboriginal kids and being racist... [We] never used to have a lot of EAL kids and slowly they have been moving into the

school and Aboriginal kids are very mean to the EAL kids so a lot of racism between the two. (P9)

The perceived White norm of acting racist may not produce direct rewards but serves as a mark of Whiteness which students perhaps unconsciously believe will enhance their property value. In other words, by participating in racism, Whiteness is transferred to Indigenous and students of colour through disposition rights. At the same time, because none of the participants' indicated that students are punished for making racist statements or acting on racism, it can be argued that K-12 students are empowered to act in such ways.

In addition to school-based teacher and administrator regulation, it was interesting to find that disposition rights are often regulated by White students. For instance, one participant remembers a story about a First Nations family:

[T]heir [First Nations] family life was turbulent, they were back and forth between their family who lived on the reserve and their family who lived in town and that meant they went back and forth between schools a lot...The kids were very, I guess, is hateful the right word, they were just very critical of them. (P5)

In this story, disposition rights are reserved for students who 'act' White which includes not having a turbulent family life and not being transitioned between schools. Those families who do not conform to such perceived White norms, such as the family in the story above, are socially ostracized or punished by White students. In this way, White students not only bully Indigenous students but also use disposition rights to regulate the distribution of White property rights.

Use and Enjoyment Rights

Aligning with chapter four's findings, various examples of use and enjoyment rights were also identified as operating in K-12 schools. Unlike disposition rights, use and enjoyment rights are granted exclusively to White individuals. For White individuals, there is no requirement to conform to perceived White norms to carry use and enjoyment rights. As described in chapter three, White individuals are granted the right to use and enjoy their White property without disturbance. For example, one reoccurring use and enjoyment right identified in the data was the right of White children to use and enjoy the benefits of K-12 schools. As one participant shared:

I think we teach to the White kids. If you look at our whole education system, we teach to the White kids. We teach to the middle class White kids and that is kind of

who we teach to a lot of the time. Even our EAL kids I don't think we really teach to them either. Our First Nations kids get just put to the side and it's frustrating. (P9)

Such stories suggest that White students are granted a normalized right to use and enjoy the curriculum. When Indigenous content is included in relevant ways, then, teachers can reduce the accumulative 'educational debt' (Ladson-Billings, 2006) owed to Indigenous students. As one participant explained:

When we get talking about things some of them will talk more than they ever would any other time. Or, they become more engaged. Too much of our education is not really inclusive of Aboriginal people so when people wonder why some Aboriginal kids aren't engaged, engaged in what? You know? (P8)

From such stories, it can also be argued that White students have the right to use and enjoy schools where they see themselves, or people racialized as White, in the content they are taught. Furthermore, drawing from the previous essentialist racism section, White students have the right to use and enjoy schools free from being racially essentialized as White identities are presented as complex, multi-dimensional, and not bound by history or a particular ideology. Content is furthermore not presented in ways that suggest White people are limited in who they must be, what they must look like, how they should behave, what languages they should speak, and what they can think, believe, achieve, and become. In general, the interviews suggest that taken for granted rights to use and enjoy schools where students are validated, feel comfortable, and can learn from and about people who look like them in non-essentialist ways, are reserved for White students. Reflecting use and enjoyment rights, one participant remembered an Indigenous student who attended a predominantly White high school and felt he could not use and enjoy the school:

I think there was one young man who was in my class but he was only there for a few weeks and then he went to a different school. I did try to talk to him a little bit and see if there was anything I could do to help him or be a support for him. But, I didn't know him at all and he didn't know me and I know from talking to him that it wasn't a welcoming place for him the school...he didn't feel comfortable there. (P3)

While White students may also feel uncomfortable in high schools, they nonetheless have access use and enjoyment rights which are withheld from Indigenous students.

In addition, unlike White students, Indigenous students do not have the right to use and enjoy schools where they are taught by a majority of Indigenous teachers. This use and enjoyment right, to be taught by a majority of teachers who share a similar racialized positioning, is reserved for White students. When Indigenous students do have access to Indigenous teachers, then, this serves to once again ‘pay the educational debt’ (Ladson-Billings, 2006) owed to Indigenous students. For instance, participants shared stories about connections made with Métis students.

Some of my grade sixes, they are so cute, I told them when I started teaching that I was Métis because I was talking a little bit about who I am and one girl put up her hand [and said], “Oh I am Métis too” and there are a few of them who, when I model [self-identifying], get excited about it and they come out. (P5)

While this practice may contribute to paying a metaphorical debt, it does not increase or guarantee Indigenous students’ access to use and enjoyment rights. Rather, the excitement to self-identify as a K-12 student with a teacher of the same racialized identity, is a normalized use and enjoyment right bestowed to White students. The findings further suggest that White students also have the right to assume teachers will not hold pre-conceived deficit ideas about their intelligence (status and reputation rights), thus again ensuring a right to use and enjoy schools freely. In addition, participants also recognized unfair hiring policies that lead to high teacher turn-over rates:

I was hired along with eight or nine other first year teachers this year. In our school over half the staff turned over. But we’re a community school, it’s a great place to learn how to teach, but why aren’t they sending their best teachers? (P12)

This awareness, that the ‘best’ or most experienced teachers are hired at White populated affluent schools demonstrates how use and enjoyment rights are reserved for White students. Similarly, White teachers can use and enjoy teaching in schools without fearing they will be subordinated because of their racial identity; that is, their authority and authenticity as White is not questioned.

Another use and enjoyment right granted to White teachers, students, and parents includes the right to use and enjoy schools without being racially harassed by school staff. For example, discussing a school administrative assistant, this participant shared:

Our administrative assistant is probably the most racist person I have ever met. And I had a parent call on the phone and the parents said she had no sense of belonging

[because the administrative assistant] doesn't make people feel comfortable when they are in school. I very specifically had to come down and give the administrative assistant specific instructions because I had a parent call back who called the assistant a disrespectful racist and they pulled their kids. (P6)

It is important to understand this racial hostility through an historical contextual lens that recognizes how White supremacy has advantaged White communities historically (Matsuda & Lawrence, 1993). When an Indigenous person enters a school and encounters racial hostility, this is not an isolated act but is based in systemic and institutionalized notions of White supremacy. This story thus suggests how White teachers, students, and parents are granted the right to use and enjoy schools where they do not have to fear encountering racial violence or being racially profiled. Furthermore, White parents have the right to use and enjoy schools in ways that permit their children to remain in schools without having to move their children to other schools to avoid racial persecution, which causes unwarranted emotional and academic stress. The participant who shared the story above further explained how her right to use and enjoy the school was diminished by the administrative assistant who assumed the participant was White:

When I first started she had no clue, I was teaching grade seven and eight and she was the assistant and she said, "I would never stick my head into one of their cars." I said, "Their cars?" "Those Indians," I said, "Oh funny you should say that, I am just like them." (P6)

Similarly, another participant recalled having a discussion as a new teacher with an experienced First Nations teacher who said, "Well you know there are still some staff at this school here that are racist" (P10). The right to teach with colleagues who do not think your race is inferior is thus a use and enjoyment right reserved for White teachers and staff. Similarly, White teachers have the right to use and enjoy schools and an education system where the majority of teachers and those who hold power identify as White. As this participant who can pass as White remembered, staff meetings can be experienced as a use and enjoyment right reserved for White teachers:

There was one staff meeting where I was referred to as the token Indian which was said in jest and in fun and that kind of thing but actually, [it] was the first time where I felt a little bit like that actually. Where I actually felt like I'm not exactly a brown face, but I am [racialized]. (P3)

In general, the participants' counter-stories painted a picture of racism enacted as micro-aggressions (Davis, 1989) in schools more so than blatant overt racist speech. For example, one participant shared:

P1: We have feasts, we do feasts [at our school] for all of our different changes of the season and protocol states women have to wear skirts, the men are the helpers. And, they're telling us about [the protocols] and a teacher comments, "Oh, do we have to braid our hair too?" Like, that's racism...it's subtle little things like that, it's those snide little things.

CG: They say it...like they are making a joke?

P1: A joke, yes, and it's not. It's disrespectful and it's racist but, so I hear more of those little things.

At the same time, however, the same participant admitted: "Have I seen racism here at this school, blatant? Yes, I think I have, I can think of an example but sometimes it's hard because things are confidential but [by not talking about it] this also protects the ignorance and the racism too right?" (P1). Interestingly, at least one participant and perhaps others would not tell stories about witnessing more overt forms of racism thus, as the participant above aptly stated, protecting White teachers' right to use and enjoy schools as well as the reputation and status of teachers who make overt racist comments.

Furthermore, White teachers have the right to use and enjoy schools without having to confront or challenge racism while Indigenous teachers often do not have this choice (St. Denis, 2010). Unlike White teachers, Indigenous teachers are often faced with the challenge of confronting K-12 racism on their own and thus being ostracized by their peers or burning out from teaching earlier than White teachers. For example, this participant explained: "People think they [lone anti-racist teachers] are a basket case, people will think, stay away from her, she is all about the Native person and if we are not going to [agree with] her, she won't talk with you" (P2). In addition, reflecting stories about liberal racism, the right to enjoy teaching free of any moral or professional responsibility to integrate Indigenous content and knowledge as mandated by the government since 1990 was also identified. As this participant explained:

Some people don't want to get it and so they just walk away and think it is not a big deal. And I think they won't get it and they are not going to do anything about it

unless they are called on it and unfortunately I don't see a lot of people calling a lot of people on some stuff which is frustrating. (P9)

In this case, White administrators have the right to 'use and enjoy' Saskatchewan Ministry of Education policies and mandates as they see fit. In the same way, one participant discussed how Indigenous protocols are often challenged by White teachers who believe they have a right to determine how funding is used and enjoyed by others. This participant shared:

If we have Elders at a meeting and we pay them with tobacco and their cheque before, [people ask] 'why do they get their cheques before and nobody else gets their cheque before? I have felt the most racism at the board office than I have in all of my teaching career. (P9)

In general, the right to use and enjoy school property, educational spaces, social circles, resources, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, and funding among other factors were found to be reserved for those who are racialized as White. This finding is congruent with stories shared by visibly White participants who experienced fluctuating access to use and enjoyment rights. As the participant explained:

Well, it is different because once, I guess in theory, once you are out of the [Métis] closet it should all apply to you, right? But, in some way I feel like because I have been able to have the privilege that I am able to deflect better. (P5)

This same participant shared: "For [Métis students who look White] it doesn't seem to interfere with their friendships so I think there is definitely a difference between Métis and First Nations in the way they are perceived" (P5). Yet, at the same time, use and enjoyment rights do not depend entirely on skin colour as discussed in chapter four. Métis students who are visibly White are also denied access to teachers who share their ancestry, racially safe spaces, and other use and enjoyment rights outlined in this section. As one participant explained:

It's like coming out of the closet or something. Coming out of the Métis closet or something. Then I tell kids all the time, in my class today we have a family here... and they bounce around from school to school to school and they are finally staying with us. This is their second year here and we videotaped them last year and I just about cried. What do you love, who are you? I am a proud Métis boy, oh my god, we all were like woohoo. (P6)

That visibly White participants referred to the process of ‘coming out of the Métis closet’ signifies not an internalized sense of shame but the courage to self-identify in spaces which have come to be recognized as unpredictable racially hostile such as K-12 schools.

Status and Reputation Rights

Status and reputation rights were also located in the participants’ counter-stories. Status and reputation rights represent the ways in which White social practices and spaces are granted elevated status simply by being racialized as White whereas the status and reputation are not granted to the same social practices and spaces of non-White individuals. Rather, the status and reputation of the same non-White social practices and spaces often decreases. For instance, Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) discussed how Whiteness can increase the property value of spaces such as schools and language programs. An example of this in Saskatchewan can be applied to French and Cree Immersion programs. While both are language programs, French immersion schools have inherited White property value which increases the status and reputation of such schools. Cree immersion programs, however, have not inherited White property value and may even experience reduced status and reputation due to racialization processes.

According to this theory, where schools are located and the racialized student bodies that fill schools will increase or decrease the reputation and status of schools and thus increase or decrease a school’s ‘property value.’ For example, when describing a school with a large Indigenous student population, one participant explained, “It is in the hood of Saskatoon. It is on 20th street and everybody thinks it is so scary which is ridiculous” (P9). Another participant discussed how the racialized reputation and status of schools shapes teachers’ assumptions about students who attend such schools:

C: So schools with higher Aboriginal populations are sort of talked down about?

P7: Oh of course, yeah, talked down about and they are tougher schools, you know.

C: In terms of violence or the kids are difficult or intellectually?

P7: Probably a little of all three.

Conversely, the reputation of students who attend primarily White schools increases because of the status and reputation rights reserved for schools perceived as White spaces.

In the same way, when White teachers are hired by school divisions, this practice increases the status and reputation of such individuals. Yet when Indigenous teachers are hired, they are often met with statements that charge, “you got a contract because you are brown. That

is the number one thing that will come out” (P9). In this sense, the idea that Indigenous teachers are only hired because of diversity initiatives is informed by liberal racism which in turn protects the reputation and status rights of White teachers. Whereas White teachers are assumed to be qualified teachers who deserve contracts, Indigenous teachers including visibly White Métis teachers are often assumed to have been hired to meet racial quotas. At the same time, the status and reputation of schools increases when visibly White, including Métis, teachers are hired. As this participant explained: “I think it’s easier for people to hire teachers that can identify as Aboriginal and pass [as White] I think that, I think that that happens often. To maintain their status quo of how many Aboriginal teachers they should hire” (P1).

The ability to advocate for students and families without being challenged by colleagues was also identified as a reputation and status rights. The data suggest White teachers who advocate for Indigenous students are often perceived as teachers who care about students, while Indigenous teachers are often constructed as trouble makers. For example:

There were a few periods where I would actually talk with a couple of my [White] colleagues and say you know, this isn’t right, I saw this happen and I would like to know why, can you explain that to me? And they would say, “Well, who do you think you are, to come and question it?” [I replied] “Well, I am an Aboriginal person, I’m a teacher, I know the family, I have taught those kids and I can see this and I am telling you this is what I can see so I am making it my business. (P2)

Another participant who is visibly White but identifies openly as Métis shared a similar experience when teaching high school students:

Older students in grades 11 and 12, not so much at this school but at the previous school, it was, oh you are teaching us about Aboriginal things because you are Aboriginal. I think that is kind of what I got, you only care about this stuff because you are Aboriginal. (P5)

Whereas White teachers are perceived as teaching Indigenous content because they are instructed to, Indigenous teachers often encounter backlash for teaching the same content. Yet, as discussed in the essentialist racism section, the research also indicates that Indigenous teachers are often expected to be experts in Indigenous education. This ‘double bind’ (Richardson, 2006) is indicative of the contradictory racial climate in which Indigenous teachers must work as they are often punished for enacting what is demanded of them by White authorities.

Status and reputation rights were also identified in stories about visibly White Métis students who minimize their racial identities. For instance, this story demonstrates how Métis students have attempted to increase their racial status and reputation:

The other thing I have seen, especially in older kids, is they will [identify as Métis] but they will say something like, but it is not a big deal or but it doesn't really matter like, I don't do anything that is Métis. So they kind of say it but then they kind of take it back like, but it is not really influencing who I am. Just to maintain their ability to fit in with the dominant group. (P5)

That Métis students feel a need to claim they 'don't do anything Métis' is indicative of how access to disposition rights can be used to increase one's status and reputation, even in only in the individual Métis student's mind. The data further suggested that racially segregated social interactions among K-12 students is another way in which status and reputation rights operate in schools. For instance, several participants explained how the status of Métis students who can pass as White enabled an ability to become friends with and accepted by White students more so than visibly Indigenous students.

While reputation and status rights are not granted to Métis teachers in absolute ways, this research found that the reputation and status of teachers who identify as Métis can at times be elevated due to their White ancestry. Resulting from associations with Whiteness, this elevated status and reputation can occur regardless of skin tone. Those who have darker skin, however, were described as having less access to status and reputation rights through associations with Whiteness, reflecting experiences of colourism. Regardless, due s to reputation and status rights, the research suggests that Métis associations with Whiteness can provide distinct pathways to advocate for Indigenous students with non-Indigenous colleagues. As this participant shared:

I suppose if you can pass you could continue passing but if your awareness is already there it is going to be with you. You are always going to have a little bit of awareness and if you can realize that, if you have [White] privilege as a Métis person if you realize your privilege and what you are able to change even though it might be difficult and it might not make you everybody's favorite person that you have some responsibility to people who aren't privileged because you have all these benefits...So, if you can use that and find ways to gain the courage to use it to make changes for family members or your students who you care about, there is a way that

people who are privileged Métis people can help fully White people understand their privilege in a different way. That, it doesn't have to be a guilt trip, it is just the way you are born and you are born into a system that needs to change. (P5)

In this way, status and reputation rights resulting from the White ancestry of Métis teachers, can be used to advance Indigenous education in ways that First Nations teachers, who are racialized as 'racially pure,' often cannot. For instance, as one participant shared, "A lot of people who are Caucasian get very nervous around Elders or traditional knowledge keepers and don't know what to do. With me they feel they can be themselves" (P6). Another participant stressed that Métis teachers' status and reputation rights can be used to challenge the status quo:

Métis people have continued to experience racism in the system by being excluded and ignored. But then also, recognizing that, you know, that ability to pass for so many years can also be used in a way to change the system. (P1)

In this way, institutional change can result from the co-existence between status and reputation rights with a Métis dual consciousness of racism. For example,

Well, I think if [White parents] get to know me and they don't know that I am Métis, if they get to know me and if they trust me, trust that their kids will be doing well with me in the classroom, then when they find out that [I am] Aboriginal, I think it just sort of shows them that Aboriginal people are competent, Aboriginal people are trustworthy, all these things that they may have not automatically trusted in. (P8)

Another participant was able to use status and reputation rights to reach out to White teachers, saying, "I'm going to extend the olive branch and say, 'this really helps me, when I started teaching, maybe you want to pursue it?' And, not force it and say, 'You have to do this'" (P1). Similarly, this participant who is visibly Indigenous explained:

I think if I was much darker it would be more difficult for me. Even for First Nations people I think it is hard for them to connect with White people. I think it is very hard because what do you have in common with them? Whereas Métis have something in common with the dominant race. We are part White regardless of how we look at it, we come from a bi-racial background. (P7)

As each of the counter-stories presented here demonstrate, when Métis teachers emphasize their White ancestry to gain access to status and reputation rights, this can challenge the status quo:

There are a lot of Métis teachers who use that [identify with White ancestry] to challenge the status quo. And I can think of one that I hired, she challenges it all the time. She sits there, she is a SUNTEP grad. She's got some coloring and more olive, a lighter olive. She can pass for a European person but she is really into her culture. She is really into the First Nation's culture and she challenges [racism] left and right in the staff room. Something comes up and she is on it immediately. (P2)

Reputation and status rights are outcomes of and work to preserve the property value of Whiteness. Together, with disposition and use and enjoyment rights, reputation and status rights authorize holders of Whiteness the absolute right to exclude as will be described below.

Absolute Right to Exclude

The absolute right to exclude, granted to those who carry White property rights, culminates from access to disposition, use and enjoyment, and reputation and status rights. As Harris (1993) theorized, "The possessors of Whiteness were granted the legal right to exclude others from the privileges inhering in Whiteness; Whiteness became an exclusive club whose membership was closely and grudgingly guarded" (p. 1736). The absolute right to exclude, as it operates in Saskatchewan provincial schools, was evident throughout the participants' counter-stories concerning their experiences as K-12 teachers. First, the absolute right to exclude was located in stories shared about staff and hiring practices. Although improving from childhood and youth experiences as students in K-12 systems, a majority of participants spoke about a lack of Indigenous teachers in the present system. For example, one participant expressed, "Our school division does a really good job of hiring Aboriginal teachers. Is it enough, no it is not enough" (P9). It was also found that school divisions place the majority of Indigenous teachers at community schools or schools with high Indigenous student enrollments, as reflected in the placements of the participants in this study. One participant reflected:

I think [high number of Indigenous staff] is more common at [school] because the enrollment rate there is very high for First Nations and Métis students. I don't even think [the number of teachers] is high enough but it is one of the schools that has the higher amount and as well as [school], [school], and the Cree bilingual school has a lot of, I wouldn't say Métis but, First Nations teachers. (P9)

Another participant recognized that while more Indigenous staff are currently hired, most of these positions are at lower level entry jobs and few are at higher administrative levels.

Well, there is definitely more now than when I was in school but I think they could still hire more. I think they could still do more. I look at some of the systems, I see the Aboriginal teachers, I see the custodians, the educational assistants, I see very few in administration, very few at the board level and very few at the director or superintendent if any maybe four or five. (P11)

Reflecting such observations, the absolute right to exclude operates through excluding teachers from being employed at White affluent schools and limiting promotions of Indigenous teachers and administrators. Such processes can also operate through intersectional oppression as demonstrated in the story below:

I have a great amount of skill compared to some other people who get promoted because they have the skin color or they have the gender. Yes, it's a classic case of racism. [They think] "I don't know if she is going to be able to do it. I can put her in a smaller school but I am not really quite sure she can go into a bigger school where the community might give her a hard time. So let's protect her and keep her in a place where the community might not be so hard on her." I see that as a classic case of institutional racism. (P2)

Consequently, as a result of the absolute right to exclude, a restricted number of Indigenous individuals are employed as superintendents or in Ministry of Education positions. The absolute right to exclude then determines what and how K-12 policies are conceptualized, implemented, and regulated. For example, this participant recognized:

There is a small core [at the board office], this small core of people who that is their work, their mandate is to improve the situation for First Nation and Métis students. I just don't know if it is enough because they can't go out there and change every teacher in every school and wave a magic wand and make everything better. (P9)

In this way, the absolute right to exclude granted by the property value of Whiteness determines not only who is hired and for what positions, but also ensures that the few Indigenous consultants hired by divisions cannot effectively meet the needs and rights of Indigenous students. The right to exclude was also found to determine how staff other than teachers are placed at schools with high Indigenous student enrollments. For instance, one participant recognized:

This school has the most EAs [educational assistants] in the entire school division and we could use more. I've only got one and if that one is taking the full-time student who needs personal care then I am the only one in here and it is crazy. (P12)

While this particular school may have more EAs than other schools, the school is also home to one of the highest rates of families living in extreme poverty and a disproportional number of students at the school, according to the participant, are below grade level.

In addition to staffing, distribution of funding was also found to be determined by the absolute right to exclude as White authorities overwhelmingly determine who has access to funding and how funding will be spent. For example, this participant shared:

We are in a school building that was built in the sixties and it's really a crappy run down building without the proper facilities. Even the building, it's not a good thing, the building, you can't be proud of this building, you can be but we're not giving our kids the best, this isn't the best school in the division. (P12)

This recognition speaks to the division's ability to determine how funding is spent in ways that uphold Whiteness, and the use and enjoyment rights of schools with primarily White students, as it is unlikely a school in a White area would operate with such rundown conditions. Another participant explained how provincial and federal funding formulas benefit provincial schools in general when students from reserves attend. This participant shared:

Let's say those [reserve] communities get \$800,000 dollars for their kids, but then the ones that go to Blaine Lake and Leask, Prairie Spirit takes theirs. So out of that \$800,000 dollars they are probably giving \$700,000 to Prairie Spirit, which leaves them with very little money...I think I am pretty close in my figures, let's say the feds give \$5000 tuition for a kid to go to school on the reserve, provincial kids are funded probably about \$13,000 dollars so that is a huge discrepancy right there. It makes a difference in education if you have money or not. (P8)

The authority to determine how K-12 school funding is distributed is a powerful example of the absolute right to exclude held by carriers of the property value of Whiteness in the Saskatchewan provincial K-12 school system.

The absolute right to exclude was also evident through stories about White students who exclude Indigenous students from social power. Some of the participants recognized Indigenous students often do not feel welcome or comfortable in schools. One participant shared:

I think it is more segregated in high school and I think we have huge issues in high schools with our First Nations and Métis kids. I don't think that they feel any sort of welcoming or belonging unless they go to [the Indigenous-focused high school]. (P9)

Reflecting a similar awareness, another participant stated:

I think again it has to do with isolation. In our school a lot of the First Nations kids stick together and the White kids stick together and it is very evident when you go into an assembly at school the way the kids sit is an indication of how they feel in the school and where they feel comfortable. I have heard [White] kids say racist things but I feel like it is not even the person or the individualized racism, it is the institutionalized separation that is playing out in the biggest way. (P5)

That this exclusion is accepted by and perhaps not noticed by a majority of White teachers indicates the power of the absolute right of White teachers and students to exclude Indigenous students from the social and academic culture of schools.

Mirroring the participants' experiences as K-12 students, the absolute right to exclude was also found to operate in how the curriculum is taught and through the pedagogical choices of White teachers and others. Since a majority of Saskatchewan teachers are White and can use their White property value to determine what content is taught regardless of what is outlined in the curriculum or mandated by the Ministry of Education, White teachers have the absolute right to exclude all knowledge that challenges and undermines Whiteness. In addition, it is assumed a majority of curriculum developers are White and therefore also hold power to determine the curricular outcomes and indicators for every grade level and subject area, which may or may not disrupt Whiteness and colonial interpretations of content. For example, although Treaty Education has been mandated for years, teachers continue to have the right to exclude this content at their discretion. As one participant recalled, "I know there were two teachers in the school last year who did not teach treaties" (P6). Although the integration of Indigenous content has been mandated since 1990, the Ministry of Education and provincial school administrators who are primarily White can use the absolute right to exclude to enforce this mandate or not. Consequently, White teachers can then also use their absolute right to exclude Indigenous content from their practice. Another participant highlighted,

I think the curriculum has changed a great deal. I think they are now taught about the Aboriginal people, the First Nation or the Métis people. I don't believe that happened

before. And even though the curriculum has changed, so now they have got these Treaty kits in the Saskatchewan schools where you are supposed to teach it at all the grade levels. And, because I work in the school system, I really question if it is being taught in all the schools in all the classrooms and why not –yet it is mandated. (P11)

In this way, participants recognize how the curriculum itself has changed to reflect and integrate Indigenous perspectives and content throughout the past few decades while school divisions do not necessarily hold teachers accountable to teach this material. The result is inconsonantly regarding what K-12 students learn about Indigenous peoples and Saskatchewan's colonial context.

At the same time, Ministry of Education authorities also decide what knowledge is mandated to be taught in K-12 schools. When considering Indigenous education, such decisions have often excluded Métis peoples. For instance, several participants spoke about the lack of Métis specific programming in K-12 schools, which is authorized by Ministry and school division employees who are holders of Whiteness and thus the absolute right to exclude. One participant shared,

Treaties are mandatory, well what's mandatory for Métis history? Our Métis communities have been really fighting for that for a long time. So how is it even possible that it's still left out? (P1)

Unlike Métis education, Treaty education, which is largely taught from First Nations perspectives, and the integration of Indigenous content, which has largely focused on Cree knowledge systems and history, has been mandated for years. Yet, teachers ultimately have the right to exclude or not privilege this knowledge. Informed by liberal, deficit and essentialist racism, various excuses were found to justify this exclusion. As one participant shared:

One meeting we had and the results had come back from the standardized testing on Treaties but and the results were, "Oh our kids did awful, province-wide the results were awful. And, on reserves the results were awful." As soon as the evidence came back that reserves did just as poorly as our school, [the principal] said, "Well if they don't know it, why should we have to know it, why should we have to teach it." (P5)

In other instances, it is White parents who exercise the absolute right to exclude what is taught in schools. For example, this participant shared a memory of a parent who felt authorized to

regulate what is taught in schools, “The parent wouldn’t even let the child make a dream catcher because of the spirituality” (P8).

Furthermore, as this participant said, “I don’t think there is going to be a lot of connection and changes being made until we start addressing the social issues of our people” (P7). In order to understand such social issues teachers must have the will to teach against racial injustice, intersectional oppression, ongoing colonial violence and Whiteness. When this knowledge is avoided, K-12 students are left to decide for themselves why, for example, Indigenous peoples are disproportionality poor or have lower graduation rates. For example, one participant stressed:

When you are living in poverty, you know you’re living in poverty. You know that the people that you have to go and see every day [teachers and administrators] are cruising off in their Mercedes Benzes...They know, but they don’t understand the system that keeps them oppressed. (P1)

When students do not understand the system that keeps Indigenous peoples oppressed, they rely on deficit, liberal, and essentialist explanations. Accordingly, participants reported an absence of anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-oppressive professional development opportunities. Instead of understanding and countering the origins and continuation of racial injustices in K-12 schools, professional development was reported as focusing largely on topics such as literacy issues presented as race-neutral topics. Although Indigenous students fall behind non-Indigenous students in standard English literacy skills, from a CRT perspective, learning about literacy inequities without naming racism as a primary factor in determining such statistics will lead to little change (Ladson-Billings, 2005). Supported by deficit, liberal, and essentialist racism, the absolute right to exclude all practical strategies to counter racism enables teachers and schools to appear to support Indigenous education without confronting racism.

Ultimately, the absolute right to exclude was demonstrated in observations of the disproportional Indigenous student incompleteness rates. As one participant stressed, “It happens right here...why does [this school] have a certain number of Aboriginal students in September and then it declines after October?” (P11). This same participant stated:

We should no longer be in a system where somebody else is telling us what is good for us. Can our own parents and our own people not decide what is good for us? We are smart enough that we know but does that dialogue happen? A lot of time it doesn’t because we are not represented at the community board level, we are not

represented at the parent council level. We are not represented at the principal level so in a lot of ways we still have that residential system where they are saying, “This is what is good for you.” That is why we need more people in the system and we need more people in those positions. (P11)

Interest Convergence

Interest convergence is a CRT theory that explains how the interests of racially oppressed peoples are only advanced by White authorities when these converge with the interests of the White population (Bell, 1980). Several examples of interest convergence were located in the interviews. First, it was noted that Indigenous education units, as they operate within school divisions and the Ministry of Education, are understaffed and do not include anti-racism specialists or employees who are knowledgeable of strategies and theory required to counter systemic racism and Whiteness. In this way, the appearance of a commitment to racial equality through the establishment of Indigenous education units exists but such units do not provide resources required to make substantial changes to the existing racial order of school systems. As one participant explained,

We really don’t in our unit—and I don’t have the answer as to why. I think first of all, who on our team is really educated in [anti-racism]? Nobody, nobody has a degree in that. I would not feel comfortable teaching a group of adults how to properly [work against racism] because I don’t believe that I even have the knowledge. (P9)

This appearance of racial equity, while indeed does benefit Indigenous peoples in some ways, also benefits the White population as well as the Ministry of Education and school divisions when Indigenous education units and specialists are encouraged to not learn about/discuss or punished for challenging institutional racism.

In a similar way, and as mentioned previously, participants shared concerns about school divisions that hire Métis teachers who look White but do not identify as Indigenous when teaching. Consequently, school divisions can claim to have increased the number of Indigenous teachers hired without disrupting the Whiteness of schools, which converges with the interest of the White population who seek to appear equitable. For instance, this participant observed:

When they [Métis teachers] are not teaching about it and they are not telling anybody, that's where I was disappointed with this one particular hire. I am hoping now that there is a permanent contract that she'll start telling folks" (P2).

In this sense, there is an underlying assumption that, because of the racism and Whiteness of K-12 schools, Métis teachers might not self-identify or advocate for Indigenous education until after they have signed permanent contracts. Reflecting the principle of interest convergence, this example underlines how Métis and other Indigenous teachers who are visibly White understand that their Whiteness serves the interest of schools and therefore self-identifying might act as a barrier to receiving permanent contracts. At the same time, other participants believe some visibly White Métis teachers take advantage SUNTEP. As this participant explained:

It is like, 'we can get schooling paid for, let's get in and I will just identify this one time but I will never identify on any other paper, no one will ever know I am Métis.' There are people that I know are Métis who would never in a million years admit they are Métis. (P9)

In this way, individuals who identify as White can claim a distant or otherwise disavowed Métis ancestry to gain acceptance to teacher education programs such as SUNTEP for 'free' teacher education degrees. The practice of identifying as Métis only to benefit economically demonstrates how White individuals can claim Indigenous ancestry while in programs such as SUNTEP but only to the extent that this converges with their own interests as 'White' people.

Funding is another way in which interest convergence was identified in the data. Several participants explained how funding formulas often serve the interests of White students and teachers. Two significant examples were shared by one participant. First, this participant explained how schools profit financially when Indigenous students are designated as special needs:

I still see teachers in schools want to put Aboriginal students in the resource room in special education without even a test, without going through the proper procedures, without consulting with the parents or getting parents to sign off simply because they get more money. (P11)

Second, this same participant discussed how Indigenous students whose parents sign Indigenous self-declaration forms in schools are not told that schools receive a certain amount of money for each self-identifying Indigenous student. Few Indigenous parents understand why they must

self-identify their children or that schools can use this designated funding in ways they see fit, without consulting Indigenous parents, educators, or students. The participant shared:

I also remember we always identified my son as Aboriginal up until grade 11 and 12 because then we realized for each student the school would get, for each student that self-identified they would get [a certain amount of money]. Having been in the education system I always thought, okay so where is this money going, this is supposed to be there to enrich or support their education and I didn't see any Aboriginal teachers, I didn't see any home school liaisons. And what I did see is students on the attendance role up until October then they were kicked out [of school] but they would still take all the money. (P11)

In both situations, providing educational support for Indigenous students and asking Indigenous students to self-identify can appear to be ethically informed decisions meant to support Indigenous students. Yet, when examined closer, the practices often serve the interests of White administrators and teachers who decide how funding is spent.

Similarly, several participants discussed how funding meant for Indigenous students can be excluded from Indigenous students and serve the interests of White school authorities. In Saskatchewan, each provincial school division is granted a certain amount of money for each self-identified Indigenous student. The amount of funding and how it is distributed, however, is determined by authorities who identify primarily as White and hold the absolute right to exclude. For example, one participant explained:

It is not that much here in Saskatchewan, it is only \$124 [per student]. But that is another racism, we need to improve these rates. In B.C. you get \$1200 per student...in Alberta it is \$1100 per student, here it is \$124 and you need to search for grants. How can you have a program when the budget or the funding isn't sustainable? You have to apply for grants all the time to keep things going. (P11)

Although I could not verify the numbers shared above, according to this participant, the absolute right to exclude funding for Indigenous education begins at the Ministry of Education level, where the large majority of decision makers are White. This process then works down to school divisions and schools, where decision makers are once again disproportionately White. When trying to confirm the numbers shared by this participant, I was told that each division applies to the Ministry for First Nations and Métis education funding. The formula used for this funding

allocates monies according to the number of self-identified First Nations and Métis students who attend schools in each division. The minimum amount given to each division with self-identifying students is \$10,000.¹⁹ It is up to the division, however, to decide how to use the funding. For example, a division can use the \$10,000.00, for example, for programs that are not related to Indigenous education or that benefit more non-Indigenous students than Indigenous students. Interestingly, the exact amount of funding designated per self-identifying student has not been released to the public and schools are rarely told about this funding as it is superintendents who apply to the Ministry. As one participant employed as a school division representative explained:

The government gives us money so we get a certain amount per every self-declared [Indigenous student]. But to be completely honest, we apply for a lot of other grants so I mainly work with literacy projects. And, our team is doing really good, great things. It is all about improving student learning outcomes. But, I believe that every First Nations and Métis student should get a piece of that money and it is impossible to run these programs...it is just impossible for all students to get those things. So, if you go to a school that is mainly First Nations and Métis you will get the vast majority of that help and programming. (P9)

In this way, school divisions receive provincial funding designated for self-identifying Indigenous students but can determine how the funding is spent and who benefits. The absolute right to exclude enables school divisions to use this funding for programs such as standard English literacy programs that do not specifically advance Indigenous education and can also benefit non-Indigenous students. In this way, the Ministry Indigenous education grant program is an example of interest convergence as this seemingly altruistic funding serves ultimately the needs and knowledge systems of White non-Indigenous populations. Furthermore, according to the research, no administrative accountability exists to ensure such programs serve Indigenous students or the aims of Indigenous education. The interest convergence principle can be a very useful analytical tool as it can be used to sway political decision making that affects Indigenous education and racial justice and can also be used to recognize when institutional accountability is required in Indigenous education policies, programs, initiatives, and funding strategies.

¹⁹ Personal communication with anonymous division superintendent.
For more information, see: <http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/details.cfm?p=81429>

Discussion

Through a CRT analysis of the participants' counter-stories regarding their experiences as practicing K-12 teachers, chapter five's findings revealed distinct ways in which racism operates in Saskatchewan K-12 schools. Unlike chapter four's discussion, which utilized the CRT theory of structural determinism to examine how specific findings reproduce Whiteness in K-12 schools and implications for student academic achievement, this chapter's discussion is concerned with what chapter five's findings can tell us about how racism operates in K-12 schools beyond what has been presented overtly in the findings. Using the theory of structural determinism again, the following section will discuss how the findings can assist with revealing how racism operates and harms Indigenous students while upholding whiteness in K-12 schools in less obvious ways.

Structural Determinism Revisited: The Missing Indigenous Children

The title of this section was inspired by a chapter in Derrick Bell's (1987) *And we are Not Saved: The Elusive Quest for Racial Justice*, entitled, "Neither separate Schools nor Mixed Schools: The Chronicle of the Sacrificed Black Schoolchildren." In his chapter, Bell tells a composite counter-story about the first day of desegregated schooling in a place where White and some Black communities had opposed integration vehemently. When the first day of school integration finally arrived, something sinister occurred: all the Black school-children disappeared. At first, many White community members felt the children's disappearance was 'for the best' given the dismal conditions in which Black children often lived, their low academic performance in segregated schools, and that Black children would decrease the status of previously White schools. Once White community members and school authorities realized what they stood to lose, particularly the loss of integration funding for educators and programs, an increased effort was made to locate the children. Eventually, however, "all the community came to realize the tragedy's lamentable lesson. In the monumental desegregation struggle, the intended beneficiaries had been forgotten long before they were lost" (p. 107).

The story is told to emphasize how Black children have been lost throughout the history of desegregated schooling which has served ultimately the interests of White Americans. Indeed, CRT scholars have argued the 1954 *Brown* school desegregation decision has benefitted Whites more than Blacks (Ladson-Billings, 2009; Taylor, 1999; Leigh, 2003) as measures were not taken to ensure that Black children received quality education, resources would be distributed equitably, or Black parents and professionals would maintain control of their children's education

(Bell, 1980). Furthermore, White authorities closed Black schools, demoted Black administrators, replaced Black teachers with White teachers, and forced Black students to bus to White communities where White residents often fled to Whiter communities (Irvine, 1988; Taeuber, 1990). As a result, Black children continue to endure White normative education taught by primarily White teachers who often view Black children, families, and communities through a racist lens (Ladson-Billings, 2011). Hence, Black children have been sacrificed in integrated schools in spite of the racially just intent of school integration policies. In the same way, using a structural determinism analysis, the findings of my study suggest that Indigenous K-12 students have ‘gone missing’ in Saskatchewan’s integrated provincial schools.

Highlighted in chapter four’s discussion, analyses of school-based segregation can assist with recognizing and understanding specific ways in which racism operates in K-12 schools through structural determinism. A discussion of structural determinism will thus be continued in this chapter. To review, structural determinism is a CRT theory that argues particular institutionalized ideologies, practices, and processes—and ways of talking about and challenging racism—lead to endemic conditions of racial oppression (Duncan, 2002). Within K-12 education systems, “race equity has constantly to fight for legitimacy as a significant topic for education policy makers. This is a key part of the way in which education policy is implicated in White supremacy” (Gillborn, 2005, p. 493). According to the theory of structural determinism, racialized K-12 academic outcomes and other indicators of Whiteness are reproduced through institutionalized language and practices that mask, distort, or minimize racism. Consequently, “One implication of structural determinism is that it limits how individuals and society at large are able to analyze and critique oppression” (Tate, 1997, p. 224). For instance, as described in chapter one, Delgado’s 1984 study found “the twenty leading law review articles on civil rights” (p. 561) were authored by White males who cited each other. As such, particular ideas and language circulated in civil rights journals have structured the practices and laws deemed legitimate in civil rights litigation which in turn has determined specific legal outcomes. In a similar way, this study with Métis teachers found the participants returned repeatedly to core messages often circulated in Indigenous education discourse such as a need to integrate Indigenous knowledge and content into classrooms and to stand up against overt racism as primary approaches to racial justice. Interestingly, such assertions were made in spite of the complex racialization processes the participants experienced prior to becoming teachers

discussed in chapter four. The following section discusses two ways in which such approaches contribute to the structural determinism of K-12 racialized outcomes: the privileging of content over student integration; and a disconnection between the participants' racial consciousness and their prior teaching experiences.

Privileging content integration over student integration. Contrary to the participants' experiences as K-12 students, all of the participants reported an increase of Indigenous content integration at most of the schools where they had taught. At the same time, the participants also noted the tendency of many White teachers to essentialize, minimize, or exclude Indigenous knowledge and content from their instruction. In Saskatchewan, as suggested by my research with Métis teachers, White teachers have been found to ignore government mandates to integrate Indigenous content and to rationalize the racial hostility Indigenous students experience with deficit, liberal, and essentialist racist ideologies and practices. This finding supports other Saskatchewan based studies conducted by scholars such as McCreary (2012), St. Denis and Schick (2005), Sterzuk (2008), Tupper (2011) and Tupper and Capello (2008). Consequently, and reflecting present day Indigenous education literature and Ministry of Education policy papers (Battiste, 2000; Simpson, 2014; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), overcoming barriers to meaningful Indigenous content integration was identified by participants as critical to the advancement of Indigenous K-12 student success. This pattern was evident in the data as when participants spoke about integration they referred primarily to content rather than students.

Unlike American CRT education scholarship, racialized student desegregation has been rarely a point of analysis within Saskatchewan education. Instead, and as demonstrated in the findings, the term integration has been applied arguably exclusively to Indigenous content integration. I first came to this awareness while examining literature for Dr. Verna St. Denis' (2015) McIntosh research project entitled: *Mapping a History of the Integration of Indigenous Students into Saskatchewan Parkland School Division #63*. While reading Saskatchewan education historical documents, I noticed the term integration referred to students until the 1970s and began to be applied more regularly to curriculum integration after this period. Since the 1970s, numerous province-wide and local Indigenous education initiatives have been implemented by school divisions and the Ministry of Education (St. Denis, 2007). Despite the

overall failure of such policies throughout the past fifty years, however, responses to K-12 racial inequities remain centered on content integration.

The repetitiveness in which content integration, both Indigenous knowledge and, at times, anti-racism content, was discussed throughout the participants' counter-stories mirrors what has been discussed in Indigenous education literature. For instance, in their research with 67 White Canadian teachers, Higgins, Madden, and Korteweg (2015) examined the 'perfect stranger' stance of White teachers and theorized:

When the imaginary and the actual images (i.e. Indigenous peoples who interact with teachers) are simultaneously read by white teachers, the imaginary overwrites and overrides the actual, resulting in Indigenous students and their families being read as stereotypically-informed spatially and temporally collapsed pan-Indians. (p. 270)

While the authors stress the essential need to develop relationships with Indigenous families and to "gain exposure to contemporary and hybrid cultural practices" (p. 270), they did not recommend a need for an analysis of the K-12 racialized practices and processes which reproduce imaginary images of Indigenous peoples. In another study with 21 Paeblo youth, Cerecer (2013) examined institutional racism experienced by students and stressed culturally responsive education in the final recommendations offered for school administrators. Of course, the studies mentioned above are very useful and serve important purposes. I argue that what has led to structural determinism through Indigenous education is not culturally responsive education or the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into K-12 schools but that these particular strategies have dominated Indigenous education literature, even within studies that examine racism exclusively. This problem of privileging content integration over student integration reflects Milner's (2017) literature review of K-12 culturally relevant research studies, as he found racialization is no longer central to this pedagogical approach as originally intended in Ladson-Billings' (1995) early work. Recommendations meant to challenge racism that do not center race beyond content integration, then, perpetuate a myth that content integration alone can improve White teachers' relationships with Indigenous students and families.

Furthermore, "the cultural differences approach reinforces an important epistemological cornerstone of imperialism: the colonized possesses a series of knowable characteristics and can be studied, known, and managed accordingly by the colonizers whose own complicity remains masked" (Razack, 1998, p. 10). Although most scholars of Indigenous education have

encouraged content integration, or decolonization of the curriculum, as an appropriate solution to racial injustice, Lentin (2005) explained that this approach can be traced back to UNESCO's response to the Holocaust in which leading scientists and academics argued against race by replacing race with the discourse of culture. Lentin argued:

[C]ulturally based explanations of human difference and culturalist solutions to racism emerged out of an elite project, piloted by the United Nations and legitimized by renowned academics. To blame the racialized for the culturalization of politics and the resultant depoliticization of anti-racism is to misunderstand the origins of the culturalist project and to disregard the choice often faced by black and 'minority ethnic' anti-racists, from the 1980s on, between adopting the language of multiculturalism or ceasing to be socially and politically engaged. (p. 390)

Implicated in and influenced by this history, among other historical factors, cultural integration has remained pervasive in Indigenous education through policies that privilege content over student integration. Such policies rely on essentialist beliefs as demonstrated in the findings that assume Indigenous students will respond intellectually to Indigenous (or sometimes anti-racist content) while the racially hostile institutionalized ideologies and policies of schools remain intact. For instance, one participant (who I will not identify) seemed to understand that systemic racism leads to racialized achievement outcomes. At the same time, this participant stated:

But is hard because...you just can't change some of those things as a teacher. You can't get out of the classroom, you just can't when it is 40 below and we don't have enough funding to take busses to the woods every day. (P12)

I found this statement interesting as the participant relied on essentialist ideology as a strategy to counter institutionalized racism. This idea, that Indigenous students learn best 'in the woods,' provides evidence of how responses to racial injustice are limited through structural determinism that perpetuates essentialist constructs of Indigenous peoples. In part, essentialist racism is reified through a constant focus on the curriculum as the primary determinant of racial inequality. This assumption then limits how racism is conceptualized as operating in schools. For instance, while CRT scholars of American K-12 schools have examined the curriculum, they have also analyzed assessment and classroom management strategies, funding equations, hiring practices, informal segregation, and disciplinary procedures to disrupt the subordinate status of students of

colour in integrated schools (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). This has not been the case in Saskatchewan education or Indigenous education scholarship in general.

In addition to the historical pattern of replacing race with culture, it can be argued that the emphasis on content integration in Saskatchewan Indigenous education can be attributed to the Black/White binary. For example, terms such as racial segregation have been conceptualized contextually as American as a result of the Black/White binary, which, as Vaught (2012) explained, has been constructed and reproduced as a matter of inequality amongst Black and White communities in the United States. From this perspective, it can be argued that Indigenous K-12 students experience cultural dissonance and not racism. This claim eliminates effectively the complicity of White school authorities in preserving racialized hierarchies and White property rights such as use and enjoyment rights, status and reputation rights, and the absolute right to exclude in K-12 schools. Furthermore, as suggested earlier, focusing on content integration rather than student integration has positioned the Saskatchewan curriculum as the primary driving force of racial inequality in K-12 schools. This narrow vision of injustice fosters an inability to recognize racialization processes enacted beyond the curriculum while often limiting an ability to see how the curriculum can be used to counter racism. As Castagno (2008) argued, “Whiteness is operationalized through the messages that are sent about what is fair, equal, and equitable” (p. 323). In this case, the findings indicate that teachers are trained through education institutions to believe that striving for racial equality consists of Indigenous knowledge integration as this practice is constructed as fair and equitable. Referring to Indigenous education, St. Denis (2007) theorized ten years ago that, “Offering cultural awareness education has become the mainstream thinking about proper solutions to educational and social inequality” (p. 1086). Consequently, it can be argued that the content integration approach, while necessary in the colonial context and Indigenous territories of Saskatchewan, has limited an ability to recognize and counter racialized student segregation which operates through formal and informal K-12 practices.

When analyzing the findings, it became clear that the participants’ reliance on cultural integration as a way to speak about racial justice prevented an ability to think about racism in new ways and therefore to recognize a broader range of practices and policies that reproduce Whiteness and maintain the subordinate status of Indigenous students. According to Delgado and Stefancic (2012), racialized academic outcomes are thus determined through the structures of education foregrounded in preexisting language, rules, and categories assumed to contribute to

racial equity. Reflecting scholarship that has problematized cultural approaches to Indigenous education inequities (Comeau, 2005; McCreary, 2011; Razack, 1998; St Denis, 2007; 2011), anti-racist scholar Leonardo (2014) explained, “culturally relevant education for students of colour, which is defined as one that resonates with and is sympathetic to their meaning systems, by itself is not enough, especially if it happens within broader conditions of racial inequality” (p. 35).

Bell’s (1976) theory of ‘serving two masters’ provides a lens in which to understand why a commitment to content integration has remained a consistent yet ineffective strategy to challenge racism in schools. According to the ‘serving two masters’ theory, the ideologies of advocacy groups such as Métis teachers who are educated through and employed by institutions, align rarely with the needs of communities most affected by racial injustice (Calmore, 1995; Pizarro, 1998). For instance, my relatives who are visibly Indigenous are less concerned with traditional Métis culture than they are with finding employment, feeding their children, and surviving racial violence and profiling. Bell theorized that by attempting to serve the needs of communities through institutionalized liberal understandings of justice, racial justice advocates can unintentionally ‘serve two masters.’ Taking a racial realist stance that is honest about racism, Bell (1976) argued that racial equality is “increasingly inaccessible and all too often educationally impotent” (p. 516). By failing to challenge White supremacy in its many forms, all solutions to racial inequality will inevitably fail. As Du Bois (1935) explained:

[T]here is no magic, either in mixed schools or in segregated schools. A mixed school with poor and unsympathetic teachers, with hostile public opinion, and no teaching of truth concerning black folk, is bad. A segregated school with ignorant placeholders, inadequate equipment, poor salaries, and wretched housing, is equally bad. (p. 335)

Whether integrated or segregated, by law or through racialization processes such as gentrification, the data suggest that Saskatchewan schools have failed Indigenous students through centering content integration while minimizing the racial suppression of Indigenous children and youth. As such, when ideologies and practices that reproduce Whiteness remain unchallenged, such as those identified in the findings, White property rights and racially hostile spaces in which all students must learn are preserved and secured for future generations. Consequently, like the sacrificed Black schoolchildren, Indigenous K-12 students’ experiences with academic and social racialization practices have been pushed to the side in the pursuit of Indigenous content integration.

Disconnections from prior teaching experiences. Although most of the participants can pass as White, and all identify with their White ancestry, the participants were also able to recognize various ways racism and Whiteness operate in schools—unlike studies with White identified teachers (Buehler, 2012; Picower, 2009). In general, the participants were also acutely aware of their complex racial identities, again differing from research with White teacher candidates who Picower (2009), for example, found were “unaware they had a racial identity” and thus “were able to deny their place in the racial hierarchy” (p. 198). Similarly, Solomona et al. (2007) argued, “In our work with [White] teacher candidates, we have observed on multiple occasions the level of discomfort that is experienced on the part of the candidates when discussions of oppression, marginalization, colonization, racism, etc., are initiated” (p. 154). Such findings were not evident in the data of this research with Métis teachers. Although differing in some ways due to mixed-racialization processes and the White property rights many of the participants are granted access to, the findings align more aptly with studies that have examined teachers of colour and visibly Indigenous teachers—whose experiential knowledge is informed by intergenerational structural racism (Jennings & Lynn, 2009; St. Denis, 2010). For example, the findings indicate unrealistic pressure was placed on many of the participants to act as cultural experts, specialists in Métis culture and history, and representatives of Indigenous peoples. Some of the participants also experienced essentialism by being positioned as Cree, regardless of their skin tone, and to be knowledgeable of all traditional Indigenous knowledge systems and languages. This finding replicates what Santoro (2015) found through two extensive studies with Indigenous teachers and teachers of colour, arguing, “Such assumptions can give rise to naive expectations within schooling communities that an indigenous teacher will be able to address all issues to do with indigenous students and indigenous education” (p. 871). Other studies support this conclusion as, like most of the teachers who participated in this study, teachers of colour and Indigenous teachers are often assumed to be cultural experts (Cherubini, Niemczyk, Hodson & McGean, 2010; Jay, 2009; Reid & Santoro, 2006; St. Denis, 2010).

Overall, the participants expressed a belief in their own heightened consciousness of racism as practicing K-12 teachers. As this participant expressed, “I have to say, being a teacher and working with the school boards, the racism has gotten worse in the elementary and the high school. Or maybe it is just that I am recognizing it more as an adult” (P9). While in many ways the findings presented in this chapter provide evidence of this assertion, the counter-stories

shared often focused on specific racist practices such as teachers' low expectations for Indigenous students, barriers to content integration, racist hiring practices, and inequitable funding. Each of these examples of racism, and others, provide invaluable knowledge regarding specific ways in which racism continues to operate in K-12 schools. At the same time, a disconnect was evident between the participants' prior teaching experiences and their experiences as practicing teachers. This disconnect, I argue, amounted to another way in which Indigenous K-12 students were found to be 'missing' in chapter five's findings. When analyzing chapter five's findings, I became increasingly aware that the participants were often unable to recognize racialization practices that they themselves witnessed or experienced as K-12 students. In particular, a general absence of awareness concerning the intricate everyday racialized experiences of Indigenous K-12 students was apparent. For instance, the examples of White property rights presented in this chapter's findings emphasize more generally the racialized experiences of Métis teachers while chapter four's findings focus more specifically on the experiences of students. This observation is not surprising given the participants shared stories from their positioning as either K-12 students or teachers respectively. Yet this finding also suggests the participants had not been asked previously to reflect on and learn from their racialized experiences as K-12 students in ways that may strengthen their practice as teachers. This finding supports Kholi's (2009) research with 12 female teachers of colour who "had a story to tell about the racism they went through in their own [K-12] education, but many of them expressed that they had not thought about such experiences since they happened" (p. 250).

It is therefore worth exploring how the participants' early experiences with racism can assist with identifying how a lack of a critical mixed-race analyses has contributed to 'missing' Indigenous children in chapter five's findings. The concept of memory-work as defined by Norquay (1993) is helpful in this regard. Norquay used feminist post-structural theory to conceptualize memory-work as a process "to reveal how individuals construct themselves and are constructed into existing relations" (p. 245) as a method to expose how White individuals have participated in racism unconsciously. I believe memory work is applicable to this CRT study with Métis teachers as Norquay also argued the method "holds the possibility of forgoing new links between the past and the future. It has the potential to usher in real change" (p. 246). By returning to early personal memories of racism before the participants became teachers, there is opportunity to disrupt structural determinism and the limited ways in which Métis and all

teachers are conditioned to understand and talk about racism. For example, in chapter four's findings, colourism and stories about White passing were evident throughout the participants' counter-stories derived from experiences prior to becoming teachers. In chapter five, however, this awareness was evident only in a small percentage of responses regarding the participants' experiences as practicing teachers. In general, many of the participants were unable to recognize how colourism continues to operate in K-12 schools. Given that racism is endemic, colourism is an integral mechanism of racism, and research indicates colourism continues in K-12 and post-secondary spaces across racialized identities (Baxley, 2014; Hunter, 2016; Keith & Munroe, 2016; Ryabov, 2016), it is unlikely that colourism has diminished in K-12 schools since the participants were K-12 students.

In addition, the participants also did not discuss extensively the practice of K-12 students passing as White to avoid racial persecution, although this was recognized when the participants recalled their prior teaching experiences. Some of the participants, however, did tell stories about practicing Métis teachers who passed as White and were assumed to be ashamed to be Métis. The disconnection between their own individual and family experiences as Métis who may have passed as White to avoid racial persecution, and who benefitted from colourism or having lighter skin tones, was evident in several stories told about how they, as Métis teachers, connect with Indigenous students. For example, some of the visibly White participants talked about sharing stories of overcoming struggles and barriers including poverty and family addictions as a way to relate with and inspire Indigenous students. These participants, however, failed to discuss how they benefitted from passing, colourism, intersectional oppression, and disposition rights. This practice is problematic not only because it supports liberal racism and promotes meritocracy but also because the participants misrepresented their stories. A racial realist approach, one that is honest about Whiteness, requires Métis teachers who can pass as White or who benefit from colourism, intersectional oppression, and White property rights to speak honestly about their experiences. The ability to speak honestly about racialization experiences, however, requires that Métis teachers have the language and theory needed to understand racism and can then use this knowledge to make connections between their own family experiences and those of their Indigenous students. Once Métis and all teachers are educated about colourism and passing, rather than simply empathize with Indigenous students, they can share colourism and passing stories to assist K-12 students with understanding how colourism maintains Whiteness.

Furthermore, by teaching K-12 students about colorism, as well as passing as a strategy to survive and protect loved ones from racial persecution, teachers can avoid what Delgado and Stefancic (2012) called the ‘empathetic fallacy.’ The empathetic fallacy consists of institutionalized ideologies and practices that assert racially just change can occur through using different stories and words or caring about oppressed people without countering Whiteness. This assumption is a fallacy because the power of empathy to create meaningful change “is diminished under conditions of social and economic apartheid” (Duncan, 2002, p. 90). Caring about Indigenous students cannot undo the normalized oppressive conditions of K-12 schools.

In addition to colorism and passing counter-stories, the participants were able to recognize more clearly before becoming teachers how Indigenous students are racialized through language that constructs Indigenous students as deviant and intellectually inferior as well as unfair or discriminatory school practices and programs. For example, as mentioned earlier, the findings of this study indicate many of the participants experienced low expectations from teachers as K-12 students and witnessed teachers’ low expectations for other Indigenous students. Indeed, several of the participants, particularly participants who identified as female but also two of the male participants, felt intellectually inadequate as K-12 and post-secondary students. This pattern continued as the participants became practicing teachers—in this case, the participants reported hearing teachers’ low expectations for Indigenous K-12 student behavior and academic abilities as commonplace in their schools of employment. This finding is disturbing. As research has demonstrated, teachers’ racialized expectations affect achievement in profound ways as racist expectations are supported by racist school ideologies and practices (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004; Downey & Pribesh, 2004; Khalifa, 2011; Ready & Wright, 2011). Furthermore, low expectations were reported by participants as originating primarily from White teachers who in Saskatchewan comprise approximately 90% of the teaching force (SME, 2010). When low expectations for Indigenous students are institutionalized, such ideologies drive the practices of teachers and policies of schools. In this chapter, the participants spoke repeatedly about deficit racism and teachers’ low expectations for Indigenous students and families.

When pressed for more detail about how low expectations manifest in teachers’ practice and school policies, however, in general the participants could not answer this question. This finding indicates that although Métis teachers are conscious of pervasive low expectations, they are not always conscious of the practices and material effects of deficit racism. Other

disconnects amongst some of the participants' prior teaching stories and stories told as practicing teachers include an unawareness of racial jokes told by students, racially hostile school spaces, and informal segregation practices whether through social groups, disciplinary procedures, or remedial placements. The participants also expressed a lack of awareness concerning how Indigenous parents and family members might teach their children about and how to cope with racism. Nor did the participants express how they communicate a commitment to racial justice with Indigenous parents and family members although this was expressed as needed while they were K-12 students. This omission might limit the potential relationships Métis teachers can develop with parents through supporting critical race parenting strategies and alliances.

The findings suggest that a lack of anti-racism education that examines mixed racialization processes from CRT perspectives limited the participants' abilities to make connections between their experiences as K-12 students and then as teachers. Twelve of the thirteen participants recognized racism and spoke openly about their experiences and all of the participants were found to have visceral responses to racism directed towards Indigenous peoples as a result of their Métis identities and ancestries. Yet the dearth of anti-racism education they had been provided, especially in ways that consider and theorize mixed-racialization processes and make use of their prior experiential knowledge, restricted the ways in which the participants were able to recognize more nuanced racialization processes. According to the findings, opportunity exists for Métis teachers to draw from their early and family experiences with racism in ways that can enable more sophisticated abilities to recognize and counter racism in K-12 schools.

The findings of this study can assist Métis teachers with making connections between the past and the present. Such knowledge is needed because the concept of mixed racialization is not always a comfortable one for mono-racialized educators to examine. As Anderson (2015) explained in her discussion concerning CRT and mixed-race studies, "While the presence of mixed race persons complicates racial categorization, the elimination of racial categories without addressing the underlying causes of racial inequity is not a response in the interests of racial justice" (p. 11). In this way, simply avoiding discussions about Métis mixed racialization processes, which relies on binary constructs of race, and often occurs through essentialist understandings of culture, will not lead to racial justice. Furthermore, according to Paradies and Cunningham (2012) a "recent review of 12 studies notes that identity is not sufficient to completely ameliorate the effects of racism on health" (p. 9). Aligning with this finding, St.

Denis (2007) argued, “Although participating in cultural revitalization has helped many to withstand discrimination, it will not challenge or end the injustice” (p. 1076). Thus, asking Métis teachers to better understand and strengthen their identities as Métis also cannot diminish racism and its effects. In the same way, when schools integrate Indigenous content at the expense of challenging Whiteness and racism, and, as discussed in this study, utilizing the experiential knowledge of Métis and other Indigenous teachers, such practices serve to protect Whiteness and racialized K-12 outcomes. At the same time, racism is also often underreported by victims of racism including mixed-race peoples such as Métis because of “the poorly understood (and largely invisible) nature of systemic racism, the protective effects that may accrue from not attributing experiences to racism, and the negative social repercussions of labelling an experience as racism” (Paradies & Cunningham, p. 9). As a result, while in many ways displaying a heightened racial consciousness, most of the participants admitted to not knowing how to challenge racism effectively. This double-bind racial consciousness, one in which individuals are conscious of racism but can see no clear path to racial justice, can be detrimental to one’s health and prevent racial justice advocacy. As one participant explained:

It’s like they [school authorities] don’t want you to be that bull in the china store and talk about all those things that are important...it draws light on things that maybe we need to work harder on as a whole. We are silenced that way sometimes. (P1)

Consequently, like the sacrificed Black school children, it can be argued that Indigenous K-12 students were in some ways missing in the findings of this chapter—through a focus on content integration rather than student integration and an apparent limited inability to learn from prior teaching racialization experiences as Métis K-12 students.

Through the process of structural determinism, institutionalized strategies believed to address racism, such as integrating Indigenous content and standing up to overt racism, as well as a disconnect from prior teaching experiential knowledge, were found to restrict teachers’ abilities to use new ideas, language, and practices which can contribute to racial justice for Indigenous students. Although the examples of racism participants shared as practicing teachers are significant and extremely informative, they reveal only a sample of the ways in which racism operates in K-12 schools. Racism is enacted through the often mundane aspects of schooling including but absolutely not limited to: school newsletters, cumulative file and transition records, report card comments and grading, field trips, classroom management methods, instruction and

assessment, staff meetings, parent teacher interviews, bulletin boards, parent council meetings, assignment comments, in the playground, in school busses, and through sports and extra-curricular activities. How racism operates in each of these examples, like the counter-stories examined in chapter four and five's findings, can be exposed and challenged through a CRT analysis of K-12 counter-stories. I believe that the process of using CRT to name and counter Whiteness is integral to racial justice in K-12 schools. As Van Ingen and Halas (2006) explained, "it is necessary for educators to comprehend the ways in which Aboriginal student experiences within school landscapes are conditioned by their racialized treatment and, simultaneously to acknowledge how race necessarily conditions the social space of school landscapes" (p. 394).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This CTR study with Métis teachers has identified multiple ways that racism continues to operate in Saskatchewan K-12 provincial schools. Drawing from the participants' counter-stories, each set of examples described in chapters four and five outline how racism is institutionalized in ways that reproduce Whiteness and inequitable racialized academic and socio-economic consequences. Chapter six, the conclusion, begins with a review of the chapters, outlining the main ideas discussed in each chapter. I then discuss the lessons I have learned from completing this CRT research with Métis teachers. Next, I outline directions for future research and acknowledge the advancements that have been made in Saskatchewan Indigenous education. To conclude, I situate this research within the ongoing struggle of Indigenous peoples to resist racism and Whiteness within Saskatchewan provincial schools.

Review of Chapters

To begin, chapter one presented the introduction of the study including the study's purpose and significance, a review of critical race methodology, and my social positioning. In chapter two, I provided a literature review of research relevant to the study including the history of critical race theory and mixed-race studies, as well as research that has examined teachers and racism, including a review of literature regarding Métis and Indigenous teachers in general. Chapter three then outlined critical race methodology, how it was used to frame the research process, why it was an appropriate methodology for the research topic, and the ethical protocols I followed while conducting the research. Chapters four and five used CRT to analyze the participants' counter-stories. In chapter four, I presented the participants' counter-stories prior to becoming teachers and highlighted significant life stages found to increase the participants' racial consciousness including counter-stories that occurred outside of K-12 schools, experiences as K-12 students, and counter-stories from post-secondary teacher education programs. Chapter four concluded with a discussion of the findings using the theory of structural determinism to reveal what the findings mean in terms of how racism continues to operate in Saskatchewan provincial K-12 schools. Like chapter four, chapter five presented the participants' counter-stories from their experiences as practicing teachers and discussed how the findings reveal how Indigenous

students are often ‘missing’ in Indigenous education initiatives. To conclude, this chapter provides a review of the chapters, outlines the lessons I learned from using CRT to analyze Métis teachers’ counter-stories, and discusses direction for future research.

Lessons Learned

One of the overall findings of this research is that Métis teachers and teacher candidates can benefit from CRT and MRS analyses when they understand the power of their experiential knowledge. When knowledgeable about CRT and MRS, I believe Métis teachers, administrators, and K-12 professionals in general can become formidable players in advancing Indigenous education through using their counter-stories to challenge often taken for granted ways in which Whiteness is normalized in schools. In addition, disrupting the idea that mixed-race people who can pass or benefit from colourism have full access to White power and resources can be instrumental in supporting Métis teachers with becoming more confident and engaged in critical race practice. As White property rights are regulated by those who have increased disposition rights and Métis experiences with racism are shaped by intersectional systems of oppression, binary approaches to racial justice cannot reflect the full range of racialized experiential knowledge held by Métis educators and students. Furthermore, Métis educators need and deserve to understand how racism operates in order to demand new and more effective ways to challenge Whiteness. CRT provides an effective framework in which to accomplish these goals.

Second, this research has taught me that a need exists for additional CRT research in Indigenous education concerning the multiple institutionalized ways in which Indigenous peoples experience racial injustices. CRT can be used to examine broad areas of study in education including educational administration, psychology, and curriculum studies and how these areas contribute to the structural determinism of racialized K-12 social and academic outcomes. This research study also emphasized a need to conduct more research concerning how White property rights and interest convergence reproduce Whiteness and racial injustices in schools. In addition, using CRT, there is also a need to examine how colorism operates in Canadian schools to preserve Whiteness and Indigenous subordination. CRT can be used to reveal how racism operates in Saskatchewan education across grade level and subject areas, and through the everyday interactions and practices of teachers and administrators. More research is also needed that utilizes Crenshaw’s theory of intersectional oppression to understand how Indigenous students, educators, and families experience oppression in K-12 education systems. Turning to

QueerCrit, DisabilityCrit, and FemCrit, as well as Latina/oCrit can assist with this objective.

A third important lesson I learned from this research is that CRT and MRS can benefit post-secondary teacher education programs. As a Métis mixed-race educator who did not attend SUNTEP, I often felt marginalized in post-secondary education even though I could pass as White and had fluctuating access to White property rights. Specifically, my White property rights were diminished when I challenged my White friends' racist remarks. Otherwise, I was not aware of the racist colonial institution I was learning from and assumed something was wrong with me and my ability to learn as I struggled throughout my Education degree program. Learning about CRT and MRS has been transformative for me as I have come to understand how racism and Whiteness are reproduced in K-12 schools in specific ways. One of the important lessons I have taken away from this dissertation is that including CRT in teacher education programs must take place in ways that foreground CRT in the original CRT legal scholarship, tenets, and theories. Simply stating that research is influenced by CRT because it recognizes that racism is endemic is not an efficient way to utilize CRT. Rather, those who bring CRT knowledge into teacher education programs must have a firm grasp on the history of CRT and its multiple but distinct theoretical strands. In addition, this research suggests that post-secondary teacher education programs can benefit from incorporating MRS. The practice of incorporating MRS into teacher education programs, particularly anti-oppressive education courses, can assist teacher candidates with better recognizing more concrete ways in which racism and racialization processes operate and can lead to increased engagement among mixed-race, not only Métis, teacher candidates who may feel excluded from common approaches to anti-oppressive education. All teacher candidates, regardless of racialized identities, need to see themselves as participating in anti-racism education with clear roles and validated racial identities. By providing racially just knowledge that resonates with more teacher candidates, there may be opportunity to counter long-standing patterns of backlash to anti-racism education in colleges of education. After completing my study, I believe that CRT can "call into question many of the practices of teachers in schools" (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005, p. 14), which preserve White property rights and are regulated and supported by provincial school division authorities.

Crenshaw's theory of expansive justice provides a useful framework in which to determine how and if K-12 practices support racial justice. According to Crenshaw (1988):

The expansive view stresses equality as a result, and looks to real consequences for African-Americans. It interprets the objective of antidiscrimination law as the eradication of the substantive conditions of Black subordination and attempts to enlist the institutional power of the courts to further the national goal of eradicating the effects of racial oppression. (p. 1341)

Specifically, expansive justice is concerned with using the institutional power of K-12 schools to eradicate the subordinate position of Indigenous and all oppressed peoples. Unlike expansive justice, Crenshaw (1988) theorized the majority of institutional practices which claim to be racially just are informed by restrictive views of justice, arguing:

The restrictive vision, which exists side by side with this expansive view, treats equality as a process, downplaying the significance of actual outcomes. The primary objective of antidiscrimination law, according to this vision, is to prevent future wrongdoing rather than to redress present manifestations of past injustice... Moreover, even when injustice is found, efforts to redress it must be balanced against, and limited by, competing interests of white workers—even when those interests were actually created by the subordination of Blacks. The innocence of whites weighs more heavily than do the past wrongs committed upon Blacks and the benefits that whites derived from those wrongs. (p. 1342)

By treating equality as a process, restrictive justice emphasizes incremental change and assumes justice is generally achieved other than as reflected in sporadic isolated incidents. In this way, as Crenshaw theorized, those who advocate for restrictive justice need not concern themselves with rectifying ‘present manifestations of past injustices’ or compete against the interests of White people. While restrictive racial justice might have some perceived positive effects, this form of justice does not counter the subordinate conditions experienced by racially oppressed peoples.

Restrictive justice works ultimately to protect Whiteness by celebrating the accomplishments of institutions which are constructed as fair, neutral, and, socially just. For example, including Indigenous knowledge in classrooms is a form of restrictive justice when racism and Whiteness are not also named and challenged at an institutional level. Removing Indigenous students from integrated or segregated schools can also be understood as a form of restrictive justice. Expansive justice, on the other hand, looks for outcomes. In this sense, simply balancing the graduation rates of K-12 students cannot ensure expansive justice as a

myriad of other factors must be considered. For instance, researchers must ask what is being taught, examine the quality of instruction and assessment, evaluate the grades that are distributed to students, and assess the racialized cultures of schools. Reflecting the original critiques of critical legal theory that led to the development of CRT, a CRT perspective of Saskatchewan education would also assert that: Indigenous peoples have not caused their own oppression through participating in provincial Western K-12 schools (which some continue to argue has caused cultural dissonance); Indigenous students do not have the option of abandoning rights to K-12 education; and Indigenous families do not have the luxury of waiting for an imagined alternative system. Rather, while hoping and striving for an emancipatory sovereign future for all Indigenous students, CRT scholars stress that change must and *can* occur within the present system. I believe it is also important to challenge insinuations that CRT is somehow less academic and rigorous than theory used commonly in anti-racist education such as post-structural theory, theorized primarily by White men who did not center race in their analyses. CRT is grounded in complex academic legal theory and to imply it is inferior to theory originating from White scholars contributes to racist ideologies and upholds White supremacist hierarchies.

Direction for Future Research

Given the lessons I have learned from this research, a general recommendation that has developed from this study is for researchers to use and include CRT analyses in Indigenous education research and education. For example, the interest convergence theory can be used to understand and demonstrate how funding is often only granted to Métis education projects when this serves the broader White population (e.g. Howe, 2011). So, too, can CRT be used to examine how racialized punishments are distributed (Anyon et al., 2017). Moreover, as displayed in the findings, the participants told counter-stories about teachers' deficit racism which led to pervasive low expectations for Indigenous students, information that as Métis K-12 students the participants could feel but not prove. Therefore, a CRT analysis of Indigenous education indicates that insider knowledge is required to document how in private spaces teachers construct Indigenous students with racist ideologies that preserve Whiteness. Without this insider knowledge, Indigenous education research that seeks to learn from Indigenous K-12 students to create institutional change is an inadequate strategy. Furthermore, Métis experiential knowledge and histories of resistance to racialization including critical race parenting were found

to be missing in post-secondary teacher education programs, suggesting that the CRT understanding of revisionist history is needed in teacher education programs.

There is also a need to conduct further research concerning effective racially just practices that can counter the different mechanisms of racism identified in this study. We cannot assume that once teachers see racism more clearly as a result of this study and other anti-racism scholarship that they will know how to teach differently. Rather, there is a need to use CRT in ways that can assist teachers with strengthening their vocabulary, analytical skills, and pedagogy in ways that lead to racial justice. As discussed in chapter five, although the participants' teaching experiential knowledge shared in chapter five is very valuable and can be analyzed using CRT to reveal and name specific practices in which Whiteness is reproduced in K-12 schools, a focus on certain areas of racial inequity and approaches to racial injustices, as well as a disconnect from prior teaching experiences, was evident when chapter four was compared to chapter five's findings. Consequently, the findings suggest that experiencing racism does not necessarily lead to an ability to identify how racism operates in less obvious ways. The findings also suggest that experiencing racism does not ensure one knows how to challenge racism effectively. Prior research supports this conclusion. For example, Kohli (2008) argued that teachers of colour require a race analysis to understand how their experiences are racialized:

Recognizing what I experienced as an injustice, but also as *racism*, has been an important healing process for me. It has also helped me to consciously work with Youth of Color to resist feelings of inferiority. As I enter the field of teacher education, I find it imperative that teacher education programs provide the space for Teachers of Color to reflect, as I did, on racism within their own educational experiences before they enter the classroom. (p. 181)

Similarly, describing the experiences of mixed-race post-secondary students in Canadian universities, Taylor (2008) stressed, "They express that their experiences of in-betweenness, invisibility, and lack of support are overlooked and misunderstood" (p. 89). Such racialization experiences were also identified in this study with Métis teachers regardless of the participants' skin tone. Similar to Kohli's observation, learning how to recognize mixed racialization processes and to name these as injustices is an important starting point in an anti-racism framework that includes and deconstructs mixed racialization processes. The findings of this dissertation therefore support the initial motivation for this study which was informed by working

with Métis teacher candidates as described in chapter one's introduction. In particular, this study was motivated by my awareness of a need for a critical race education framework in which Métis teachers are positioned as mixed-race and can share their experiential knowledge and support each other. Due to the limited number of teachers who participated in this study, however, there is a need to conduct further CRT research with Métis educators. Beyond what has been discussed in chapter four and five's discussions, the following sections highlight several recommendations for future research which can expand the original aims of my research.

Métis reactions to racism. Continued investigations regarding how Métis teachers react to racism directed to Indigenous peoples and how such reactions can act as a springboard to engagement with anti-racism education is a recommendation of this study. Regardless of skin tone, the Métis teachers who participated in my study told counter-stories that suggest they each shared common experiences of racialization within K-12 schools. As this study infers, Métis who can pass as White or who benefit from colourism can be racialized as inferior at the moment of self-identification yet at the same time are granted fluctuating access to White property rights. In addition, Métis teachers who are visibly Indigenous are often essentialized as First Nations or when identifying as Métis are often pushed aside in Indigenous education initiatives. Furthermore, whether recognized publically as Indigenous or not, all of the Métis teachers in this study feel the effects of racism at a personal level. As this study found, Métis children and youth are affected directly by racism in visceral ways in spite of their racial appearance and thus all Métis children and youth require knowledge to understand and counter racialization processes. For example, this participant who can pass as White shared:

I can recognize about myself that I definitely feel more offended when people are making those kinds of comments than I do if they are making homophobic comments...I don't think it is cool to be homophobic, that offends me as well...Yes they [racist comments about Indigenous peoples] definitely do bother me more...I can get in quite a rage about that. (P10)

Another visibly White participant shared: "I guess it is racism in a different way; it is like racism that should apply to you but doesn't, but does. It does because...I know if they knew who I was that joke would apply to me" (P5). Similarly, this visibly White participant shared he responded to racist comments by saying, "You are talking about me or hey, I am Native too, or something like that, you know?" (P3). This same participant also spoke about connections with visibly

Indigenous family members, saying, “Even though I haven’t experienced the same oppressions as a lot of my Native relatives or friends, I share a history, a connection. My family has certainly experienced and suffered from racism” (P3). Even if only partial, the participants expressed an awareness that racism targeted at Indigenous people is directed to them and their families even if they can pass as White. Yet, simply because Métis teachers feel and in varying yet similar ways experience racism, does not mean Métis teachers always understand the historical foundations of racism, how racism operates in K-12 schools, and how to recognize and challenge Whiteness. Consequently, as highlighted and drawing from the findings of this study, a need exists to provide Métis teachers with, and to expand current approaches to, anti-racism education.

Métis microaggressions. A second recommendation for further research includes additional research concerning Métis teachers’ experiences with micro-aggressions. Racial microaggressions include the “subtle, stunning, often automatic, and nonverbal exchanges which are ‘put downs’ of blacks [and other racially oppressed populations] by offenders” (Pierce, Carew, Pierce-Gonzalas & Wills, 1978, p. 66). Micro-aggressions can also be verbal through, for example, language that may appear to be positive but is in actuality a back-handed compliment. For instance, when teachers express how surprised they are about a Métis student’s ability to articulate complex ideas, this can be considered a micro-aggression. Microaggressions may be difficult to ‘prove’ but are ‘felt’ as they inform the speech and actions of the dominant White population (Solorzano, 1997) and the policies and discourse of institutions (Davis, 1989; Solorzano, Ceja & Yasso, 2000). Huber and Solorzano (2015) further explained, “Microaggressions are the layered, cumulative and often subtle and unconscious forms of racism that target People of Color. They are the everyday reflections of larger racist structures and ideological beliefs that impact People of Color’s lives” (p. 302). For example, in their study with 75 teachers of colour at both K-12 and post-secondary institutions, DeCuir-Gunby and Gunby (2016) stressed, “Where a racial microaggression occurs, institutional racism operates to enforce it” (p. 306). Microaggressions are normalized within White supremacist societies as, “[t]he inferiority of the [racially oppressed] is more than an implicit assertion; it is a background assumption that supports the seizure of a prerogative” (Davis, 1989, p. 1568).

It is important to conduct additional research concerning racial microaggressions, such as pervasive low expectations as identified in my study, in part because microaggressions have been found to cause psychological, social, and political harm to racially oppressed people (Delgado,

1993). In terms of education, Ladson-Billings (1998) stressed, “These daily indignities take their toll on people of colour. When these indignities are skimmed over in the classroom that purports to develop students into citizens, it is no wonder students “blow off” classroom discourse” (p. 16). The health consequences of racial microaggressions have been reported in quantitative research. For instance, when examining the health effects of racial micro-aggressions, Paradies and Cunningham (2012) found, “racism acts (at least in part) as a form of stress that, in turn, leads to both physical and mental ill-health through various psychological and physical consequences” (p. 9). Brondolo et al. (2009) theorized that “Racism is a potent psychosocial stressor that is characterized by both social ostracism and blocked economic opportunity” (p. 2). The mixed racialization processes which Métis teachers endure can assist with identifying racial micro-aggressions and other acts of racism from unique perspectives. For instance, in her study with ten mixed-race college students in the United States, Harris (2016) found microaggressions are experienced through essentialist constructs of racial identity as “[m]onoracism embeds and normalizes a monoracial-only paradigm of race” (p. 5). In a similar way, the data of this research with Métis teachers infers that the participants’ experiences as practicing teachers continue to mirror historical racialization processes where Métis were pushed to the sides of society or were forced or pressured to identify as White or First Nations, providing evidence that, “Racialization is an ideological process, an historically specific one” (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 64). From a CRT lens, it can be assumed that Métis teachers have endured and witnessed racism directed to others from White teachers, teacher candidates, professors, and others. Through studying how Métis teachers, teacher candidates, K-12 students and others experience and witness racial microaggressions directed to Indigenous and people of colour in general, we can more effectively counter racialization processes that advantage those who carry White property rights, including some Métis. Identifying microaggressions can heighten the racial consciousness of school authorities and Indigenous education advocates who hold potential to advance current approaches to racial justice in teacher education programs and K-12 schools.

Colourism stories. Another recommendation that stems from this research is a need to conduct extensive research concerning how colourism operates in schools. In general, anti-racism and Indigenous education scholars have ignored the process colourism. Yet, as my study found, colourism plays a fundamental role in how Indigenous and people of colour experience racism. This under-examined process is significant because “understanding classroom dynamics

is a critical part of understanding how colorism operates in schools” (Hunter, 2016, p. 56). McGee, Alveraz, and Milner (2016) further “stress[ed] the importance of offering curriculum and experiences that allow teachers to not only develop a greater understanding of race as well as colorism, as it is a central component of how race operates in schools” (p. 70). For example, colourism extends beyond the experiences of students as “Light-skinned parents of color may have an advantage over their darker-skinned counterparts when it comes to advocating with teachers and administrators” (Hunter, 2016, p. 57). Until such practices are named and identified through teacher education, the curriculum, and educational policies, colourism will continue to contribute to the structural determinism of K-12 outcomes.

Beyond understanding how colourism operates in schools, there is also a need to conduct research concerning how to teach students about colourism effectively and in empowering ways. This recommendation is supported by Takimoto Amos’ (2016) study with four teacher candidates who are described as ‘of colour’:

The participants...experienced emotional and psychological upheavals through the interactions with white students...all the participants were impacted in the same way: they were afraid that they might be labeled as the ones who spoke up against the white students, made to believe that they were the ones who were over-thinking, and fearful of the possibility of retaliation and ostracism from their white peers. In addition, they started to worry about their future employment where they would be surrounded by white colleagues who believed and behaved like their white peers. (p. 1012)

Such findings are interesting as they reflect the anxiety experienced by mixed-race teacher candidates who also benefit from colourism. According to Takimoto Amos’s research, two of the teacher candidates of colour in the study are mixed-race and can pass as White, one of the four participants has light skin, and only one participant is visibly of colour as a Korean American. Yet, the three participants who look White or benefit from colourism were positioned as ‘of colour’ and felt persecuted and pressured to conform to the racialized norms of Whiteness in their classroom. Drawing from Takimoto Amos’ research, it is possible to argue that had there been more visible students of colour in the course, the same dynamics may not have occurred as Black and Brown students would not have had the option to pass as White. In this case, colourism

affects the ways in which students and teachers experience racism and such experiences are important to comprehend through anti-racist scholarship and teaching.

Furthermore, for many visibly White Métis, the process of coming to accept one has White privilege, although difficult, differs from how those racialized as White experience this process. Thus theoretical approaches to deconstructing White privilege that recognize colourism and thereby differ from those often presented to mono-racial teachers are required. For example, the findings of this research suggest that as Métis have re-claimed historically oppressed socially diverse collective identities, a tendency to deny White (and other) racial identities as a means to emphasize ‘authentic’ Indigenous identities can lead to disengagement when asked to analyze how Métis have benefitted from Whiteness. The findings also confirm that confusion and guilt can arise when Métis teachers begin to understand how Métis with lighter skin have benefitted from the oppression of family members who have darker skin tones. In each case, analyses of colourism can assist Métis with coming to accept how they benefit from Whiteness and how they can use their White property value, even if fluctuating, to counter racial injustices. Identifying specific ways that colourism operates in schools and protects Whiteness through liberal, deficit, and essentialist racism, is important to understand in more robust ways than offered in this study.

White passing stories. A fourth recommendation for future research is a need examine Métis passing stories and how to incorporate White passing stories into anti-racism education using a CRT analysis. In particular, there is a need to undo the assumption that Métis and others racialized as mixed pass because they are ashamed of their ancestry or are racist themselves. Historically, as Richardson (2006) stressed and my study found, Métis as with other mixed-race people, passed to protect themselves and their families from racial persecution. Furthermore, while such assumptions may be true for some, is it not more humanizing to empathize with those who have internalized White supremacist ideologies that cause individuals to feel shame? Passing is a direct result of White supremacist ideologies and practices. By judging and ridiculing those who do or have passed, we limit opportunities to engage such individuals with anti-racist and Indigenous education and protect the White supremacist conditions that encourage passing. For example, St. Denis (2007) explained that one of the consequences of choosing to pass as White may be “denying that racism is a problem as one way to achieve acceptance” (p. 1082). St. Denis further argued, “In this context, Aboriginal teachers and people when equipped with a critical anti-racist analysis would be better positioned to challenge such effects of

racialization by developing a critical analysis of how Whiteness has been produced as superior” (p. 1082). In this way, through critical race analyses of Whiteness—rather than shaming those who have or continue to pass as White—there may be opportunity to encourage visibly White Métis teachers to use their White property value to create K-12 institutional change. Like colourism, however, passing has largely been excluded from anti-racism and Indigenous education scholarship. The exclusion of analyses of passing from teacher education was evident in this CRT study with Métis teachers. For instance, that Métis students and teachers may use passing as White as a strategy to cope with racially hostile environments was not considered by most of the participants nor were the conditions that cause many Métis to pass as White such as historical processes that have disenfranchised Métis from Métis communities and their families (Richardson, 2006). If teachers have not thought critically about passing, they cannot pass this knowledge onto their students and consequently perpetuate the shaming of those who pass.

Reflecting on this dissertation’s findings and many conversations I have had with Métis educators and others, there is a desperate need to re-conceptualize common discourse that constructs passing in a negative light. Specifically, and as mentioned, this re-conceptualization is needed to honour the sacrifices Métis peoples have made throughout generations to protect themselves and their families. For many Métis and others racialized as mixed, passing has enabled survival in White colonial contexts. To this end, more research that examines passing through a CRT lens is needed as current approaches to anti-racism education often encourage teacher candidates unintentionally to pass. For instance, anti-racism education scholars often claim that people racialized as mixed such as Métis who have White or light skin cannot experience racism. As Norquay (1993) stressed, “I am not a victim of racism. The color of my skin will always construct me into a place of privilege—or at least into a place from which I can claim white privilege” (p. 250). Such claims invalidate visibly White Métis experiences with racism which differ significantly from visibly Indigenous family members and others but exists nonetheless. It can also be argued that the Black/White binary (or visibly Indigenous/White binary prevalent in Saskatchewan) has reinforced the pattern of passing. For example, scholars of anti-racism research who interview teachers often assume or only interview research participants racialized as mono-racial or racially ‘pure’ (e.g. Dickar, 2008; Jupp, Berry & Lenismore, 2016; Picower, 2009). Consequently, Métis and mixed-race teacher candidates who can pass as White rarely if ever read or learn about their experiences in anti-racism courses.

When teacher candidates look White, are told they cannot experience racism and do not see or learn about their experiences, it can be argued that such processes encourage White passing. Further research into passing as a significant area of K-12 education is a recommendation that has resulted from this dissertation.

Mixed racialization. Continued research involving the naming, confronting, and theorizing of historical and continuing mixed racialization processes in K-12 schools—including how these preserve White property rights, interest convergence, and other operatives of Whiteness as theorized in CRT and identified in the data—and how to integrate this knowledge into present anti-racism educational pedagogy is a fifth recommendation for ongoing research. Like colourism and passing, mixed racialization or knowledge regarding how individuals and groups are racialized as mixed, has been marginalized within anti-racist and Indigenous education scholarship. Identifying, understanding, and learning how to counter mixed racialization processes can assist all K-12 professionals and students. For example, because Métis students and teachers are not easily identifiable by skin tone, Métis complicate enrollment ‘counting’ methods used to inform achievement statistics and funding formulas. Métis were also reported as underrepresented in the curriculum and often presented in resources in essentialist ways. Consequently, Saskatchewan teachers must question how to “move beyond ‘celebrating diversity’ to develop a social justice orientation and question the structures that promote inequity” (Anderson, 2015, p. 14).

Ongoing research concerning K-12 mixed racialization is essential because such research can validate the experiential knowledge of students racialized as mixed such as Métis, in spite of Métis distinct Indigenous identities and rights. As Anderson (2015) described,

In many cases, students of mixed race have ancestral histories that include both oppressor and oppressed. In these cases, the easier route for a teacher might be to adopt a ‘colorblind’ approach and to avoid discussions of power and questions of structural determinism. Yet, as previously noted, mixed race children will sometimes actually possess a more defined sense of racial difference...Thus, a CRT education would provide these students with the tools to name these differences and the histories and structures that surround them. (p. 14)

Anderson’s argument aligns with a central finding of my research, which is a need to provide Métis students, teachers (and others racialized as mixed) with space, knowledge, and language

needed to reflect on their own experiences with racism, including colourism and passing. As discussed in chapter five, more research that examines how memory work can be utilized to mobilize Métis past experiential knowledge can provide more in-depth knowledge concerning how racism operates in K-12 schools and possible solutions.

In addition, incorporating mixed-race experiential knowledge into anti-racism education theory can spur more rigorous engagement of Métis and other teachers racialized a mixed in anti-racism education. Specifically, there is a need to document more Métis K-12 counter-stories from which Métis, and others, can learn. This documentation, when shared through a CRT lens, can assist Métis and other teachers with countering racism more effectively and supporting visibly Indigenous students and students of colour. As discussed in chapter five, visibly White Métis teachers have unintentionally reproduced Whiteness through sharing their stories in problematic ways that support essentialism and liberal racism. It can be argued that such practices are consequences of excluding mixed racialization processes from anti-racism education. In particular, the findings of this research complicate what is known about teachers who look White or have White ancestry but are also racialized as mixed and the potential these teachers, such as Métis teachers, have to contribute to K-12 racial justice when their experiences are validated in anti-racism education. Twelve of the thirteen teachers who volunteered to participate in this study likely did so because of the study's title and its focus on racism, as these teachers were committed to K-12 racial justice before engaging with the research. Yet, the participants' racial consciousness regardless of their training in anti-racism education was found to contribute to a commitment to Indigenous education that differs significantly from studies with White teachers. This finding is noteworthy as ten of the twelve participants are visibly White. Regardless of skin colour, however, mixed racialization processes can be a positive motivator in advancing Métis teachers' commitment to K-12 racial justice when provided with the language and theory required to challenge racism and understand their own mixed racialized positions. A recommendation of this research, then, is to continue to understand through CRT research, and utilizing mixed-race studies, how knowledge regarding mixed racialization processes can strengthen anti-racism and Indigenous education.

Métis alliances. The final recommendation that has resulted from my research is that a need exists to examine the effects of critical race Métis teacher alliances. Métis alliances are critical as the effects of racism on mental health have been found to be less pronounced when

individuals have like-minded and supportive friends and colleagues (Priest et al., 2011). As Kohli and Pizarro (2016) suggested:

Whether through a teacher activist group, a critical inquiry circle, or just a meeting of several like-minded teachers, having this community will support the retention of community-oriented teachers of Color, as well as their potential to create transformative educational spaces. (p. 82)

Similarly, Richardson (2006) argued that Métis benefit from Métis third spaces where Métis can gather and be honest about distinct experiences with racialization, colourism, passing and racial violence. A Métis third space can also be used to strategize collectively against Whiteness.

While microaggressions and overt experiences with racial violence can lead to mental and physical distress, a study with Indigenous Austrian leaders found:

[T]he need to challenge racism was emphasized not only with regard to correcting the racist attitudes and/or behaviors, but also considerable emphasis was placed on the need to challenge racism from internal points of reference. That is, it was stressed that one must endeavor to prove the racist wrong, and that racism itself may become a motivator for success. (Bodkin-Andrews & Carlson, 2016, p. 17)

This finding is interesting as it re-conceptualizes the effects of experiencing and challenging racism. Just as it is important to re-think passing stories through historical understandings of the conditions that encourage passing, it is important to view the ability to verbally challenge racism in skillful ways as a source of strength. This reconceptualization can be supported through critical race Métis teacher alliances, which may involve collaboration with other groups. Drawing from the findings of this research, successful Métis alliances would also include disrupting identity politics grounded in essentialist racism that can cause divisions among Métis. Alliances can assist visibly White Métis to use their White property to become anti-racist and Indigenous education activists. As Hunter's (2004) argued, mixed-race peoples who have lighter skin tones have demonstrated "high levels of political activism and racial consciousness" (p. 37) and have been leaders in historical social and intellectual movements that have challenged racial injustice. For instance, to create Métis student alliances, it is critical to "engage in a discussion with students about why so many leaders have been light-skinned, and the unique barriers that darker-skinned leaders have faced in their communities" (Hunter, 2016, p. 59). The research also infers that Métis teachers can encourage other Métis teachers, such as one participant in this

study who expressed deficit racism about First Nations students, to become vocal advocates of racial justice. Much opportunity exists to conduct research concerning Métis alliances.

Conclusion

In Saskatchewan provincial K-12 schools, the ability to advance Indigenous education and increase Indigenous student provincial graduation and success rates rests almost entirely on a system directed, organized, and regulated by White individuals who have the freedom to support anti-racist/colonial education or not at their whim. While the findings of this research suggest that structural determinism can be used to understand racialized outcomes of Saskatchewan K-12 schools, the progress that has been accomplished in Saskatchewan K-12 Indigenous education should not be taken for granted. In this sense, I want to emphasize that this analysis of Saskatchewan K-12 education is not presented to delegitimize the Indigenous education advances that have been made in provincial schools. Saskatchewan K-12 education has made great strides in advancing Indigenous education throughout the past four decades. The curriculum has adapted to calls to action from Indigenous peoples, Treaty education is now mandated, more Indigenous teachers work in Saskatchewan schools, Elders and Indigenous education specialists are hired by school divisions, and concerted efforts have been made to increase the graduation rates of Indigenous students. Research, research, and more research—studying a wide range of areas in Indigenous education—has been completed by the government, provincial universities and research units, school divisions, and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Indigenous education researchers and policy makers now often consult with Indigenous peoples and communities and, in some cases, institutions hire Indigenous peoples as researchers and policy makers. Although this study aimed to reveal the ways in which racism continues to shape the educational experiences and outcomes of students in K-12 schools through a CRT analysis of Métis teachers' counter-stories, it does not seek to undermine the progress that has been made largely because of Indigenous peoples. If anything, this research has taught me how tenuous Indigenous education continues to be in its present state and we must not take for granted the advances that have been made, almost miraculously, in a White dominant colonized context.

The intent of this research has been to reveal how racism continues to operate in Saskatchewan provincial K-12 schools through a CRT analysis of Métis teachers' counter-stories. The teachers who shared their stories demonstrated how skin colour matters; yet, when it comes to racial injustice, so too do racialization processes regardless of skin tone. In several ways, this

research suggests that Métis teachers' experiential knowledge when analyzed through a CRT lens can play key roles in challenging the intergenerational K-12 racism Indigenous students continue to endure. The findings highlight that Métis teachers are carriers of often unexplored valuable race-based knowledge concerning the intergenerational racism K-12 Indigenous students encounter in provincial schools. As I have argued throughout this research, such encounters with racism provide evidence of structural determinism, shaping K-12 academic outcomes.

Ladson-Billings (2006b) stressed, "One of the earliest things one learns in statistics is that correlation does not prove causation, but we must ask ourselves why" (p. 6). Although the data presented in this study cannot prove definitively that racialization processes have led to inequitable racialized educational attainment statistics, it is irresponsible to avoid investigating this correlation. Furthermore, even in the unlikely situation that the experiences of racism shared in this dissertation do not contribute to unjust educational outcomes, it is irresponsible and I would argue cruel to ignore the normalized racial hostility in which Indigenous students are often forced to learn. While some may argue the stories told in this research are subjective and cannot be trusted as reliable sources of knowledge, I believe we must ask what we are willing to risk by ignoring such data. If the evidence of racism revealed in the participants' stories is accurate, what will be lost by disregarding or rationalizing these stories and what stands to be protected and preserved? I argue that as long as counter-stories about Saskatchewan K-12 schools remain ignored collectively by those who hold institutional power, Indigenous students will continue to be 'lost' and Whiteness will remain protected as structured initially in the historical foundations of provincial schools.

As Ladson-Billings (2012) stressed, CRT scholars "have an obligation to point out the endemic racism that is extant in our schools, colleges, and other public spaces. We must deconstruct laws, ordinances, and policies that work to re-inscribe racism and deny people their full rights" (p. 45). I have attempted to respect this obligation by using CRT to reveal specific ways in which racism operates in Saskatchewan schools and laying the groundwork for an unexplored path towards racial justice through Métis teachers' counter-stories. It is now my responsibility to give back to my community through sharing this work and continuing to learn. To conclude, in the CRT spirit of resistance and hope, I hope one day those who hold power to bring racial justice to our schools will listen. How many times must we tell the same stories?

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APPENDIX A: Participant Invitation and Consent Form

April 2, 2013

Dear XXX,

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled *A Critical Race Analysis of Métis Teachers and Racism in Saskatchewan Schools* conducted by Carmen Gillies. The project will involve an examination of how approximately 15 Métis K-12 certified Saskatchewan teachers experience and respond to racism directed towards Indigenous peoples. I am a PhD Candidate in the Department of Educational Foundations, College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. The purpose of my research is to identify how the experiential knowledge of Métis teachers may counter systemic racism and colonization. It is anticipated that the research, through centering and validating Métis teachers' experiences and knowledges, will further the aims of First Nations and Métis education in Saskatchewan.

This research is significant as few studies highlight the race-based knowledge of Métis teachers specifically. There is also a need to examine how 'mixed-race' identities may influence understandings of anti-racism and Indigenous education. I am particularly interested in this project because I am of Métis ancestry and have noticed an absence of Métis voices and experiences reflected in Saskatchewan education at all levels. The inclusion of Métis perspectives regarding how Indigenous peoples experience and respond to racism in Saskatchewan schools may contribute considerably to teacher education programming and K-12 education policy.

You are being invited to participate in this project because you identify as Métis, are a certified teacher, and have experience teaching with the Saskatchewan K-12 education system. Your involvement with this project would involve one (or possibly two) 60-90 minute interview to be conducted at a time and location of your choice. Although direct quotes will be used in this study, your anonymity and identity will be protected, and steps will be taken to ensure that your name, address, and any other identifying information will be removed from the interview. All identifying dates, locations and names will be removed from the transcript. The interview will be recorded and you may ask the recording to stop at any time during the interview. You will have an opportunity to review and revise your transcript before the information is used. Information from this study may be reported in journal articles or conference proceedings. Any information obtained from you or about you in connection with this project will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission.

I do not anticipate any risks or discomforts with this research. If any discomfort should arise you may withdraw at any time and, if needed, I can provide you contact information of counseling services. Data from your interview will be stored in electronic forms in secure locations locked in my personal laptop. All materials will be destroyed after five years of the study's completion. There are no perceived conflicts of interest and no financial benefits will be gained from this research. The study was approved by the University of Saskatchewan's Research Ethics Board on _____.

You are not under any obligation to participate in this study, and your decision will not affect your future relationship with the University of Saskatchewan. Furthermore, **if you decide to participate you may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice.**

Please contact me, Carmen Gillies, at carmen.gillies@usask.ca or 280-0744 if you have questions about this project or your participation in it.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided on this form, it has been explained to you, you have been offered a copy of this form to keep, you have been given an opportunity to ask questions about this form, your questions have been answered, and you agree to participate in this project.

Signature _____

Date _____

Signature of Principal Investigator _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions

Primary Research Questions

1. What can Métis teachers teach us about racism and the experiences of Métis and First Nations students, families, and staff in K-12 education systems?
2. What can Métis teachers teach us about becoming more effective in challenging structural racism and colonial violence in and through education systems.

Introductory Questions

Question 1: Please begin by telling me a little bit about your teaching experience, grades and subjects taught, and identify where you received your teacher education.

Probe: Have you worked with many Métis teachers, administrators, and students?

Probe: Do you have experience in Métis specific education? If yes, please describe briefly.

Métis & Racial Identity

Question 2: Please tell me a little bit about your Métis ancestry and family lineage.

Probe: From where did you learn about your Métis identity? i.e. Family, friends, school?

Probe: Have you always identified publically as Métis? Why or why not?

Probe: Do you always identify as Métis as a teacher? Why or why not?

Probe: How has identifying as Métis influenced your relationships with students, staff, and parents?

Probe: How do you identify racially?

Early Experiences of Racism

Question 3: Please tell me about some of your early family, community, and school experiences and memories of racism.

Probe: When did you first become conscious of racism experienced by Métis and First Nations people in Saskatchewan?

Probe: How did you feel, what did you think, and what did you do?

Probe: Have you found that people in your family are treated differently by society according to their skin tone? Please explain.

Probe: Have you ever 'passed' as a White Canadian or First Nations? If so, what has this experience taught you about racism?

Probe: Please tell me how you define race. How do you define racism?

Experiences of Racism as a Teacher

Question 4: Please tell me some stories about how you have experienced and witnessed racism as a teacher.

Probe: How do you think Métis youth and educators experience racism in schools today?

Probe: Do you feel that Métis youth and educators experience racism in schools differently than First Nations youth and educators? Please explain.

Probe: Have you witnessed racism frequently as a teacher?

Probe: Please tell me about where you feel racism happens in your school.

Probe: Do you feel that you are always aware of racism in schools? Why or why not?

Responses to Racism

Question 5: Have you had any training in anti-racism education? If yes, please describe how this

training influences your professional practice. [If not proceed to (a) below].

Probe: How do you react to or challenge racism? What are the outcomes?

Probe: Please tell me about a time when you reacted to racism and describe the outcomes.

Probe: From where did you learn how to respond to racism?

Probe: What supports do you receive when you respond to racism in schools?

Probe: How do you teach your students about racism directed towards Métis and First Nations peoples? From where did you learn about this approach?

Probe: How do you talk to Métis and First Nations students about racism? Do you provide them with any knowledge or skills to challenge racism? If so, from where does this knowledge come?

Probe: Please describe how you talk to staff members about racism.

Institutional Supports

Question 6: What professional development opportunities have you been offered in anti-racism education?

Probe: If any, do you find that Métis perspectives are included?

Probe: If any, did this include knowledge regarding White privilege?

Probe: If none, do you feel that this training is important? Why or why not?

Probe: If you have received cultural training, do you feel that this combats racism? Why or why not?

Probe: In your view, what institutional and administrative supports do teachers need to address racism directed towards Métis and First Nations peoples?

Conclusion

Question 7: What knowledge would you want to pass on to new Métis teachers regarding how to address racism directed towards Métis and First Nations peoples in schools?

Question 8: Is there something else you would like to add that we have not discussed?