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**Toward a History for ‘Unlearning Racism’:  
Exploring Ontario history teacher candidates’  
knowledges, purposes and identities**

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for the degree of  
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## **Abstract**

This thesis, located in critical race theory (CRT), explores how 46 Ontario history teacher candidates were positioned to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’ (Ladson-Billings, 2003). Through an eclectic qualitative approach that combined a ‘mapping activity’ (Seixas, 1997), a ‘timeline activity’ (Epstein, 1998; Peck, 2010), short answer questions and follow-up interviews, a rich body of data was gathered that revealed teacher candidates’ knowledges, views on the purpose of teaching and their role as history teachers, as well as the ways that they negotiated their racial and intersecting identities’ influence.

The study found that a majority of participants did not possess the knowledges, political impetus, nor a sophisticated understanding of the influence of their racial identities to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’. Three teacher candidates, however, stood apart, displaying not only the knowledges but also an understanding of the intimately political and personal ways in which histories are produced, learned and taught. Additionally, drawing from their experiences as a result of their respective marginalized identities, they possessed a lived awareness of the intrinsic role of race and racism in Canadian history and its ongoing legacy. Their marginalized identities, while compelling them to teach a history for ‘unlearning racism’ also worked to inhibit them from doing so, their already tenuous membership in the teaching profession further at risk if they opted to ‘teach against the grain’.

I recommend, on the one hand, that there needs to be a radical change in the selection of history teacher candidates and the focus of the history methods course. On the other, the three participants’ experiences in their placements point to the vital role played by associate teachers and hence, recommendations are made regarding their selection. It is hoped that this research will help move all teacher candidates toward a history ‘for unlearning racism’ and ensure that those ‘already there’ are supported in doing so.

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother, Sibylle, whose wisdom and curiosity about the world, its peoples and histories sparked in me a spirit of inquiry. This work has been shaped by you in more ways than one and I so look forward to discussing all your questions and comments face-to-face, again, one day.

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## Terminology

Writing about Canada from outside Canada for both a Canadian and international audience requires particular attention on the part of the researcher to linguistic precision. This is even more critical in research that explores concepts of race, racism and colonization, already taboo subjects that have often been softened through more palatable euphemisms. The following section describes the terminology used in this thesis to guide the international reader through some concepts that take meaning only within the Canadian context, and to demarcate to the Canadian reader the specific interpretations that I bring to certain concepts.

**Race** as conceptualized in this thesis follows the view that although a social construct, race is real insofar as it determines access to material resources and opportunities. As Dei (2014) explains, ‘race is neither an illusion nor a myth. It is real and alive in the everydayness of racism and is embedded in the very foundations of our society and social structures’. The term race is often avoided in Canadian discourse, instead replaced and in turn confounded with *ethnicity*, which is more palatable in a multicultural society that presupposes it is ‘post-race’ and ‘colour-blind’. While people can be racialized due to other aspects of their identity (e.g. culture, language, religion), the saliency of skin colour, as a permanent marker, cannot and should not be overlooked in discussions on race. For, as Dei (1999) notes, despite redefinitions and the abandonment of biological claims of race, skin colour remains ‘a permanent marker for distinction, for discrimination, for creating differences’.

I have made the conscious decision to use the term **racialized** in this thesis as opposed to the term *visible minority* to refer to non-white individuals aside from Indigenous peoples. The term visible minority was defined in Canada’s Employment Equity Act (1986) as ‘persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race and non-white in colour’, and it is used by Statistics Canada in data gathering as well as by all federally funded agencies. The decision to use the term *racialized* emerged in response to the observation that the term *visible minority* allows for the skirting of race, a topic that many Canadians continue to feel uncomfortable discussing. In using racialized, this thesis signals a commitment to bringing an honest discussion of race to



the fore. The term racialized derives from the concept of racialization, which as Stanley (2006: 9) explains is the ‘social process of making “race”’. Drawing from Miles (1989, cited in Stanley, 2006: 9), he explains racialization as ‘a signifying practice, one in which a particular aspect of real or imagined human difference is selected to mark one group in relation to another, i.e., is signified in essential and inescapable ways.’ Thus, to be *racialized*, is to be marked, as a result of alleged biological—despite widespread consensus that biological arguments of race no longer hold any merit—or cultural differences. While not discounting the diverse experiences of different racialized groups, and that the term does not necessarily do justice to this diversity, it is still helpful in understanding how certain bodies are marked as ‘other’ in relation to the ‘unnamed’ white body.

***Racism***, while eluding any conclusive definition is broadly conceived of in this study as involving the racialization of groups of people, the exclusion of these racialized groups, and the subsequent negative consequences on these excluded groups (Goldberg, 1993; Stanley, 2006). This three-part definition provides definitional clarity, in that it requires all three aspects to be present for it to be racism. Racialization alone (e.g. race-based data gathering) is not racist, as some conservatives would argue, but rather can serve to uncover inequality and identify the needs of racialized groups. Exclusion itself, similarly, does not equate with racism, many instances of self-exclusion by racialized groups having served as empowering and unifying spaces for marginalized groups to fight back. Adopting the view that only when racialization is followed by exclusion that has negative consequences on those excluded is it racism ensures that racism is not misused. Dua, Razack and Warner’s (2005: 2) view of racism as a spatial project also guides the conceptualization of racism in my research. This thesis engages with this definition in discussing racialized teachers’ liminal positioning in the teaching profession. Additionally, while the notion of racism as a spatial project is perhaps most easily observed in the exclusion of certain bodies from the nation state, I believe it is also germane in discussions on the exclusion of certain histories from the curriculum and the classroom. Following Critical Race Theory, this research begins with the starting point that racism is endemic in Canadian society. It is not an individual pathology, but rather part of the structures that built the nation and

systems that continue to uphold it. Racial disparity is ‘the result of both historical and ongoing social and political policies rooted in white supremacy’ (Blaisdell, 2016: 249).

The term *white supremacy* is used in this thesis to refer to the ‘comprehensive condition whereby the interests and perceptions of white subjects are constantly placed centre stage and assumed as “normal”’ (Gillborn, 2006: 318). Although it has come to signify the likes of the Klu Klux Klan, and overt—even outrageous—expressions of racism, critical race scholars call for a conceptualization of white supremacy that reveals the subtle yet effective ways that white supremacy operates in societies through mundane practices that serve to ensure that whites remain on top. Indeed, as Leonardo (2004: 137) explains the departure from white privilege to white supremacy, ‘the conditions of white supremacy make white privilege possible’.

This thesis uses the term *Indigenous* to refer to the original inhabitants of what is now known as Canada and includes First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples. While terminology is a contested terrain, and not all Indigenous peoples like or use the term *Indigenous*, it is widely considered the preferred term to *Aboriginal*, which many argue was imposed on Indigenous peoples by the government when it was written into the Canadian Constitution (1982). Anishinaabe scholar Jan Hare (2017) explains that while Indigenous can be broadly divided into First Nations, Métis and Inuit, the diversity extends beyond these three categorizations—‘Indigeneity encompasses a complex and very diverse set of identities, ideas and origins.’ Consequently, researchers writing on Indigenous peoples should take care to reflect this diversity by referring to the specific names of Nations and communities and most importantly, defer to individuals’ self-identification. Indigenous authors quoted and referred to in this study are therefore identified based on their self-identification. When quoting or paraphrasing participants and scholarly writings, the speaker or author’s language is retained.

The *Canadian Indian residential school system* was set up by the Canadian government with the objective of indoctrinating Indigenous children with Euro-Christian ways and assimilating them into Canadian life. Children were ripped from their families and sent to church-run schools that forbade them from speaking their languages and punished any acknowledgement of their heritage or culture. Children

were subject to physical, sexual and psychological abuse. Described as ‘a conscious policy of cultural genocide’ (TRC, 2015: 55), the system was in place between the 1870s-1990s, with the last school closing in 1996. The intergenerational trauma has been widely documented and continues to be felt by Indigenous people today. See, [https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the\\_residential\\_school\\_system/](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_residential_school_system/) for a more detailed account of the history and legacy of residential schools.

The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)* was established by the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2008. It was tasked with documenting the history and ongoing impact of the Canadian Indian residential school system on Indigenous peoples. The Commission, which traveled across the country to give survivors and family of survivors the opportunity to share their experiences of the residential schools brought national attention to a history that had long been erased from national memory. The TRC released its Executive Summary in June 2015 accompanied by 94 Calls to Action. Call 62 calls for the creation of mandatory K-12 education on Indigenous contributions, Treaties and residential schools, as well as for the training of teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into the classroom (TRC, 2015: 331). For more information on the TRC’s findings and the calls to action, see <http://www.trc.ca>.

*Settler-colonialism* is a specific form of colonialism based primarily on the accumulation of land, not just resources or labour. Settler colonial societies are formed through the settlement of people on land already inhabited by Indigenous peoples. As Rowe and Tuck (2017) explain this entails the reconfiguration of Indigenous land into settler property, often through the genocide of Indigenous peoples. Importantly, settler-colonialism continues to be an organizing force in societies like Canada, in the face of ‘Indigenous refusals to be eliminated’ (Rowe and Tuck, 2017: 6). Wolfe’s (2006: 388) framing of invasion as ‘a structure, not an event’ serves as a helpful reminder that settler-colonialism is ongoing.

In the context of teacher education in Ontario, there are a variety of terms that are used to describe the different actors. I use the term *teacher candidate* to refer to my participants. While elsewhere the term *student teacher* is used, in keeping with the Ontario Teacher’s Federation, I use teacher candidate. The term *teacher educator* is

used to refer to the university instructors in teacher education. The term *associate teacher* (sometimes referred to as *mentor teacher*) is used to refer to the in-school teachers that teacher candidates are placed with during their practica. The term *teachable* refers to a teacher's 'teaching subject' for which they have completed a required number of courses. In Ontario, aspiring teachers can become a teacher via two routes: They can complete the *Concurrent Bachelor of Education*, wherein they complete their education degree concurrently with their other degree. The other option is the *Consecutive Bachelor of Education*, which entails completing an undergraduate degree followed by the completion of a 2-year Bachelor of Education degree. Finally, the *History Methods* course refers to the course that history teacher candidates complete during their teacher education program that is intended to provide them with the pedagogical tools to teach history. Some teacher education programs rather than having a stand-alone History Methods course have combined history with the other social studies in their preparation programs under the title of 'Social Studies Methods'.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

This thesis explores 46 Ontario history teacher candidates' understandings of and orientations to teaching Canadian history. It further examines how their understandings and orientations are influenced by their identities, with the ultimate goal of identifying how they are positioned to take up a history education for 'unlearning racism' (Ladson-Billings, 2003).

Through an innovative qualitative approach that combined methods such as a 'mapping activity' (Seixas, 1997), a 'timeline activity' (Epstein, 1998; Peck, 2010), short answer questions and follow-up interviews, a rich body of data was gathered that revealed teacher candidates' knowledges, views on the purpose of history education and their role as history teachers, as well as the ways that they negotiate their racial and intersecting identities.

Guided by the tenets of critical race theory (CRT), which seeks to challenge dominant ideology and neutrality, the analysis focused on the silences and 'misrecognition' that marked participants' narratives of Canadian history, centring racism and power. At the same time, moving beyond the role of 'mere' observer, in interviews I sought to work with the teacher candidates to interrupt the view of teaching as a neutral act that most participants appeared to have, seeking to highlight the intimately political and personal ways in which individuals engage with histories.

## 1.2 Background and context

This study is grounded in the view that racism is normal, not aberrant, in Canadian society. Nevertheless, to speak of 'race' in Canada, is to challenge a long-held view—both within and outside its borders—of Canada as 'raceless, benevolent, and innocent' (Schick and St. Denis, 2005: 296).

The denial of racism is part of a larger denial of the historic and ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples and the 'originary violence' (Thobani, 2007: 16) through which the nation of Canada was built. The ease with which this denial is made was best

captured by former Prime Minister Stephen Harper's declaration in a news conference at the 2009 G20 summit in Pittsburgh (O'Keefe, 2009):

We also have no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them.

While striking in its inaccuracy, Harper's statement was hardly unique, but rather, reflected a long-held view of 'Canada the Redeemer' (Roman and Stanley, 1997). As Boyko (1995: 15) observed more than fifteen years prior:

Canadians are often guilty of ignoring or warping our past while sanctimoniously feeling somewhat removed from and superior to countries struggling with racial problems and harboring histories marked by slavery and racial violence.

Today, owing in large part to the work of Indigenous activists, alongside researchers, writers and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to bring light to Canada's history of colonization, and in the face of assessments by international bodies (e.g. United Nations Reports) that chronicle the abhorrent conditions faced by Indigenous peoples, a statement such as Harper's would likely no longer find its way to an international stage. However, Canadian Senator Lynn Beyak's comments in 2017, that the Canadian Indian residential school system was 'well intentioned' and that the Truth and Reconciliation's Final Report had failed to properly document 'the good' of these schools (Tasker, 2017), suggest that straight-out denial ('this never happened') has merely been toned down ('it happened, but was not that bad').

While Beyak was suspended from the Senate, the narrative 'there is no place in Canada for her views' has served to mute the other narrative: that Beyak was lauded by many Canadians for her 'honesty', and received some racist letters of support, which she proceeded to post on her website. Furthermore, her suspension works to reinforce a view of racial discrimination not as systemic or embedded in the very structures and fabric of Canadian society, but rather, confined to the attitudes and actions of certain individuals.

The denial of racism is by no means unique to Canada. All settler-colonial societies have struggled to acknowledge the violence and domination that characterized their

foundation as they challenge the myths of a) white bodies as the originary presence (Dua, Razack, and Smith, 2005; Thobani, 2007; Schick, 2014); and b) white domination as the product of meritocracy and not violence (Mackey, 2002; Dua, Razack, and Smith, 2005; Schick and St. Denis, 2005). Similarly, no western nation will openly admit to ongoing racism.

What makes Canada unique is how it uses multiculturalism—which in ‘its simultaneous celebration and paradoxical erasure of difference’ serves to promote a view that all Canadians are positioned equally (Schick 2014: 94)—as a trump card. Indeed, multiculturalism, considered by many as a *fait accompli*, is often used to substantiate claims that racism is no longer an issue: Canada is ‘post-race’.

Countering these claims is a rich body of critiques levelled by critical scholars who argue that multiculturalism implicitly constructs whites as at the core of Canadian identity and all other identities as multicultural (Mackey, 2002); that multiculturalism prevents any real interrogation of the ‘institutionalized embeddedness’ of racism through its superficial accommodation of difference (Daniel, 2009); and that, particular to Indigenous peoples, multiculturalism represents ‘a form of colonialism and works to distract from the recognition and redress of Indigenous rights’ (St. Denis, 2011: 308).

Nevertheless, what makes the narrative of multiculturalism so powerful, as feminist scholar Sara Ahmed (2007: 127) contends, is that just as the ‘kill joy feminist’, who is seen to ‘kill other people’s joy by pointing out moments of sexism’ so too is anyone who points out racism seen as killing the joy and happiness that multiculturalism offers.

Ahmed’s (2007: 127) argument that ‘The exposure of violence becomes the origin of violence’ takes life in the Canadian context, where accusations of racism are regarded as wounding/hurtful to the national psyche, those making the accusations often depicted as ‘aggressors’. It also helps in part explain the sustained denial of racism despite hard evidence that suggests otherwise.

One need not look far for this evidence. A 2019 Fact Sheet produced by Colour of Poverty-Colour of Change, a network across Ontario working to develop community-based capacity to address racialization and the racialization of poverty, found that child poverty rates are higher for children of colour (25%), Indigenous children (51% total, 60% for those on reserves) and children of immigrants (32%) than white non-immigrant children (13%) (Colour of Poverty, 2019).

Numerous studies (James, 2019; James and Turner, 2017) have chronicled the inequitable treatment of Black students including being streamed into courses with a lower ability level, discouraged from attending university, and a lack of representation in both the curriculum and teaching force. A 2017 report by the United Nations found that racism ‘lies at the core’ of Canadian institutions (The Huffington Post, 2017), while another United Nations report from 2019 (Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, no date) found that Canada was ‘failing’ Indigenous peoples. Cole (2020) and Maynard (2017) provide recent discerning portrayals and interrogations of the oversurveillance of Black bodies leading to an overrepresentation of Black people in the criminal justice system. UN Special Rapporteur for Violence against Women Dubravka Šimonović in 2019 wrote in a report (Brake, 2019) on the state of Indigenous women in Canada:

Indigenous women from First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities face violence, marginalization, exclusion and poverty because of institutional, systemic, multiple intersecting forms of discrimination not addressed adequately by the State.

Despite the above evidence, the Race Relations Canada 2019 survey found that two thirds of Canadians feel that ‘people from all races have equal opportunities to succeed in life’ (EnviroNics Institute, 2019: 9). As activist Desmond Cole commented on the survey’s findings, ‘This is a fantasy’ (Forani, 2019). It is against this fantasy that this study was undertaken.

### **1.3 Guiding assumptions**

This study emerged out of three guiding assumptions. First, I view the history classroom as a political site that has long enacted a violence on racialized bodies



through racist curricula that silence the brutality of the settler-colonial history of Canada as well as the resistance, resilience and agency of racialized bodies. Through these erasures, the narrative taught in most Canadian history classrooms serves to uphold the myth or, as Cole put it, the ‘fantasy’ of Canada as post-racial.

At the same time, guided, and indeed inspired by critical researchers such as Gloria Ladson-Billings (2003), who sees the social studies as the potential curricular home for ‘unlearning racism’, and Timothy Stanley (2014), who argues that the history classroom can be a space for anti-racism, this study is motivated by the emancipatory potential of history education.

The decision to zone in on history teacher candidates was made in response to a growing body of research (VanSledright, 1997; Barton and Levstik, 2004; Létourneau, 2006; Sandwell, 2011; Salinas, Blevins and Sullivan, 2012) that underscores the relative autonomy and power teachers have in the classroom. Conceptualizing teachers as ‘brokers’ or ‘gatekeepers’ of knowledge (Barton and Levstik, 2004) this study begins with the assumption that the emancipatory potential of history education will be realized only if teachers are ‘on board’. Exploring teacher candidates’ understandings and orientations to teaching Canadian history, thus, was done with the ultimate goal of understanding how they are positioned to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

The third assumption of this study is that teachers’ identities influence their historical identifications (i.e. what histories they identify with) and in turn the ones they will subsequently privilege or silence in their teaching if not interrupted. Despite the relative dearth of studies in this area, available research (Seixas, 1996; Epstein, 1998; Peck, 2010) has shown the influence of students’ identities on their historical perspectives. Combined with a critical view that race, gender, social class and other identities shape our experiences inside and outside the classroom, this study seeks to fill this lacuna.

## 1.4 Motivations

Ahmed (2012: 2) writes that ‘Every research project has a story, which is the story of an arrival’. The story of how I arrived at this research project is the culmination of three personal and pedagogical encounters. The first occurred during the summer of 2011 when I attended the *National Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy*’s Summer Institute, ‘Black Europe: Exploring Dimensions of Citizenship, Race and Ethnic Relations’.<sup>1</sup> The three-week institute, run by some of the leading scholars on race and racism (Kwame Nimako, Philomena Essed, David Theo Goldberg, Ramon Grosfuguel, and Stephen Small) offered an interdisciplinary approach to examining Black Europe. Special attention was given to the exploration of race and its intersections with gender, class, age and ethnicity as well as the particularities of race and racism in Europe, and to the concept of ‘Blackness’ as a social construction, an official categorization, and a contestation of the dominant (white) paradigm.

While the learnings of the course were eye-opening, the make-up of the class (of the eighteen participants only three were white) and the instructors (all but one were racialized scholars) had an equally strong impact on me. Not only was it the first time I had ever been in a classroom that centred Black histories, it was also the first time I had ever been in the minority in a classroom as a white woman.

Stanley (2006) argues that racialized students are constantly reminded that schools are spaces that are made for white students. In contrast, this was a space built by and for racialized people. For many of my racialized classmates, this was also the first time in their educational lives that their histories had been centred, and their bodies reflected in their classmates and teachers.

While the discussions that took place in the classroom under the guidance of these veteran instructors served to expand my knowledge and understanding of the history and politics of race and racism in Europe, it was the discussions outside the classroom

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<sup>1</sup> For a description of the 2011 course, see <https://www.connections.clio-online.net/event/id/termine-15247>

that compelled a recognition of the politics of education and how the school system enacts a violence on certain students, in part, through the erasure of their histories.

The second encounter took place in the fall of 2012, when I enrolled in a teacher education program in Ontario to become a history teacher. Fresh out of my Master's degree, which had complemented the learnings from the Summer School with a critical understanding of the role of education as a tool of the nation state in 'stranger making' (Ahmed, 2012), I entered the program with a strong resolve: I was going to become an anti-racist history teacher. To that end, I had applied to what was considered at the time as the 'social justice' teacher education program in the province, the Faculty of Education home to some very influential anti-racist scholars.

However, as the first few weeks came and went, it became clear that the topics of race and racism, sexism, classism and power would be confined to the mandatory social justice course (School and Society). Any discussion of these topics in the history methods course was accidental or circumvented. There was no probing of the basic matrices of Canadian history that the teacher candidates brought with them to the program, no interrogation of the master narrative that is (mis)cast as official history. The history methods course was devoted to teaching us how to teach our students the 'historical thinking concepts' (The Historical Thinking Project). While the shortfalls of the historical thinking approach will be discussed at length in the chapter that follows, I was immediately struck by the ways that this approach worked to sidestep questions of power, knowledge production, and the affective and subjective ways that individuals engage with history.

The third encounter was a series of smaller encounters with the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland (CERES) at the University of Edinburgh that started in the fall of 2012 and would culminate in 2014 with my enrollment as a doctoral student in the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh.

On September 4, 2012, the same day I began the teacher education program, I received an email from a colleague from my master's degree with whom I had attended the Summer School on Black Europe. The message was brief, 'something for you?' Attached was a 'Call for Papers' for the CERES 2013 conference, 'Racism and Anti-

Racism through Education and Community Practice: An International Exchange'. The first Conference stream was titled 'Teacher education and liberatory pedagogies' and the description read as follows:

This stream seeks contributions from those engaged in research and/or delivery in teacher education programs who have sought to disinvest from any pedagogy of silence or containment on 'race'.

I had never heard of CERES, but a quick search brought me to a website where I found research projects that, like the conference, unapologetically sought to put race onto the agenda in education. I also discovered that the Centre took on interns.

That winter, looking to secure a practicum for the month of June (the final requirement for completion of the teacher education program at the time<sup>2</sup>) I sent an inquiry to the generic email address for CERES and less than a week later received a reply from the Director, inviting me to come to CERES and contribute to the Centre's work. I spent the month of May in Edinburgh, working with the members of the CERES team to organize the conference while at the same time joining one of their existing projects, conducting interviews with newly qualified teachers on their understandings of social justice and equity. When I left that summer, I knew that I wanted to come back. I had found in the Centre a community of anti-racist scholars, and a space to further explore the silences that had marked my own education.

In the fall of 2014, as a result of these three encounters, I returned to the University of Edinburgh. I wanted to investigate how to better prepare history teacher candidates to challenge the silences of the master narrative of Canadian history; interrogate the coercive ways through which education has long been used by the state and highlight its emancipatory potential; and confront the ways that teachers are complicit in the white supremacist system—which they have the power to challenge. Put otherwise, I set out to explore how to better prepare history teacher candidates to teach a history for 'unlearning racism'.

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<sup>2</sup> As of September 1, 2015, the Bachelor of Education Consecutive program in Ontario has shifted from a 1-year program to a 2-year program.

## 1.5 Research questions

It is against this backdrop, guiding assumptions and set of aims that the research questions of my thesis were elaborated. In order to identify what was required to support teacher candidates in taking up a history for ‘unlearning racism’, I first needed to understand how they are currently positioned in relation to this goal. Thus, I developed a series of queries that sought to identify both their readiness (i.e. do they have the necessary knowledges?) and their willingness (i.e. are they motivated?), as well as how their identities either support or impede them. Specifically, I asked:

1. *What are teacher candidates’ understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching Canadian history?*
2. *How are they influenced by their identities?*

## 1.6 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis makes a number of important contributions to knowledge. While there exists a body of research that considers what moves teachers to ‘teach against the grain’, the research largely focusses on either improving teacher candidates’ disciplinary knowledge or changing their views on the purpose of education. This provides an incomplete picture at best: expanded historical knowledge means little when not coupled with a politicized view of teaching. Likewise, without a sophisticated and nuanced knowledge of counter-perspectives, a recognition of the political purpose of education will not result in any tangible changes.

In exploring teacher candidates’ readiness (i.e. knowledges) alongside their willingness (i.e. views on purpose) through an innovative research design, this thesis presents a more holistic depiction of where teacher candidates are currently positioned in relation to taking up a history for ‘unlearning racism’ and hence, what needs to be done to better support them.

My research also makes an original contribution to knowledge through its focus on the influence of history teacher candidates’ identities on their understandings of and orientations to teaching Canadian history. Despite a growing body of scholarly literature that explores students’ identities and how they shape their understandings

and approaches to history education, research on the identities of history teacher candidates is close to non-existent. Thus, this thesis provides compelling evidence that an exploration of teacher candidates' identities (alongside power and racism) should be integrated into the history methods course in teacher education.

Finally, in centring the experiences of three of my racialized participants (whose racial identities are intersected by other identities that further marginalize them), my thesis sheds light on the silencing (both by the self as a mode of protection, and by others as a form of violence) that marks racialized teacher candidates' experiences in teacher education. This study is intended as a clarion call for change—both in terms of the way that history teacher education is organized and in the direction of research in history education.

## **1.7 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into nine chapters.

Following the general introduction presented in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 offers a critical overview of the literature that details the key role of history in the nation-building project. I provide a brief history of history education in Canada and discuss its changing purpose, noting the shortfalls that persist in contemporary approaches to teaching history. The chapter concludes with the presentation of a few alternative, critical and anti-racist approaches to history education, and a discussion on how capacitating teacher candidates to take up a history for 'unlearning racism' undergirds the study.

In Chapter 3 I consider a more recent body of research that provides some insight into how teachers are positioned in relation to the more critical and social justice purposes discussed in Chapter 2. I discuss how the current research provides a somewhat incomplete picture of how teacher candidates are positioned to take up a 'history for unlearning racism', owing to its tendency to focus on one factor (i.e. knowledge or purpose), to not tease out concepts (knowledge vs knowledges), and its nearly complete exclusion of any inquiry into history teacher candidates' identities and their influence on their knowledges of and orientations to teaching Canadian history. The literature review paves the road to the methodological decisions of the study.

Chapter 4 describes in detail the methodology of the study, beginning with a discussion of critical race theory (CRT) and how it informed all stages of the research. I then describe how the qualitative, multi-pronged approach to gathering data resulted in a rich and complex body of data. The changes in direction that the thesis took are discussed, highlighting the flux of research and how these changes aligned the research more closely with the objectives of CRT. I then describe the selection of sites and recruitment of participants, followed by the multi-pronged critical analysis of the different types of data that were gathered. Given the study is grounded in a critical research paradigm, which rejects notions of reliability and validity as quality markers, I present alternative criteria for assessing the quality of the research. I discuss the ethical considerations that guided the research and conclude with a consideration of the ways my multiple identities informed and influenced the thesis.

In Chapter 5 I present the first findings chapter of my research, documenting the analyzed data from the 46 questionnaires and 20 interviews. The findings are presented in the order of the questionnaires (e.g. mapping activity, timeline activity, short answer questions, identities). The interview data, which provided a more nuanced and detailed extension of the questionnaire data is woven across each of the different sections. The findings answer the research questions: *What are teacher candidates' understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching Canadian history?* and *How are they influenced by their identities?*

Chapter 6 examines the themes that were identified through a CRT-reading of the findings presented in Chapter 5. The themes reveal how teacher candidates' understandings and orientations are caught up in hegemonic and colonial ways of thinking about knowledge that serve to privilege a white, Eurocentric narrative of history and a 'technician' view of the teacher; and how racism is not regarded as intrinsic to Canadian history. The data further reveals the intimate connection between teacher candidates' identities and their historical understandings and orientations, despite a strong resistance by many to accept an identity let alone its influence. Differences in the ways that the white participants and racialized participants engaged with their identities are highlighted.

Chapter 7 changes course and zones in on three of the racialized participants—Robin, Liu Wei and Ana<sup>3</sup>—who stood apart from the themes discussed in the previous chapter. In contrast to the first findings chapter, this chapter gives space to these participants to tell their own story. Their narratives reveal not only their knowledges of, orientations to teaching and identities’ influence on Canadian history, but also shed light on the silences and silencing that continue to mark history education and teacher education programs for teacher candidates coming from racialized and other marginalized identities.

In Chapter 8 I draw out the themes that traversed Robin, Liu Wei and Ana’s narratives, situating them in the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3. I also introduce the concept of ‘space invaders’ (Puwar, 2004), which I use to guide the discussion on their tenuous membership in the teaching profession. Through a CRT-reading of their narratives, I examine the duality of their marginalized identities. While their identities appear to spur them to action, at the same time they appear to impede them from this action. Their experiences highlight how the teaching profession is not above the racist structures that control the movement of racialized bodies in Canadian spaces.

Chapter 9 considers what the themes detailed in both discussion chapters mean for a history for ‘unlearning racism’. I offer recommendations for teacher education and ongoing professional development and address the need for a radical rethinking of student admission to teacher education programs as well as the selection of the associate teachers with whom teacher candidates are placed in their school practica. I discuss the need to expand the content that is taught in the one mandatory social justice course in teacher education to the history methods course and offer a few possibilities for how this might look. I discuss the contributions of my research in its original contribution to knowledge and methodological design as well as the contributions to practice. The thesis concludes with some final thoughts that locate the importance of research into anti-racism in the present context.

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<sup>3</sup> All names used are pseudonyms.



# Chapter 2 Literature Review 1

## 2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I set the backdrop for the study, outlining my motivations for and introducing the theoretical underpinnings of this research. This chapter presents the first major area of literature that was critically reviewed: the role of history in nation-building, describing the history of education in Canada and the changing purposes of history education over the past century. The literature reviewed in this chapter draws attention to the role of the master narrative of Canadian history in upholding a racialized system through its silences; and it points to the inadequacies of contemporary approaches to history education.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 2.2 situates history—both what is remembered and what is forgotten—in the work of theorists who see it as a key tool in the nation-building project. I draw on literature that points to the omissions and silences that mark ‘official history’—hereon referred to as ‘the master narrative’ (Thobani, 2007)—and how they work to uphold white supremacy.

Although the master narrative and its constitutive silences are diffused through multiple channels, Section 2.3 focusses on the literature that presents school history as one of the most important purveyors of the master narrative. I discuss a range of scholarly works that highlight how the silences in school history serve to uphold schools as spaces for students racialized as white.

Section 2.4 steps back and examines the history of education in Canada in order to elucidate the ongoing, albeit loosening, grip of the master narrative on school history. This literature shows that despite significant changes in approaches to and purposes of history education in Canada over the past century, the newly embraced methods fail to address issues of power, identity and the affective ways through which we engage with histories.

The chapter concludes with a discussion of more critical, anti-racist orientations to history education that take centring power and challenging the silences as well as acknowledging the subjective ways in which we interact with history as the priorities.

## 2.2 History and the nation

Despite the fixedness and stability of nations regularly proclaimed by governments and readily accepted by mainstream society, nations are produced and unstable fictions (Anderson, 1991). Nations are narrations (Bhabha, 1990; Said, 1994) or as Anderson (1991) famously coined them, 'imagined communities'. Given their partial and unfinished nature, they require constant manufacturing (VanSledright, 2008: 111).

Key among the many tools used in the construction of nations is history. Indeed, as Scottish historian David McCrone (1998: 44) observes, history is a key ingredient to any nationalist project. Although history is often conceived of as that which is remembered, the constitutive role that forgetting plays was acknowledged by early thinkers on nation-building.

Ernest Renan, one of the fathers on the origin of nations, stressed that what was forgotten or omitted from history was as essential to the nation-building project as that which was remembered. As he declared in his contentious lecture, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?', 'Or l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses' (1882, quoted in Bhabha, 1990 : 11). [The essence of a nation is that its members hold much in common, and also that they have forgotten many things.] A nation's very constitution necessitates the committing of what he termed 'historical error'. 'This is why progress in historical studies often constitutes a danger for (the principles) of nationality' (Renan, 1882, quoted in McCrone, 1998: 44).

Haitian historian Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995) extended the notion of nations as produced fictions, arguing that history is manufactured, its production intimately intertwined with power. As he noted, 'the production of historical narratives involves the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have unequal access to the means for such production' (Trouillot, 1995: xix). Consequently, 'any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences' (Trouillot, 1995: 27).

In his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, Trouillot (1995) compellingly shows how these silences are created at four distinct stages in the

production of history. The first occurrence of silencing arises in the making of sources stage, where only certain things are remembered. The second opportunity for the creation of silences takes place during the archival stage, where of those sources that were initially remembered, only certain ones are archived, and the remaining are destroyed.

A third occasion for silencing occurs at the making of narratives stage, where historians, in their decisions to research some things over others, leave many of the archived materials untouched. The final stage in which silences are produced is during the ‘making of history’ stage, where only a small selection of what was remembered, archived and subsequently deemed worthy of incorporation into a historical narrative is given the veritable ‘stamp’ of history (Trouillot, 1995).

While much contemporary writing on history agrees on the constitutive role that silences play in history-making and, in turn, nation-building, different assessments of the consequences have been offered.

Lowenthal (1998: 9), while acknowledging that a “‘mountain of false information’ sustains all societies’, maintains that ‘the bad effects are more than compensated by the bonding a legacy confers and by the barriers it erects’. He dismisses the ‘[selective] forget[ing] of the evil or indecorous or incomprehensible in acts of oblivion or bowdlerizing’ (Lowenthal, 1998: 12) as a mere imperfection, insisting that ‘departures from history distress only a handful of highbrows. Most neither seek historical veracity nor mind its absence’ (Lowenthal, 1998: 13).

Other literature paints a much more dire view of this ‘selective forgetting’. Numerous critical scholars (Dua, Razack, Warner, 2005; Leonardo, 2009; St. Denis, 2011; Stanley, 2012) convincingly argue that this silencing (variously termed historical amnesia or erasure), far from being a mere imperfection, is a deliberate and performative act that serves to uphold white supremacy.

Critical scholars in Canada (Backhouse, 1999; Stanley, 2000, 2006; Dei, 2001; Mackey, 2002; Dua, Razack and Warner, 2005; Schick and St. Denis, 2005; Thobani, 2007; Schick, 2014) have written at length about the historical error and selective

amnesia that characterizes official Canadian history and the mythologies it serves to uphold: that the Canadian nation is originally white (Dua, Razack, and Smith, 2005; Thobani, 2007; Schick, 2014); that white domination is the product of meritocracy, and not violence (Mackey, 2002; Dua, Razack, and Smith, 2005; Schick and St. Denis, 2005); and that multiculturalism neutralizes or precludes the existence of racism (Montgomery, 2008; Howard and James, 2019).

Feminist sociologist Sunera Thobani (2007) provides one of the most comprehensive critical analyses of the historical trajectory of the making of Canadian identity in her book *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*. She writes that although both subject and nation are unstable constructs (i.e. there is nothing or no one inherently Canadian) ‘the objective of the modern state has been to stabilize [and] essentialize them’ (Thobani, 2007: 23).

Using the concept of *exaltation*, Thobani (2007) describes how certain bodies (i.e. white European) have been exalted or constituted as Canadian nationals through a master narrative, whereas others (i.e. immigrants and Aboriginal peoples) have been depicted as strangers to the national community, their contributions rendered invisible. In casting white bodies as the true subjects of the Canadian nation, she argues, the nation is in turn cast as originally white.

Critical race feminists Dua, Razack and Warner (2005: 3) have similarly argued that, ‘National mythologies operate to make Canada a white nation’, one innocent of racism. The narrative that Europeans settled and built the nation not only erases the brutal colonization, genocide and slavery that secured white domination, but also obscures the ‘continued exploitation of the labour of aboriginals and people of colour’.

According to Schick and St. Denis (2005), the erasure of the brutal colonization and racist governmental policies enables a pathologizing and blaming of marginalized groups for their own marginalization. To counter this pathologizing, many critical scholars advocate for historic interpretations of current inequalities and injustices. As Levstik (2000: 290) maintains, one can only make sense of ongoing inequalities by facing up to historical racisms. Dei (2001: 141) echoes this sentiment, contending that ‘What is happening today to the ‘black body’ is very much a continuum of the historic

treatment of Black people as ‘subhuman’ and the criminalization of Blackness’. Critical race theory challenges ahistoricism and argues that, ‘Current inequalities and social/institutional practices are linked to earlier periods in which the intent and cultural meaning of such practices were clear’ (Lawrence *et al.*, 1993: 6).

Finally, Schick and St. Denis’s (2005: 302) contention that in order to make sense of current poverty of Aboriginal people, one need only ‘look at the coercive robbing of their land’, supports Pon, Gosine and Phillips’s (2011: 386) argument that it is only possible to understand the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Black children in the Canadian protection system if one understands the history of white supremacy in Canada.

These scholars maintain that ahistorical interpretations of inequalities combined with the widely accepted view of Canada as a multicultural meritocracy, ensure that contemporary inequalities are seen as proof of marginalized groups’ own failings. This in turn engenders a passivity among the general populace, as inequalities are naturalized.

As the above literature demonstrates then, far from distressing a mere ‘handful of highbrows’, the silences of the master narrative serve to uphold white supremacist systems, not only through marking certain bodies as ‘normal’ and others as foreign, but also through rendering power relations and inequalities natural.

While the silences pervade the various sites through which official history is transmitted, the following section focusses solely on literature that points to the silences and omissions that mark school history. I then present some of the research that highlights how schools play a key role in establishing dominant narratives and silencing others, showing the direct and tangible effects these discursive exclusions have on students and calling for the need for teachers to dismantle the master narrative.

## 2.3 The silences in school history

### 2.3.1 *The Canadian history textbook*

Since the inception of public education in Canada in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, school history—*how* it is taught, *why* it is taught, and *what* is taught—has ignited heated, at times even vitriolic, discussion and debate. Given the history textbook's long-established predominance in the history classroom and general monopoly over historical knowledge—historian Daniel Francis (1997: 14-15) noting that for many Canadians, it is the only history book they will ever read—studies that try to pinpoint '*what*' have primarily taken the textbook's content as their focus.

While the earliest studies of textbooks were motivated by provincial ministries' concerns that they might inculcate anti-British sentiment (as they had been up until that point published in the United States), beginning in the 1960s, the first critiques of how race and racism were presented began to emerge. However, as Montgomery (2005a: 315) notes quite tellingly, 'it was human rights organizations, not educational ministries, that initiated the studies'.

Studies on Canadian history textbooks that documented the misrepresentation and marginalization of Indigenous peoples were the first to appear. Many other studies soon surfaced, detailing the denigration of various minority groups and the omnipresent Eurocentric lens through which the textbooks were written (Montgomery, 2005a: 316). The authors were unforgiving in their judgement, McDiarmid and Pratt (1971, cited in Osborne, 2003: 595) reporting in their Ontario Human Rights Commission funded study that history textbooks were not teaching history but rather, they were 'teaching prejudice'.

Ken Montgomery's (2005a; 2005b; 2008) widespread research on Ontario history textbooks indicated that McDiarmid and Pratt's (1971) finding still rang true some thirty years later. Montgomery (2005a: 317) documented not only how certain groups were unfairly represented, but also, 'how history textbooks inculcate racist understandings of the nation'. Through exhaustive analyses, Montgomery (2005a, 2005b, 2008) demonstrated that although contemporary textbooks could no longer be called overtly racist owing to their nominal inclusion of the experiences of minoritized

groups as well as historical racisms, these were superficial add-ons that served two purposes: On the one hand, the inclusion of historical racisms in the textbooks worked to enhance the master narrative of progress and development as the racisms were most often presented alongside their restitution (e.g. Japanese internment presented alongside the 1988 Government Apology); thus, racism was presented as something that Canada had overcome (Montgomery, 2008: 90).

On the other hand, the multiple perspectives that had been added were often scattered across Ontario history textbooks in a fragmented way such that little attention was given to the longstanding contributions and activism of minoritized groups that forced many changes (e.g. civil rights, Aboriginal rights, multiculturalism). ‘Primarily,’ Montgomery (2008: 92) writes, ‘it is state apparatuses like the Supreme Court and certain white male political leaders standing for the nation (e.g. Prime Ministers Diefenbaker and Trudeau) that are credited with championing human rights and racial equality’. This served to align anti-racism with the state, thus containing racism to the past while at the same time obscuring present racisms (Montgomery, 2008: 95).

Around the same time, Clark (2007) conducted a review of high school history textbooks across five provinces (Ontario, British Columbia, Manitoba, Nova Scotia) and one territory (Yukon), looking specifically at how they depicted Aboriginal people. Although she noted some positive improvements on previous versions, the textbooks still failed to properly explain to their readers the institutional and structural frameworks that undergird the abuses experienced by Aboriginal communities as well as the legacies that they bestowed upon them. As she writes, ‘For example, they may now acknowledge that Aboriginal people assisted European explorers and colonists but fail to acknowledge the colonial relationships of power in which such interactions occurred’ (Clark, 2007: 101).

Ghosh (2008) observed that while much racist and sexist content had been removed from the curriculum, racist effects still result from Canada’s Eurocentric educational systems. This she argues, is ‘largely through the textbooks’ non-recognition and misrecognition of the contribution of groups of people’ (Ghosh, 2008: 28).

Glassford's (2010) assessment of Ontario history textbooks taken from three different eras (pre-WWII, mid-century, and end of 20<sup>th</sup>), presents a more optimistic outlook than the one offered above. Explaining that textbooks published in the mid-century portrayed immigrants in a more positive light than their predecessors, he offered as evidence a quote that outlined their contributions from one of the textbooks. According to the textbook, immigrants contributed 'qualities of thrift and patience, a love of beauty, of music, and of handicrafts, which, if woven into Canada's life, could colour and enrich it' (Glassford, 2010).

A critical appraisal of this list—and something that Glassford neglected to do—shows it to be limited to culture. This, in turn, serves to minimize immigrants' other, important contributions, such as those vital to the development of the national economy (Thobani, 2007), and it diminishes their role as critical actors, just as simplistic interpretations of multiculturalism have tended to reduce diversity to 'saris, samosas and steel drums' (Troyna, 1993: 26). The contributions by immigrants that speak to the constitutive role they have played and continue to play in building the nation are passed over. This recognition is, thus, perhaps better understood as what Ghosh (2008) refers to as 'misrecognition'.

Apart from Glassford's (2010) generous appraisal, other reviews (Macgillivray, 2011; Coloma, 2012; Poole, 2012) have consistently pointed to the failings of the textbooks to include and properly represent Indigenous peoples and racial/ethnic minorities. The fact that in 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation's report identified history textbooks as a contributing factor to the ongoing racism experienced by First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities underscores that textbooks remain fraught with silences. As the report states, 'although textbooks have become more inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives over the past three decades, the role of Aboriginal people in Canadian history during much of the twentieth century remains invisible' (TRC, 2015: 235).

### *2.3.2 The Ontario grade 10 Canadian history curriculum*

Setting the textbook aside and looking more broadly at the curriculum itself, Stanley's (2014) review of the 2013 version of the Ontario Grade 10 History Curriculum reveals multiple silences particularly with regards to racism.



Indeed, as he explains, the only instance in the curriculum where racist exclusion is required to be taught is in the unit on the Holocaust, an event that occurred outside Canada. Furthermore, the expectation that students will ‘analyze the impact of the Holocaust on Canada and on Canadian *attitudes* towards human rights’ (Ontario Ministry of Education [OMOE], 2013: 117)’ reduces racism to an ‘attitudinal’ issue, removing the institutional and structural ways that it operates. What would follow is that racism is seen as something that only occurred elsewhere and is limited to feelings and attitudes.

Through his analysis, Stanley (2014) found that the only other instances where racism is mentioned is in a list of examples that teachers can choose from as optional topics to cover. Importantly, in these examples racism is only referred to in relation to the negative consequences it has had on minority groups: ‘Racism apparently only affects minorities. Its role in shaping the dominant group is not mentioned at any time’ (Stanley, 2014: 9).

Chow’s (2015) assessment of the 2013 version of the Ontario Grade 10 History Curriculum corroborates Stanley’s (2014) in stating that the current curriculum ‘actively participates in obscuring the historical and ongoing impact of racism in Canada’ (Chow, 2015: 42). While she acknowledges that certain racist historical events are included in this version, Chow (2015: 36) argues that the wording of the expectations (e.g. students should ‘analyze some significant ways in which Canadians cooperated and/or came into conflict with each other’ [OMOE, 2013: 116]) works to present racist events as mere “‘conflicts” between individual Canadians, and not representative of the anti-Semitism, anti-Asian racism and xenophobia, and anti-black racism that shaped the political and cultural landscape at the time’ (Chow, 2015: 36). Furthermore, she contends:

Even the category of Canadian used to describe both the perpetrators and victims of racialized injustice obscures the ways in which nationality and belonging constituted (and still constitute to this day) contested sites for bodies that do not fit the mold of the quintessential Canadian—white, cisgendered, middle-class, and heterosexual. (Chow, 2015: 36)

Similar to Stanley (2014), Chow (2015: 40-43) points to the fact that the only place in the curriculum where racism is used to describe an event is in the section on the Holocaust, noting that neither the specific expectations for teaching the Japanese Internment nor those regarding the demolition of Africville mention the word 'racism'. Euphemisms such as 'social conflict and/or inequality' are placed in its stead, the long-standing anti-black and anti-Asian racism that shaped the events obliterated.

Finally, and perhaps most important to Chow (2015: 37), is the fact that the curriculum provides little in the way of 'opportunities to examine how race and racism, as effects of racialization processes, generate value-laden meanings to skin colour—not just inferiority to some but also superiority to others'. This is a shortcoming of many approaches to racism that fail to recognize that the very same systemic barriers that work to ensure the disenfranchisement of certain groups benefit other groups.

In 2018, a new Canadian History Curriculum that was revised in collaboration with First Nations, Métis and Inuit educators and authors was released by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

There are some notable improvements from its 2013 version, Nardozi (2018) observing of the pre-publication document that 'examples and prompts regarding First Nation, Métis, and Inuit will now be an integral part of the expectations'. However, a few other early assessments have argued that the new curriculum does not go beyond incorporating more Indigenous people, developments and events into a Euro-Canadian framework and does not adequately emphasize Indigenous sources of evidence (Seguin, 2019: 146).

Furthermore, still missing from the curriculum is an interrogation of race and racism and its constitutive role in Canadian history. The words racism and race are each mentioned a handful of times in examples of questions that teachers can ask their students, however, tellingly, both remain missing from the glossary. Racialized histories and actors remain unchanged from the 2013 version.

Stanley (2014: 12) argues convincingly that the silences that continue to mark the curriculum need to be regarded as reflective of 'the wider articulations of dominance

that constitute the Canadian nation-state', echoing Ladson-Billings (2003), who in discussing the erasure of African Americans, American Indians and other non-white bodies from the US history curriculum, reasoned that schools and the messages they communicate are representative of power relations that mark society as a whole. What renders the silences in the curriculum so dangerous is that 'The official curriculum only serves to reinforce what the societal curriculum suggests, i.e. people of color are relatively insignificant to the growth and development of our democracy and our nation and they represent a drain on the resources and values' (Ladson-Billings, 2003: 4).

While this is an important reminder that efforts to challenge the silences in school history will not get far without sustained and corresponding efforts to challenge the power structures and systems that support the white colonial school system, I believe in the emancipatory potential of schools and that education serves as one of the points of entry for an anti-racist project to dismantle the existing structures.

This is not just aspirational, but a crucial point of departure when one considers the literature reviewed in the following section which highlights the direct consequences of the silences in school history on students.

### *2.3.3 The effects of the silences on students*

A growing body of research undertaken by critical scholars over the past twenty-five years has shown that the exclusion of racialized students' histories and culture from the classroom, amounting to what Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1992) terms 'misrecognition', works to foster disengagement and a rejection of the curriculum, in some cases culminating in students' self-exclusion (e.g. dropping out) (James, 1994; Dei, 1997; Neegan, 2005; Van Sledright, 2008; James and Turner, 2017; James, 2019).

Dei *et al.*'s (1997) seminal three-year study on Black students' experiences in the public education system in Ontario highlighted the disengagement that can result from not seeing one's history and culture in the classroom. Through interviews and focus groups conducted with over 150 Black high school students and former students, Dei and his colleagues found that many of their participants spoke of a lack of

Black/African-Canadian history in the classroom, one student describing his experience as ‘They’re robbing you of your past’ (Dei et al., 1997: 137).

Nearly all of the participants who had dropped out—or more accurately been ‘pushed out’ (Dei *et al.*, 1995)—included the omission of Black history as among their reasons for having left school. One student (Dei et al., 1997: 138), reflecting on what had prompted her to leave, explained:

The curriculum...was one-sided, especially when it came down to history. There was never a mention of any Black people that have contributed to society...I mean, everything, it’s the White man that did. History is just based on the European Canadian that came over...There was no mention of the Africans that helped build a railway, that ran away from the South and came up to Nova Scotia and helped work and build Canada too...no mention of that.

Dei and his colleagues (1997: 138) argue convincingly that the absence of Black actors in the curriculum serves to underscore ‘Black students’ sense of invisibility and lack of status as Canadians’; experiencing regular exclusion, many students leave in order to preserve their self-esteem.

James’ (1994, 2017, 2019) work that has spanned several decades shows how Black students have long been—and continue to be—silenced by the curriculum. His 1994 study demonstrated how teachers’ choices can serve to render certain students invisible. In a case study on 10-year old African Canadian student Darren, James (1994: 27) showed that despite claims by Darren’s teacher that Darren’s disengagement from class had ‘nothing to do with race’ and was instead the result of low self-esteem, it had everything to do with race. Through a critical analysis of the teaching materials (e.g. lesson plans, resources, language) used by Darren’s teacher, James (1994: 27) showed how Darren’s disengagement can be understood if one considers the lack of reflection and in turn validation of his life experiences, needs and interests. Pointing to the problematic ways in which Blacks were presented—as ‘low achievers’, ‘primitive’, and ‘slum dwellers’—as well as the lack of attention paid to Darren’s life experiences and the history of his racial group, James presented a persuasive case that Darren’s lack of engagement stemmed from being invisible in the

classroom. Over twenty years later, his study with Turner (James and Turner, 2017: 55) found ‘a curriculum that is not responsive to [Black students’] needs and interests, nor culturally relevant to, or reflective of, their cultural worlds’. As one of their Black participants commented, ‘Black history is being “white-washed” in the school curriculum’ (James and Turner, 2017: 55).

In revisiting her experience as an African Canadian student navigating through the Ontario educational system, Neegan (2005: 4) reflected that ‘the school system [...] completely negated the contribution of African peoples to Canadian society’. She recalled how the only instance where Blacks were mentioned was in relation to how they had been rescued from slavery. Noting the on-going absence of Aboriginal and Black culture in the curriculum and, in particular, the silences surrounding the contributions of Aboriginal peoples both in the past and present, she drew a similar conclusion to that of Dei and his colleagues: ‘If the students cannot identify with what is being taught, there is really nothing for them to do but disengage’ (Neegan, 2005: 11).

The findings of an Ontario Ministry of Education commissioned study into early school leavers in 2005 lend support to the conclusions drawn by the previous authors, as it found that a ‘curriculum that fails to acknowledge and include the contributions/experiences/history etc. of minority groups’ (Ferguson *et al.*, 2005: 57) was one of the factors contributing to student disengagement.

Recent analyses show that the silences surrounding Black histories persist. As activist and author Robin Maynard (2017) writes, ‘Black students contend with erasure, which is itself arguably a form of violence.’ Black students, she argues, in addition to being vilified and streamed into lower tracks of education opportunities continue to not see themselves reflected or celebrated in curriculum.

Research on the absence of Indigenous history in history curricula has similarly shown how a lack of acknowledgement of Indigenous histories, cultures, and languages contributes to Indigenous students’ disengagement. As Mi’kmaq scholar Marie Battiste and Chickasaw Nation educator James Youngblood Henderson describe this silencing, ‘For most Indigenous students in Eurocentric education, realizing their

invisibility is like looking into a still lake and not seeing their reflections’ (2000: 88). Reflecting on her own invisibility that she began to feel as early as Grade 3, Métis author Jean Irene LaPierre (2019: 1) describes how this led to her ‘fading out’ of the system and leaving high school.

Cooper’s (2012) study on Aboriginal youth disengagement points to the lack of Aboriginal content in schools as a push-factor for Aboriginal students to leave school or disengage. Asking her participants—Aboriginal students—how they felt they could be re-engaged, many of them pointed to the need for more Aboriginal content, one participant stating:

If there was more understanding of Aboriginals and youth, they might have a different outlook of what they are... Everybody being more educated about Aboriginals. The school system putting more about Aboriginals in their books so that they can learn, you know, just the little things that could make the biggest differences in school. (Cooper, 2012: 71)

King and Swartz (2014: xvii) maintain that the lack of representation of certain students or token or skewed representations work to ‘devalue their identity, compromise their interest and engagement in school, and teach a hierarchy of human worth that positions liminal identity groups at the bottom’. Thus, while dropping out is focused on as the main outcome, it is perhaps better understood as a symptom of the disease.

Notwithstanding the fact that the exclusion of certain groups’ histories works to enact a certain violence on certain bodies, King and Swartz (2014: xvii) explain how ‘Monocultural content also disserves students whose heritage is privileged in the curriculum, as the social and curriculum constructions of dominance as inevitable diminishes their access to the human collective’.

Indigenous scholars have long emphasized the importance of non-Indigenous students (and indeed teachers) learning about Indigenous histories and ways of knowing. As Anishinaabe scholar Jan Hare (2017) notes, key to creating equitable and inclusive learning spaces is that ‘all learners develop their knowledge and understanding of Indigenous people’s worldviews and cultures’.

In brief, the silences that permeate school history texts and curriculum have direct consequences on the lives of all students. Students whose histories are excluded become alienated and often have no alternative but to disengage. Stanley (2006: 37) notes that, 'For these young people, school is about and for racialized white people'. Students whose histories are included continue to see white, European history unproblematically as 'the history that counts'. Consequently, they see white, male, cis-gendered Europeans as the agents of Canadian history and in turn as the 'true' Canadians.

### *2.3.4 Beyond the multicultural 'add and stir'*

Importantly, while concerned with issues of content (and invisibility) critical scholars see the task at hand as much more than a matter of adding more content; many have noted that for Indigenous students in particular, it is not simply a lack of inclusion of Indigenous content that has led to student disengagement.

As Indigenous scholar Michael Marker (2011: 97) explains, 'the deeper problem is that categories of what counts as history do not often correspond with the ways that traditional indigenous communities make meaning out of the past'. Marker (2011: 98) points to four themes of Indigenous ways of understanding the past that are at odds with Western approaches to history: Indigenous views of time as circular, which reject the notion of 'progress' that drives Western histories; the relationship between humans and landscape and other beings; a focus on the local landscape as opposed to the global; and Indigenous narratives and perspectives on colonization that counter the stories of settlement advanced by dominant narratives. Consequently, no simple 'add content and stir recipe' will present a solution. Efforts to include more content need to be accompanied by different approaches to history.

Black scholars have also argued for more than what has been termed a 'bolt-on' approach, or what Miles (2019: 254) refers to as the "'add and stir" model of multiculturalism in schools', which upholds existing power structures. Thus, Howard (2014: 513) states:

African-centered education is not achieved simply by expanding curriculum content to include 'a bit of Black

History', nor is it solely about making Black students aware of a few stock Black public figures, past or present... While interventions like these may be well-intentioned and have some tenuous merit, by themselves they represent superficial attempts to address the needs of Black students without interrogating the educational framework within which the interventions are being introduced.

Understanding the shifting purposes of history education can help to elucidate why, barring a few exceptions, there have been few radical attempts to dismantle the existing narrative structures and replace them with alternative ones.

## **2.4 Shifting purposes**

The following section provides a synopsis of the shifting purposes of history education in Canada. Crucially, I highlight that despite the significant changes over the years, the first three renditions of history education fail to account for issues of power inherent in knowledge production and that we are all positioned differently in relation to history. A number of alternative, critical, political, and anti-racist approaches to history education are then presented, setting the backdrop for this study.

### *2.4.1 Patriotic history*

Schools have long been used by governments as a form of 'social control' (Levine-Rasky, 1998: 100) with the aim of homogenizing the population and 'solidifying the symbolic boundaries of the nation' (Montgomery, 2008: 85). According to McCrone (1998: 47), mass education emerged with the purpose of imbuing 'pupils with the new patriotism rather than simply to teach them new technical skills such as reading, writing and counting'.

In Canada, schools were created and placed under provincial jurisdiction by the 1867 British North America Act 'with the aim of socializing children, and making them loyal not only to Canada but to the British crown' (Glassford, 2010). Canadian historian Desmond Morton (2006: 26) points to the central role initially afforded to history education in the nation building project, noting that 'Public education was a



nineteenth century invention, designed to create loyal, dutiful citizens, and history was its sharpest blade’.

A school textbook (*Public School Methods*) written in 1913 by then Toronto Chief Inspector of schools James L. Hughes and his colleagues, confirms that patriotic aims carried on into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, where ‘developing patriotism’ was listed as one of the six reasons for learning history (Clark, 2014: 39). As stated in the introduction to the section on history (Hughes et al., 1913: 166):

Through their study of history, pupils should be brought into sympathy with our institutions and acquire a love for them...it is far better to have too much faith in one’s country than too little. The man who boasts overmuch of his country is a better citizen than the negative type who sneers at his neighbor because of his enthusiasm.

### *2.4.2 Social history*

The 1960s-70s saw a loosening in the connection between history and the nation-state, the result of the emergence of social history (Osborne, 2006). This ‘new’ history not only brought to the fore histories from below (e.g. women’s history, minorities’ history, working class history), challenging the white, male politicians as the only actors. It also muddied the clean line of progress and development the traditional nation-building narrative conveyed, ‘reveal[ing] some of the less salubrious doings of the nation-state’ (Osborne, 2006: 116).

While Canadian history education at the university level began to thrive in this new context with a plethora of new courses created to accommodate these emerging histories, history education in schools saw itself being swallowed up by the social sciences (Gaffield, 2006). As Gaffield (2006: 90) notes, on the one hand this was due to a shift in focus in schools to contemporary problems, which many believed were best served by an interdisciplinary approach facilitated by the social studies; at the same time, teachers were much more reliant on textbooks than their post-secondary counterparts, and there was consensus that the textbooks of the previous generations were no longer acceptable given the growing diversity of Canada and in turn emerging histories. Given a lack of new textbooks, many felt it was easiest to do away with

history as a distinct subject matter in its entirety and today, Ontario remains one of the few provinces where it has not been subsumed by the social studies.

Despite social histories making some—albeit limited—inroads into schools, in the decades that followed the introduction of ‘history from below’ Canadian nationalist historians voiced strong denunciations of the move away from military and political history to social histories, arguing that the new areas of study were ‘niche’ topics that were of little interest to the general populace.

According to Canadian historian Jack Granatstein (1998: 5), the most outspoken critic, social historians were to blame for Canadians’ lack of historical consciousness and in turn their lack of knowing themselves. Worse, he bemoaned, what had accompanied the move toward social histories was an embracing of a ‘warts and all’ approach to the past. This, he argued—albeit with little evidence—had seeped into the provincial educational system. According to Granatstein what was being taught as history did not warrant the name of history: real Canadian history was dead (Granatstein, 1998).

### *2.4.3 Skills-based history*

It was in this context of what some have termed the ‘history wars’ (Keraj, 2013) that yet another approach to history education, the disciplinary or skills-based approach, which had held currency in the UK since the 1970s, emerged in Canada. Popularized primarily through the work of Peter Seixas, it took as its point of departure the notion that historical thinking ‘is central to history instruction and that students should become more competent as historical thinkers as they progress through their schooling’ (The Historical Thinking Project). This approach focused on process—teaching students how to think like historians—rather than product (i.e. content).

The new goal was to initiate students into history as a form of disciplined inquiry. Educational research in the UK and US had been showing for quite some time that students could no longer be considered as passive absorbers of content. Even young students had the capacity to think historically and make meaning of history (Osborne, 2006: 115).

Six historical thinking concepts were elaborated (The Historical Thinking Project, no date), which together, created an accessible framework for historical thinking. Students were to learn to:

- 1) Establish historical significance;
- 2) Use primary source evidence;
- 3) Identify continuity and change;
- 4) Analyze cause and consequence;
- 5) Take historical perspectives; and
- 6) Understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations.

Historical thinking, or the ‘Big Six’ as it is now widely known, has since its inception acquired a significant following. The sheer amount of research devoted to how to get students (and teachers) to engage in historical thinking as well as the fact that a number of provinces (e.g. Ontario<sup>4</sup>, British Columbia) have recalibrated their history curricula around it are indicative of its strong endorsement both within research and policy circles. However, amidst this widespread popular support some critical voices have argued that such an approach is fraught, for it fails to sufficiently engage with issues of power and consequently enables silences to persist.

Commenting on the speed at which the historical thinking approach was taken up in Canada, Osborne (2003: 134) notes that the timing cannot be overlooked. He argues that amid the supposed ‘death’ of Canadian history proclaimed by nationalist historians, and the broader debate it ignited on what counts as Canadian history, the emphasis that this approach placed on skills allowed history educators to sidestep the content question. Given the focus was no longer on content, but rather on process, *what* content did not matter.

Osborne (2006: 124) expresses a dissatisfaction with this sidestepping, maintaining that knowledge and content should not be mere bi-products, as historical thinking treats them. Drawing on George Orwell’s dystopian classic *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, he discusses how it was due to a lack of knowledge that the workers in the ‘Ministry of

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth mentioning that the Ontario curriculum did not adopt the sixth concept (the ethical dimension), which at first glance would appear to be the concept most conducive to a social justice approach to history.

Truth' did not question the merits and consequences of rewriting the past and converting information to Newspeak. 'Without an accurate knowledge and understanding of history, we are doomed to be victims of manipulation at best and subjugation at worst' (Osborne, 2006: 103).

Osborne (2003, 2006) is not alone in his critique of historical thinking, though it should be noted he is accompanied by only a few other dissenters, further underlining the ironclad hold historical thinking has on history education in Canada. Their critiques place different emphases that are worth noting. What preoccupies Osborne (2006: 125) is historical thinking's 'attitude to knowledge, which it variously ignores, takes for granted, or treats as instrumental to the attainment of historical thinking'. This he argues is misguided, as 'not all historical knowledge is equal' (Osborne, 2006: 124). By contrast, others are more critical of the fact that the disciplinary approach assumes a neutrality of the learner, denying the emotive and subjective ways in which we engage with history (Cutrara, 2009). Of further concern to these scholars is that the focus on skills may make us blind to the fact that some interpretations of the past are considered worthy (i.e. those that make up the master narrative) while others have been sidelined (den Heyer, 2011).

Cutrara (2009: 97), in one of the more candid critiques of the disciplinary approach, takes issue with the weight placed on the teaching of skills, arguing that such an approach fails to create space 'to discuss inequities in the past or present by leaving no place to think about history outside of classification and rational thinking'. She is concerned that the disciplinary approach takes the world as given, as something that can be known if one follows a sequence of detached steps. On the one hand, she argues, this hinders the possibility of imagining alternatives. On the other, drawing from Stanley (2002) she notes that this approach fails to consider that students approach history (and indeed historical thinking) from different social positions (Cutrara, 2009: 97). Interestingly, missing from both Stanley (2002) and Cutrara's (2009) critiques, and in part propelling my own research, is that the disciplinary approach also fails to consider the various social locations from which teachers approach history.

More recently, Cutrara (2018: 253-254) has taken the disciplinary approach to task again, calling it antithetical to the call of the TRC to decolonize and indigenize Canadian history and Canadian history education, contending:

Instead, historical thinking, as conceptualized by Peter Seixas, imposes a settler grammar over the study of the past in such ways that widens the gulf between Aboriginal and Euro-Canadian systems, lessening the space available to develop the respect, openness for truth, and room for relationality needed to develop relationships of reconciliation.

Den Heyer (2011), in perhaps the most judicious critique of historical thinking, sees the focus on skills as limiting not simply because it ignores content, or the very personal and emotive ways in which individuals engage with history, but most significantly, because it does not enable a history education spurred by ethics and social action. Like Cutrara (2009) and Stanley (2002), he argues that historical thinking, which evokes the ‘scientific approach’ allows no room for subjective interpretations and engagements with both the past and the present. Specifically, he dismisses the claim made by proponents of historical thinking that students can apply the rational thinking they learn through historical thinking to the present, noting that this wrongly assumes that students engage with the present in a detached way.

Den Heyer (2011) also calls into question the starting point of historical thinking, arguing that beginning from a place where young people are regarded as not knowing how to think and reason properly—with the goal of historical thinking being to correct this—exemplifies deficit thinking.

Finally, he explains that the disciplinarian’s focus on skills ignores the unequal distribution of different historical narratives, arguing that:

[Historical thinking] while dedicated to elevating students’ ‘reasoned judgements,’ these judgments are to take place within an unexamined social and political context of influence as to what is considered valid historical investigation, relevant topics, and of worth for wide public distribution. (den Heyer, 2011: 156)

With no consideration of the social and political context that makes some narratives worthy and others marginalized, the ‘Grand Narrative’ is assumed to reflect ‘the past itself, unencumbered by interpretation or selective amnesia’ (den Heyer, 2011: 159). This by-passing allows for the status quo to persist, missing an opportunity for a history education rooted in social action.

Epstein (1997: 31), who has devoted much of her research to examining how African American students navigate the history on offer in schools has similarly argued that the move in history education to emulate the academic discipline and focus on conceptual thinking is ‘insufficient for addressing the very real tension and conflict between the school-based historical knowledge and perspectives and those that students from ethnically or culturally diverse communities have constructed’.

Even former advocates of disciplinary thinking Barton and Levstik (2004) have since retracted their support for a history education that seeks to have students think like historians, arguing that disciplinary practices are just one set among many. Barton and Levstik (2004) insist that the requirements and purposes of history education are not the same as academic history. Instead they offer up a history that is rooted in the notion of ‘teaching for the common good’.

The critiques presented above reveal that the nation-building and patriotism-fostering approach of early history classrooms that ensured silences (surrounding anything that might challenge the ‘imagined community’ [Anderson, 1991]) have been largely replaced by a new focus on skills. However, this contemporary approach, while commendable for the emphasis it places on active learning and *doing* history, fails to adequately centre power, agency and subjectivity as intricately intertwined with the production and consumption of history.

As Anderson (2017: 5-6) explains:

[Historical thinking’s] tenets do not explicitly address the frequently hidden master national narrative templates (or those that contest and rebuke them) that are communicated in sites of pedagogy. Consequently, the [historical thinking concepts] are not enough in themselves to allow for full engagement with the silenced histories and urgent identity questions—ethnic,

transnational, diasporic, and Indigenous—that permeate and shape contemporary Canadian society.

#### *2.4.4 A history for ‘unlearning racism’, for reconciliation and for social justice*

Alongside den Heyer’s (2011) call for a history education spurred by ethics and social action and Barton and Levstik’s (2004) history education for ‘the common good’, a number of alternative orientations to history education have been proposed that centre power and racism, and see the purpose of history education as one of social change.

My own project, in its adherence to anti-racism and critical race theory is first and foremost inspired by critical race theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings’ (2003: 8) view that the social studies ‘can serve as the curricular home for unlearning racism’. As she notes, ‘The historical, social, economic, and political records provide compelling blueprints for the way the nation has recruited the concept of race to justify hierarchy, inequity, and oppression’ (Ladson-Billings, 2003: 8).

At the same time, I am inspired by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s work that pointed to the leadership role of education in reconciliation<sup>5</sup>. As Senator Murray Sinclair, the Head Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission explained, despite being one of the biggest perpetrators of structural racism toward Indigenous peoples, ‘Education provides one of the greatest hopes for repairing cultural attitudes, redressing the legacy of Indian Residential Schools, and advancing the process of reconciliation’ (People for Education, 2016: 2).

Both a history for ‘unlearning racism’ and a history for reconciliation call for confronting Canada’s long history of violence toward Indigenous and racialized peoples. At the same time, they both require that teachers and students acknowledge

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<sup>5</sup> According to the TRC, ‘...Reconciliation is about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in this country. In order for that to happen, there has to be awareness of the past, an acknowledgement of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behaviour’ (TRC, 2015: 6). It is important to note that reconciliation is regarded by many as deeply problematic, both as a term and a process. Some Indigenous scholars maintain that in its focus on Indigenous healing, it mutes calls for Indigenous sovereignty and allows the state to control Indigenous nationhood (see Turner, 2013).

and confront their complicity in upholding this system. According to Miles (2018: 296):

A history education positioned in pursuit of reconciliation requires more than just teaching and learning about unjust actions, events and structures; it must compel teachers and students to reflect on their identities and consider what it would mean to reframe their ethical orientation to past, present and future.

While I will primarily refer to a history for ‘unlearning racism’, which I believe is clearer and more instructive than simply a history for ‘social justice’, which has become a term easily thrown about, Epstein’s (2009: 5) delineation of what a history for social justice would look like is foundational, as it:

[...] includes teaching students to critique historical and contemporary texts not just as academic historians do, but as critical minded citizens do, noting whose facts are presented as ‘what happened’ or as ‘the truth’, as well as who benefits and who is silenced by particular interpretations of the past and present.

My research is motivated by these transformative approaches to history education, which in addition to centring the constitutive roles of race and power in Canadian history take as their starting point not only that knowledge is constructed, but also look at ‘how processes of knowledge construction can maintain power relations’ (Chow, 2015: 27); and finally, that ‘not everyone enters our common spaces under conditions of equality’ (Stanley, 2006: 47).

As Chow (2015: 28) notes, the majority of research that has been done on history teachers has, in alignment with institutional goals, been conducted on history teachers’ understandings, knowledge and approaches to historical thinking. Very little research has explored teachers’ understandings, knowledge and approaches to a history for ‘unlearning racism’. My research seeks to contribute to filling this gap.



## 2.5 Chapter Summary

Drawing on relevant scholarly works on the intimate connection between history and the nation and the changing purposes of history education over the last century, this chapter has endeavoured to argue that official history is in part produced by silences. These silences ensure that some bodies are excluded from the ‘imagined community’, while others ‘become understood as the rightful occupants’ (Ahmed, 2012: 2).

The first section discussed the key role that history has played in constructing the Canadian nation, synthesizing the work of many critical scholars who argue that this history is marked by a selective amnesia that serves to uphold white dominance (Stanley, 2014). It further highlighted studies on the impact of these silences on all students, observing that for many students, silences surrounding their histories contributes to ‘pushing them out’ (Dei *et al.*, 1995).

The second and third sections showed how school history was historically whitewashed of the contributions of racialized communities as well as the racist histories that are foundational to the current state of inequality in Canada. Despite changes in approaches to history education, the current and widely accepted disciplinary approach does not adequately address the power and subjectivity inherent in the production of history, nor does it consider the different social locations from which its interlocutors—both students and teachers—approach it. In the shift from content to skills, many of the silences endure.

Finally, the chapter presented some alternative approaches to history education that centre power and racism and see as their objective the challenging of silences. Moving from theory to practice (i.e. the teacher candidates), the next chapter explores how far we have to go to meet the goals identified by the alternative approaches.

## Chapter 3 Literature Review 2

### 3.1 Introduction

Having laid out the impetus and backdrop for this project in the preceding two chapters, this chapter presents a synthesis of the literature that was reviewed in order to get a better understanding of how to operationalize a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

In section 3.2 I begin by discussing a body of literature that speaks to the relative autonomy teachers have in their own classrooms, and how this presents an opportunity for taking up Ladson-Billings’ (2003: 8) history for ‘unlearning racism’. However, section 3.3 tempers this rather optimistic assumption as I present research documenting how many teachers are resistant to teaching outside the master narrative.

Section 3.4 draws out some of the factors (e.g. knowledges, views on purpose) researchers have identified as contributing to whether teachers will confront or accept the curriculum; and it pinpoints an area that has been virtually absent from research on history teachers: identity. I synthesize and evaluate the existing literature that explores how teachers’ and teacher candidates’ views regarding the purpose of education and their role as teachers as well as knowledges impact what and how they teach. While these authors tend to privilege purpose over knowledge (or vice versa) I argue that not only need the two be considered in tandem, but they must be considered alongside the notion of identity. A select body of literature that speaks to the influence of racial and other identities is presented, providing a compelling case for the need to consider teacher candidates’ identities (and how they negotiate them).

The final section provides a summary of the chapter, arguing that teachers, although differently positioned in relation to the master narrative, and often resistant to do so, have the power, and indeed, the responsibility to challenge the silences and racism of the curriculum. I reiterate the need for research that looks at the various factors alongside one another, setting the stage for my own methodological approach, which is described in the chapter that follows.

### 3.2 Teacher autonomy and impact

Research (see, for example Sandwell, 2011) has shown that despite the pressures of conforming to provincial standards and school priorities, Ontario teachers retain a degree of autonomy in their own classrooms and can manipulate the curriculum to meet their own interests and commitments. As Sandwell (2011: 239) writes:

[...] while the number of formal expectations teachers are obliged to meet as professional teachers in Ontario can at first seem daunting, these expectations are flexible and pliable; indeed, teachers throughout Canada generally have considerable freedom in what they teach and how they think.

This freedom is supported at both the macro level, where the broadness of the curriculum requirements makes it possible that two teachers teach the same course quite differently, as well as at the micro level, Sandwell (2011) noting that history departments in secondary schools tend to be supportive of different approaches to history education.

Osborne (2003) credits the end of standardized provincial history exams in Ontario in the 1970s and the move to teacher-designed evaluation as the reason for the relative freedom teachers have. This shift freed teachers from having to teach the prescribed content, and instead presented them with the opportunity to choose what history to cover.

In other jurisdictions, where teachers' autonomy may comparatively be much reduced, teachers still retain a degree of autonomy over what they teach. Indeed, the various monikers—from 'brokers' to 'gatekeepers'—that researchers have given to history teachers (Barton and Levstik, 2004: 245) underscore that at the end of the day, it is the teacher who guides classroom instruction, determines what is taught and what is not (Barton and Levstik, 2004: 245).

As Barton and Levstik (2004) observe, the shift in balance in academic research—from studies devoted to curriculum and textbooks toward more research on teacher education and professional development—is further indication of a recognition within

the research community that teachers make choices every day, and that these choices matter.

Both Létourneau's (2006) and VanSledright's (1997) works on student historical narratives point to the influential role teachers have. In an exploratory study that asked over 403 Quebec youth, ages 15 through 25, to write what was in their own view the history of Quebec, Létourneau (2006: 72) found that a majority of the participants penned a narrative that evoked 'the timeless quest of the Quebecois, poor alienated people, for emancipation from their oppressors'. Explaining that Quebec historians have been countering this narrative for over 25 years and that textbooks for their part could no longer be regarded as 'narrowly nationalistic' he surmises that 'teachers, who hold a prominent place in the system of the classroom, are very much responsible for the structuring and maintenance of the specific account students have of the historical experience of Quebec' (Létourneau, 2006: 76-77).

Accounting for the reason why teachers would teach such an outdated narrative, he offers three possibilities (Létourneau, 2006: 78): First, many older teachers who received their training long ago were brought up in a system that underlined 'the victimization of francophones in Canada'. Second, with minimal disciplinary training and a knowledge that is limited to the big brushstrokes of Quebec history, not only were a majority of teachers incapable of imagining alternative narratives, but to make up for their lack of knowledge, had to revert to textbooks. Although Létourneau argues that it is too simplistic to place all the shortcomings on the textbook, he admits that it is likely to favour a nationalist history of Quebec—especially if read with a particular aim. Finally, as a third reason Létourneau cites what I would call inertia, i.e. that it is easier for teachers to teach this 'traditional' account since it agrees with the historical account students are exposed to outside of the school setting.

In a much smaller interview-based study of 30 primary and high school students' views on the purpose of studying US history, VanSledright (1997: 550) found that beyond the initial puzzlement that the question '*What is the purpose of learning history?*' seemed to incite in participants, a majority held the 'belief in the inert but applicable moral role' of history. Attributing this view to their teachers, he argues that any shift or change that is to occur in students' views of history cannot be expected to come

simply from curricular changes. Rather, it must involve teachers. This is no easy feat, he adds, when one considers the ‘consensus, stabilized view of history’ (VanSledright, 1997: 552) that many current teachers have been taught.

While admittedly the school history classroom does not exist in a void, and the historical narratives youth adopt will be informed by their families, cultural communities and the other channels of history that they are exposed to (Lévesque, 2005: 2), Létourneau’s (2006) and VanSledright’s (1997) research suggest that what history teachers choose to cover and how and why they choose to cover it strongly influences students’ understandings of and orientations to history. Indeed, as Létourneau (2006: 85) concludes, although students will bring pre-existing understandings of history to the classroom, ‘the teacher is at the heart of any qualitative transformation in the collective historical consciousness of students’.

The relative autonomy teachers have in their own classrooms, combined with the strong influence that teachers have on students’ learning, makes advancing a history for ‘unlearning racism’ a tangible goal. Kohli (2009: 243) argues that teachers not only have the power, but ‘the responsibility to validate students’ cultures and racial identities despite the inadequacies of their curriculum... When they do not challenge this racism, they in turn condone, or even affirm, racial hierarchies with their attitudes and actions.’ However, as the following section illustrates, much of the existing research reports resistance on the part of teachers to embrace this power and assume this responsibility.

### **3.3 Teacher resistances**

Existing research has shown teachers to exhibit resistance to teaching multiple perspectives (i.e. racialized histories) as well as racist histories.

Scott’s (2013) case study on five experienced social studies teachers in Alberta illustrates the first type of resistance, where he found that despite a new curricular initiative from the province to incorporate Aboriginal and Francophone perspectives into every classroom, all five teachers resisted doing so. Through a combination of individual interviews, observation of their teaching, and a focus group discussion,

Scott found that participants did not feel it was important to include Aboriginal perspectives in their teaching unless the historical event or issue under study directly involved them (i.e. residential schools). Indeed, of all the lessons he observed, only one incorporated Aboriginal perspectives.

Scott (2013: 34) explains this resistance as intimately linked to the production and reproduction of an English Canadian grand narrative that has not only cast 'Aboriginal peoples outside the story of Canada', but has also been imparted as natural, and value-free. This has, in turn, rendered it difficult for many Canadians to imagine Canada's past outside this perspective. Scott (2013) further points to participants' use of the 'cultural disqualification' argument, a term coined by Cree scholar Dwayne Donald (2009: 33) that denotes a 'retreat behind the comforting shelter of real or passive ignorance that effectively disqualifies [someone] from participation'. Scott's participants rationalized that they could not teach Aboriginal perspectives because they were not Aboriginal (Scott, 2013: 40).

Both the inability to imagine a different narrative and the use of the 'cultural disqualification' argument appear in a number of other studies. Den Heyer and Abbott's (2011) study conducted on their social studies teacher candidates found that in addition to most of their students struggling to conceive of a Canadian history outside the grand narrative, several of them felt they weren't properly placed to represent the perspective of the 'other'.

Despite modelling for their teacher candidates a practical way to incorporate multiple perspectives by means of a final assignment that asked students to create two non-dominant narratives of an historical event, their students largely indicated that they would not do a similar assignment in their own classes. Den Heyer and Abbott's (2011) study is telling in how it exposes the resilience of the resistance to including non-dominant perspectives.

While Scott's (2013) study highlights a reluctance to teaching Francophone and Aboriginal perspectives and den Heyer and Abbott's (2011) identifies resistance to teaching any non-dominant perspective, many Indigenous scholars have identified a decided resistance by teachers to teaching Indigenous perspectives.

Reflecting on their many years teaching a cross-cultural education course in the Canadian prairies, St. Denis and Schick (2003) discuss how their primarily white teacher candidates have been resistant to learning about anti-racism and Aboriginal perspectives. They note that their students often use statements such as they do not see themselves ever teaching Aboriginal students to justify their disinterest.

Nardozi *et al.*'s, (2014) recent research to understand what strategies can best serve to increase Ontario teacher candidates' readiness and willingness to teach Aboriginal knowledge and ways of knowing, also identified strong resistance. Like St. Denis and Schick (2003), they found that many of the participants in their study held the view that Aboriginal content is only for Aboriginal students<sup>6</sup>.

However, as Senator Murray Sinclair, the Chief Justice of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reminds us, 'Reconciliation is not an Aboriginal problem—it involves all of us' (Fedio, 2015). So too is Indigenous history for all students (Hare, 2017).

While the research reviewed above shows us that persuading teacher candidates to teach different perspectives can be a challenge, Levstik's (2000: 296) two-part study highlights that getting them to teach what she terms the 'coercive and divisive elements in national development' (i.e. racist histories) may be even more difficult.

Proceeding in two stages—first with students in Grades 5 through 8, followed by teachers and teacher candidates—Levstik (2000) provided participants with captioned historical events in American history and tasked them with selecting the ones they thought were most significant and placing them on a 500-year timeline. Group discussions were recorded and followed-up by individual interviews.

Interestingly, while there was a tendency among both groups to select events that supported a narrative of progress and development, Levstik (2000) found that the student participants also selected images that veered away from the progress and

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<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that this tendency to dissociate is not limited to teachers. Indeed, as Oneida scholar Martin Cannon (2012) affirms, a majority of Canadians wrongly see colonization, and consequently, reconciliation as strictly Indigenous issues. Conceptualizing Indigenous history as only for Indigenous students is just one illustration of this misconception.

development narrative. In their discussions, the student participants not only discussed racism—both historical and contemporary—but also expressed interest in the images that spoke to the ‘darker’ aspects of US history.

In contrast, the teacher and teacher candidate participants only selected images that presented a positive view of US history. While some events that extended rights to ethnic minorities (e.g. the Civil Rights movement) were included, events that were about ethnoracial repression were excluded (Barton and Levstik, 2004: 95). Little time was spent discussing racism, Levstik (2000: 292) noting that these participants tended to group racism and ethnicity into one ‘issue of culture’.

Levstik (2000) observes that despite the teachers and teacher candidates being aware that students wanted to learn more than the traditional narrative, they expressed discomfort at the idea of teaching ‘negative’ history justifying their decision with the argument that students were too young to be engaging with this content while at the same time dismissing the negative events as aberrations. In their interviews, they explained that ‘knowing about coercive and divisive parts of America’s past [is] not fundamental to the formation of children’s national identity... Such knowledge threaten[s] to undermine that identity’ (Levstik, 2000: 296).

Pointing to the fear expressed by these teachers and teacher candidates, she concludes that ‘They were aware that injustices had happened in the past but were terrified of what they might unleash by speaking about them in the present. In response, “they chose silence”’ (Levstik, 2000: 297).

While acknowledging the possibility that addressing racist histories may cause anxiety among teachers, critical scholars remind us that such fears must not be allowed to supersede the responsibility teachers have to teach them. As Potawatomi-Lenapé scholar Susan Dion (2009: 55) puts it, ‘Talking about traumatic events and one’s connection to the suffering of Others is “dangerous” work, however, we cannot use our fear of saying the wrong thing as an excuse for not doing the work’.

It is important to note that the research cited above deals namely with white teachers’ resistance. While some research points to racialized teachers’ resistance, the origins of



the resistance in the latter case are distinct: the very real fear of further ostracization faced by any racialized teacher who seeks to ‘teach against the grain’, in this case by teaching previously silenced histories. As Howard (2014: 514) notes of Black teachers:

The choice politically conscious Black teachers make to teach Black students how to navigate schools and society and to engage in politically relevant pedagogy in multiracial schools [i.e. teach previously silenced histories] is usually a choice to gamble with one’s career. The ostensibly colour-blind, yet racist context of Canadian schools and schooling therefore functions to curtail the liberatory pedagogy of Black teachers.

Indeed, as will be further discussed in the section on identities, racialized teachers’ already precarious membership in the teaching community works to curtail their ability and sometimes willingness to speak out. Silence while long used by whites as a weapon, is often used by racialized people as a protective measure. Thus, Kohli’s (2009) argument that teachers have the power to challenge the inadequacies of the curriculum needs to be considered against the backdrop of teachers’ different identities.

The literature reviewed in this section shows that neither progressive curricular incentives (as employed in Scott’s [2013] study), nor practical methods (as in den Heyer and Abbott’s [2011] study) would seem to be sufficient stimulus to prompt many white teachers to teach beyond the master narrative; neither would—by all appearances—an awareness of the ‘coercive and divisive elements in national development’ or the fact that students are keen to learn about them (Levstik, 2000: 296). At the same time, we know that the insecure membership of many racialized teachers leads some to purposely avoid ‘rocking the boat’. Both white and racialized teachers’ resistance is thus closely linked to white supremacy and to ensuring the maintenance of white authority. Yet as the next sections highlights, there are a number of other factors identified across the literature that influence the extent to which teachers do or do not challenge the master narrative.

### 3.4 Teacher purposes

Critical scholars (Solomon and Levine-Rasky, 1996; Dlamini, 2002; Daniel, 2009) have long pointed to the conservatism that marks the teaching profession as one of the biggest roadblocks for change.

This conservatism is widespread. Drawing on Hurley's (2004) research, Schweisfurth (2006: 43) writes that a majority of Canadian teachers see their role as 'implementers of government-initiated policies rather than as active agents of change'. Some research and ample anecdotal evidence of history and social studies teachers has shown them to be no exception.

For example, work by Segall and Gaudelli (2007) on social studies teacher candidates found that the teacher candidates approached the course in what they term a 'readerly' manner (as consumers of knowledge) rather than in a 'writerly' manner (as generators of knowledge). Sears (2014), drawing on many years training social studies teacher candidates in Eastern Canada, similarly observes that teacher candidates view themselves as receivers of information, not as active shapers of it.

Villegas and Lucas (2002a: 53) argue that a depoliticized view of one's role corresponds with a depoliticized view of teaching, noting that teachers who see their role as 'technicians' 'tend to see schools as neutral and meritocratic institutions that function separately from the larger social order. Grounded in this uncritical view of schools, they think of teaching as a politically neutral activity'. However, as King and Swartz (2014: 55) and countless other critical scholars have pointed out, 'there is no neutrality in recounting the past'.

A fairly neutral view of teaching is revealed in two of the few studies that directly asked history teacher candidates and teachers for their views on the purpose of history education. Lévesque and Zanazanian's (2015: 401-402) online study of 233 Canadian teacher candidates found that the most important reasons for teaching history according to participants were 'to understand the present' (30%), 'orientation from past to future' (17%), and 'education for citizenship' (11%). Hicks and Dolittle's (2004: 223) survey of 158 US teachers found participants overwhelmingly indicated

that they thought the most important reasons for teaching history were to help students understand common historical knowledge and to have students ‘commit the story of America to memory’.

These findings suggest that none or very few of the participants in each study appeared to hold a political view of teaching history. While Lévesque and Zanzanian’s (2015) elaborated codes of the teacher candidates’ answers did not include any political purposes, Hicks, Doolittle and Lee (2004: 223) report that their teachers selected ‘Challenging the accepted versions of history’ as the least important reason for students to learn history.

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Levstik (2000: 285) cast part of the blame for teachers’ conservatism on teacher education programs, noting that they did not tend to engage prospective teachers in how knowledge is distorted, and used politically. Nearly fifteen years later, den Heyer (2014: 175) echoed this sentiment, remarking that the current approach to how *historical* is taken up in Canadian teacher education is depoliticized.

Consequently, new teachers come out of the system uncritical of the curriculum and embrace the ‘twin pillars of coverage and control’ as their main objectives (Barton and Levstik, 2004). Barton and Levstik (2004) argue that this is unsurprising as most teachers (especially newly qualified ones) want to be accepted: adhering to the mandated curriculum is easiest. It is also safest, Létourneau (2006) observing that challenging the history curriculum constitutes a direct challenge to the collective memory of a society.

As with all rules, however, there are exceptions, with Barton and Levstik (2004) noting that there are thousands of teachers who reject coverage and control as their objectives and are shown to teach differently. Reviewing some of the research on these teachers, Barton and Levstik (2004) identify what makes these teachers able to resist the pressure to conform to the transmission approach to teaching: a transformative purpose that can only be met by transformative practices.

Consequently, according to Barton and Levstik (2004), if we hope to transform educational practices, teacher educators need to focus not on improving teacher candidates' disciplinary knowledge, but rather on moving teacher candidates toward transformative goals.

Villegas and Lucas (2002a) argue that teachers who view themselves as agents of change are those who can resist the pressure to conform. Egbo (2011: 34) agrees, stating that teacher agency 'is a prerequisite condition for transcending everyday technical responsibilities in order to initiate critical transformative action'. Teachers who see themselves as agents of change see schools as institutions that, despite upholding the existing social inequalities by privileging certain knowledges and ways of knowing, have the potential to be transformative. Teaching for these teachers is therefore not simply about transmitting information or skills, but rather about interrupting schooling practices that maintain inequalities (Villegas and Lucas, 2002a: 54).

Furthermore, while there is a strong conservatism marking the profession, and while acknowledging that there are a host of factors that work against teachers becoming agents of change (e.g. time pressures, the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the educational system, resistance by those in positions of power) (Villegas and Lucas, 2002b: 24), there is a moral imperative for teachers to embrace the view of themselves as agents of change. They argue that 'teacher educators must take steps to "deliberately socialize" [teacher candidates] into the change agent role' (Villegas and Lucas, 2002b: 24).

As the literature in the following section illustrates, however, even if teachers see themselves as agents of change and are motivated to challenge the silences, without a sufficient knowledge to counter them they cannot effectively do so. Borrowing from Howard (1999), Salinas and Blevins (2013: 20) remind us that 'We can't teach what we don't know'.

### 3.5 Teacher knowledges

Research has shown that teachers' subject matter knowledge has a profound impact on how and what they teach. Research by Salinas and Blevins (2013: 19) indicates that 'what teachers do and do not know about their discipline has great implications for whether they will adhere to or contest the official curriculum as well as other inequitable schooling practices'.

Drawing on research they conducted in their critical social studies methods course, Salinas and Blevins (2013) explain that the three teacher candidates who had a more critical understanding of historical inquiry —Carlos, Linda and Wilma—had three particular sets of knowledge: experiential knowledge, official knowledge, and knowledge of counter perspectives. Together, these knowledges enabled them to effectively challenge and confront the official curriculum.

Through interviews, Salinas and Blevins (2013) determined that all three participants had been exposed to critical issues at some point in their previous education, be it during high school or in their undergraduate studies. This prior exposure to critical topics as students (what they term 'experiential knowledge') inspired them to expose their own students to these issues.

At the same time, they all demonstrated a thorough grasp of 'official history' which enabled them to identify the gaps and silences that permeated the official curriculum. Finally, and most importantly, what set these teacher candidates apart from their colleagues was that they had knowledge of alternative perspectives.

Carlos, Linda and Wilma stand in contrast to Catherine, an art history teacher in Dei *et al.*'s (1997) study on Black Canadian student disengagement. Despite being conscious of the gaps in the curriculum, Catherine was incapable of interrupting its one-sidedness because she herself was still learning it. Given that she did not have sufficient knowledge to replace the official narrative with an alternative one, she explained how she was limited to pointing out to her students that the curriculum only lends attention to white Europeans and ignores what other groups were doing at the same time. Catherine's case illustrates that to move beyond merely doubting to

actually countering the official narrative requires sufficient knowledge of alternative narratives (Salinas and Blevins, 2013: 17). James and Turner's (2017: 55) study further underlines the need for teachers who are knowledgeable, their participants explaining:

While some teachers did try to integrate Black cultural and historical materials into the curriculum, in some instances their lack of knowledge limited their ability to be successful in this regard.

These three studies demonstrate that teacher candidates' knowledge matters, especially with regards to whether they can challenge the official curriculum and its silences. Nevertheless, despite calls by several history education scholars (den Heyer, 2014; Sears, 2014; Lévesque and Zanazanian, 2015) to teacher educators to 'take the pulse of their classrooms' (Lévesque and Zanazanian, 2015: 405) and to researchers to 'map the cognitive frames of beginning history teachers' (Sears, 2014: 22) very little systematic research has been conducted on teacher candidates' pre-existing knowledges.

Lévesque and Zanazanian's (2015) previously discussed study is one exception, where in addition to asking participants about the purpose of history education, their online survey included a series of questions regarding teacher candidates' knowledge. Using a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, participants were asked how many history courses they had taken; how many Canadian history courses they had taken; and they were asked to indicate their knowledge of history in general and of Canadian/national history. The findings showed that few of the participants had extensive knowledge of Canadian history. Furthermore, they appeared to have taken relatively few history courses overall—a majority of them fewer than ten academic history courses and fewer than seven Canadian history courses. More than half had taken fewer than four.

While the authors acknowledge that there is no magic number of history courses one need to take in order to be properly prepared for teaching the subject, they suggest that while having only 5% of future history teachers with over ten history courses under their belt may be too low, as long as teachers are prepared and willing to fill in their

gaps having fewer may not necessarily present a limitation (Lévesque and Zanzanian, 2015: 395).

Relying on teachers to do their own research to fill knowledge gaps, however, assumes that teacher candidates are aware of them in the first place. As McDiarmid and Vinten-Johansen's (2000) observations of their history teacher candidates indicate, we cannot assume this to be the case.

Discussing their remodelling of the history methods course at Michigan State University in the nineties, they explain that their students not only demonstrated low levels of historical knowledge but also very little awareness of what they knew and did not know. Moreover, there appeared to be little thought that went into how they would go about filling these gaps (McDiarmid and Vinten-Johansen, 2000: 164).

While both these studies explore teacher candidates' knowledge, unlike Salinas and Blevins (2013) they do not distinguish between the different types of knowledge. Lévesque and Zanzanian (2015) for their part only asked about knowledge of Canadian history in general where participants were asked to indicate their level (e.g. very thorough; thorough; not very thorough; not at all thorough) and consequently did not uncover the specific knowledges—official vs counter—teacher candidates did or did not have. McDiarmid and Vinten-Johansen (2000), for their part, are vague in their discussion of what they mean by historical knowledge. Furthermore, neither study gave participants the opportunity to convey what knowledge they did possess, something that as Pollock (2014) notes, is starkly missing from existing research which mostly focusses on gaps in teacher candidates' knowledges.

Salinas and Blevins' (2013) distinction between the different types of knowledges is very helpful as it enables us to identify both what teachers know and don't know, and to in turn identify teacher candidates who, while being aware of the silences in official history and seeing themselves as agents of change, are unable to move their critique into action as a result of limited knowledge of counter-perspectives.

It follows that research that hones in on both teachers' views on the purpose of history education and their roles as well as their knowledges would provide a more

comprehensive understanding of where history teachers are situated in relation to teaching a history for ‘unlearning racism’. However, in the next section I would propose that any desire to understand teacher candidates’ capacity and willingness to teach a history for ‘unlearning racism’ (Ladson-Billings, 2003) must necessarily consider their different social locations vis-a-vis racism (Stanley, 2014).

While much research has shown teachers’ identities to be important and influential in shaping what and how they teach, an exploration of the influence of history teacher candidates’ identities has remained largely absent from the research on history teacher education. Drawing primarily on the growing body of research that points to the influence students’ identities have on their historical identifications, I make the argument that this focus needs to be extended to teachers and teacher candidates, who are neither neutral deliverers of curriculum nor positioned outside the racial matrix that shapes our beliefs and actions.

## **3.6 Teacher identities**

### *3.6.1 In defence of studying identities*

Any research project that seeks to study identity must confront its disputed status. As Alcoff (2000: 314) observes, despite its wide adoption in social science and humanities disciplines, the attachment to identity is still seen as ‘suspect’. Critics are quick to point to its essentialist tendencies, arguing that identity categories wrongly presuppose fixed and unchanging categories that fail to account for historical context or setting (Moya, 2000: 3). Postmodernists reject the very concept of identity, arguing that it is fabricated ‘because experience can’t be a source of objective knowledge’ (Mohanty, 2000: 42).

This research rejects both claims—that identity categorization necessarily leads to ‘essentialist programs’ (Moya, 2000: 4), and that experience is not a source for knowledge—and instead adopts a critical view of identity as ‘both constructed (socially, linguistically, theoretically, etc.) and “real” at the same time’ (Mohanty, 2000: 69).



On the one hand, identities are shifting, incomplete, dynamic and contested (Brayboy, Castagno, and Maughan, 2007: 167), in continual development and revision (Quiocho and Rios, 2000: 517), their salience changing depending on the context (Dei, Karumanchery and Karumanchery-Luik, 2004). At the same time, they are real insofar as individual and group self-ascribed and imposed identity markers (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, dis/ability, etc.) bring with them material consequences. As Moya (2000: 8) explains, ‘goods and resources are still distributed according to identity categories’. Dei (2005: 11) emphasizes how ‘real’ these identities are, noting that ‘Who we are, our educational and personal histories and experience, all shape how we make sense of our world and interpret social reality’.

Giroux (2003: 142) presents an anti-essentialist view of identities, contending that:

Identities are neither fixed nor unified but are about an ongoing process of becoming. Identities are constructed through the differences and exclusions, mediated within disparate and often unequal relations of power, that largely determine the range of available resources—history, values, language, and experiences—through which individuals and groups experience their relationships to themselves and others.

In relation to teaching, it is hard to deny the salience of identity. Numerous studies show that although teachers’ identities do not determine, they influence a great number of factors such as their pedagogies and how they relate to their students (Kannen and Acker, 2008); their knowledge and practices (Britzman, 2003; Rezai-Rashti and Solomon, 2004); their willingness to be introduced to new ways of knowing and doing (Dlamini, 2002); and, their professional selves (Quiocho and Rios, 2000).

### *3.6.2 Missing from the conversation*

Despite a consensus that teachers’ identities matter, this has not always been the case. Bascia (1996) observed in the mid-1990s that while issues of race, class and culture and their effects on students’ learning experiences were garnering researchers’ attention, barring a few exceptions, very little comparable research had emerged on teachers’ identities. Some attribute this to the fact that for the most part, the teaching profession was made up of white, middle-class teachers for whom ‘racial’ identity was not a consideration.

This disinterest in teacher candidates' identities was also seen in teacher education programs, the remodelled teacher education program at Michigan State University in 1992 providing one example. While the remodelled program set as its mission to have teacher candidates learn about 'how pupils' ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds affected their experiences in learning subject matter in school' (McDiarmid and Vinten-Johansen's, 2000: 160), there was no mention of teacher candidates learning about the effects of their own ethnicity and socioeconomic backgrounds on their teaching.

More than a decade later, despite a growing body of research on the influence of teacher candidates' identities, Allard and Santoro (2006) observed the same trend persisted in teacher education programs: The focus in these programs remained 'on developing student teachers' understandings of how factors like *'race', ethnicity, social class, and gender* influence and shape learner identities; little attention is paid to how they shape teachers' identities' (Allard and Santoro, 2006: 115).

Indeed, as they noted of their predominantly white, middle-class teacher candidates, most had never been asked to think about their ethnicity or socio-economic status. The only teacher candidate in their class who was keenly aware of her identity was Susan, a teacher candidate of Sri Lankan heritage 'whose skin colour clearly marked her as not belonging to the Anglo-Australian majority' (Allard and Santoro, 2006: 120). Whereas the other students could ignore their identities, Susan's ethnicity 'was a dimension of her identity of which she was reminded constantly' (Allard and Santoro, 2006: 120). As they remarked, 'Being middle-class, like 'Whiteness', has a normative sense about it and remains largely unexamined by those whose lived experiences are centred within this space' (Allard and Santoro, 2006: 124).

### **3.6.3 White teacher candidates**

The very different experiences of white and racialized teacher candidates in relation to identity have continued to characterize the findings of teacher education research. Perhaps owing to the fact that a majority of the teaching force remains white (Sleeter, 2016; Nardozi *et al.*, 2014), much of the research has focused on white teacher

candidates with the main finding being that white teacher candidates tend to deny their racial identity and any impact it might have on their teaching.

One of the earlier studies on white teacher candidates by McIntyre (1997: 45) identified what she called 'white talk', a strategy that her teacher candidates used in order to 'insulate [themselves] from examining their individual and collective roles in the perpetuation of racism'.

Kannen and Acker's (2008) study of five white kindergarten teachers in a predominantly white community in Northern Ontario presents another example of the subtle ways through which white teachers disavow their whiteness.

Interested in understanding the interface between teacher and student identities as well as the 'factors that contribute to or hinder anti-oppression education for young children' Kannen and Acker (2008: 25) asked all the teachers to describe their identity. Significantly, none of the participants identified as white, instead, referring to their gender, marital status, class and age. Whiteness, according to Kannen and Acker (2008: 37) was 'largely invisible in the interviews and not considered a racial category by most of the participants'.

The ease with which white people deny a white racial identity and how this works to uphold whiteness has been studied at length. Dyer (1997) in one of the most incisive interrogations of whiteness and the white racial imagery discusses how race has long been applied to only non-white peoples. White people tend to cast themselves as the human norm, 'Other people are raced, we are just people' (Dyer, 1997: 1).

This self-perception is problematic for a number of reasons. Roman (1993, cited in Schick and St. Denis, 2003: 1), maintains that 'denial that one has a racial identity trivializes and makes invisible the effects of power'. Put differently, it denies what Johal (2003) refers to as the 'pigmentary passport of privilege' that is afforded to white racial identity, which 'allows sanctity as a result of the racial polity of whiteness' (Johal, 2003: 273).

Viewing white people as raceless, or 'just human' also presents 'race' and, consequently, racism as something that both exists and needs to be discussed only in

multicultural settings (Lander, 2011). This is evidenced in Kannen and Acker's (2008) study, where they found that the majority of the participants only felt 'race' was relevant and needed to be brought up when there were racial minority students in the classroom.

Higgins, Madden and Korteweg's (2015) study on white teachers' resistance to teaching Indigenous knowledge further shows that seeing oneself as 'raceless' or 'cultureless' makes it difficult to imagine teaching another culture. The authors argue that because the white teachers perceive themselves as without a culture, they cannot begin to imagine how to teach indigenous culture (Higgins, Madden and Korteweg, 2015: 260). As Dyer (1997: 2) explains, 'There is no more powerful position than that of being "just" human'.

Whereas earlier research tended to cast this as a lack of awareness, Peggy McIntosh's (1990) 'invisible knapsack' activity being an allegory for white people who are unaware of the unearned privileges bestowed upon them, Leonardo (2009) convincingly argues that such a view wrongly presents white people as innocent, and thus 'off the hook'.

Leonardo (2009) maintains that one can no longer reasonably argue that white people are unaware of their privilege and power that their racial identity bestows upon them. The resistance that persists, far from being based in naivety, is a resolute performative act.

Many critical researchers have called for the need for teacher education programs to engage white teacher candidates in critical reflection on their identities. As Higgins, Madden and Korteweg (2015: 267) put it, white teachers need 'to become familiar with themselves as cultural beings'. However, as Bhopal and Rhamie's (2013) research cautions, this critical reflection must move teachers beyond merely acknowledging their identities to understanding how they affect their teaching.

In a study that explored 30 teacher candidates' understandings of the teaching of race, diversity, and inclusion in Initial Teacher Training courses in the UK, Bhopal and Rhamie (2013: 311) reported that although the white teacher candidate participants

were aware of their racial identity and the privilege and power attached to it, they did not see how it would affect their teaching. As they observed:

Many of them were reflective about their own identities and saw this in terms of being in a position of advantage. Yet at the same time, they did not think that their identity would have a significant effect on their pupils—regardless of the pupils' background.

Accordingly, what must accompany an increased awareness of one's identity is an increased attentiveness to the interface between one's identity and one's pedagogical choices and one's students' identities.

Some scholars (Jupp and Lensmire, 2016; Lowenstein, 2009) have criticized what they call a 'deficit thinking' view of white teacher candidates and called for alternative depictions of white teacher candidates, pointing to studies that have shown that not all are guilty of evading race. Indeed, some recent research shows white teacher candidates 'attempting to come to grips with their own complexity and complicity in a white-supremacist system and seeking to learn how to fight against it' (Jupp and Lensmire, 2016: 986). These studies, while importantly illustrating the need to resist viewing white identities as monolithic are the exception to an expansive body of research that shows white teachers are resistant to acknowledging their racial identities and their influence.

In contrast to the literature reviewed in this section, the research reviewed on racialized teacher candidates in the next section highlights the continued violence that racialized teachers encounter on their paths to becoming (and remaining) teachers.

#### *3.6.4 Racialized teacher candidates*

Teachers' personal and professional identities do not necessarily line up perfectly and can in fact conflict, as some individuals may not fit the social construct of what is 'a teacher'. Indeed, as Alsup (2006: 7) notes of the transition from personal to professional identity:

[...] taking on this professional identity may be more difficult for some new teachers than for others, due to their outsider or

marginalized status in society. If a new teacher is not a member of the middle class, white, female, and heterosexual, the difficulty of the transition is exaggerated.

This point cannot be underscored enough, as it reminds us that despite policies to bring more racialized teachers into the teaching profession, some bodies are still seen to stand for ‘teacher’ while others are seen as ‘space invaders’ (Puwar, 2004). This is present at all levels of education. Indeed, literature on the ‘ostracism’ and ‘outsiderness’ that Black and other racialized teachers are made to feel continues to expand. As Daniel’s (2019: 21) reflections on her experience as a Black university faculty member in Canada show, Black professors’ membership in academe remains a contested space:

For racialized academics, life in the academy can be marred by racial violence that leaves them caught between their commitment to their craft, desire for educational attainment and development, and the mental anguish that can dominate their existence.

Research conducted on racialized teachers has shown that they are not only acutely aware of their identities, as illustrated by Susan in Allard and Santoro’s (2006) study, but that they tend to have a strong understanding of how their racial and cultural identities influence their pedagogies and interactions with students. In addition, research has shown that many minority teachers express a sense of empathy and responsibility toward minority students, having lived similar experiences of marginalization.

For example, Bascia’s (1996: 154) study of 11 racial minority teachers, all of whom had migrated to Canada, found that the teachers not only expressed a particular sensitivity to minority students, but many were in fact ‘engaged in special advocacy roles with respect to ethnocultural and racial minority students’. In explaining their sense of responsibility toward minority students, participants drew on their own experiences of social alienation and discrimination within schools and Canadian society at large. From being put down in class for not speaking English properly, to one Black male participant ‘being routinely followed by the police when he walked

down the street at night' (Bascia, 1996: 157), these experiences had incited in them an empathy for minority students.

Kohli's (2009: 235) research on Women of Color educators in Los Angeles echoes Bascia's findings, her participants reflecting on how their own experiences of being made to feel 'inferior' as students had inspired them to become teachers and create classrooms free of the racism they themselves had endured.

Despite a substantial body of research (Quirocho and Rios, 2000; Dlamini, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Villegas and Irvine, 2010) that speaks to the benefits of hiring more racialized teachers (e.g. they are able to connect with minority students, serve as role models, are more inclined to challenge the curriculum, etc.) some scholars caution against assuming that all racialized teachers will be agents of anti-racism. As Hopson (2013: ii) warns, 'The assumption, however, that racialized educators will automatically be effective teachers or role models for racialized students homogenizes their social differences and reduces the multiplicity of their identities to the colour of their skin'. The other risk of assuming that racialized teachers are better placed through their experiential knowledge is that it leaves white teachers off the hook, countless studies showing, for example, how Black teachers are always expected to take the lead on Black History month.

Finally, and most critically, for those racialized teachers who are in fact politicized and committed to being effective role models for their students, research (see, for example Kornfeld, 1999; Dlamini and Martinovic, 2007; Amos, 2013, 2016) has also shown that often these teachers experience discrimination and microaggressions in teacher education programs and are limited in their capacity to challenge the curriculum as it makes their already precarious positions even more precarious.

Research has documented racism in the school environment experienced at the hands of different actors, be it superiors, peers, students, or even parents. Dlamini and Martinovic's (2007) study of English as an Additional Language teacher candidates sheds light on the discrimination their participants experienced from their teacher associates. This would range from teacher candidates being refused by teacher associates who argued that their accents would make it too difficult for students to

understand them, to facing racist and derogatory comments and unfair practicum evaluations. Amos' research (2013, 2016) has documented the microaggressions minority teacher candidates face from their white teacher candidate colleagues, and how the racialized teacher candidates were silent in the face of the enactment of whiteness, nervous about the consequences of challenging them not only in their class, but later on in the schools where they might be hired.

Although there exists only limited research on the role of parents, Aujla-Bhullar's (2018) study on visible minority women teachers in Canada highlights parents calling into question teachers' abilities and intentions based on their racial/ethnic background. Howard (2014: 511) also describes some of the ways that white parents resist Black teachers' attempts 'to teach in politically relevant, race-cognizant ways': arguing the teacher has an 'agenda', the teachings are detracting from the 'required material' or the 'real curriculum'. He notes that often these complaints find support in educational administrators, who themselves are wary of broaching race issues.

Quiocho and Rios (2000: 518), pointing to the marginalization faced by many minority group teachers, explain that 'Collectively, these teachers [have] to reconcile their image as agents of change with their experiences of marginalization'. Thus, whilst they may be more inclined and committed to challenge the racist undertones of the curriculum in part as a result of their own identities, they are at the same time limited in their capacity to do so for fear of the retaliation and ostracism that may follow. This reinforces Howard's (2014: 514) argument that for many Black teachers, speaking out equates with gambling with one's career.

### *3.6.5 Identity in history education research*

Interestingly, while as evidenced above there has been significant research conducted outside history education on how racial identity and other aspects of teachers' identities influence their pedagogies, very little history education research has looked at how teacher candidates' identities influence their interactions with and orientations to Canadian history.

The near absence of research on history teacher candidates' identities can perhaps be attributed to the fact that up until recently, very little research has been driven by the



goal of understanding how to better support future history teachers in challenging the silences of the master narrative. Instead, the focus has been on how to prepare teacher candidates to teach historical thinking, which as its critics have noted removes any subjectivity in pursuit of an objective and rationale approach to history. Just as den Heyer (2011: 157) observes that the historical thinking approach appears to forget that the concepts were created by raced, gendered, and classed individuals, much history education research seems to forget that history teachers are positioned differently in relation to Canadian history according to their race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and other identity markers.

This is not to say that there has been no interest in exploring identities in relation to historical perspectives. In fact, there exists a rich and ever-growing body of work that examines the influence of students' identities on their historical perspectives. One of the forerunners of this research is American scholar Terri Epstein, who has led extensive inquiries into the relationship between students' racial identities and their historical perspectives.

In her study of two Grade 11 classes, Epstein (1998) found that the African American students and European American students constructed different perspectives of US history. Whereas the European American students held traditional Eurocentric perspectives or revisionist Eurocentric perspectives, the African American students held Afrocentric perspectives, wherein actors and events related to African American freedom were the most significant.

Reporting on the study in an earlier article, Epstein (1997: 29) observes how some of the African American students constructed a 'double historical consciousness' perspective, a play on the term 'double-consciousness' coined by African-American scholar and civil rights activist W. E. B. Du Bois in 1903 to describe the mental conflict of being both Black and American, 'two unreconciled strivings' (Du Bois, Gates and Rampersad, 2010: 3). Epstein (1997: 29) employs Du Bois' concept to denote that these students constructed both Afrocentric perspectives and Eurocentric perspectives of US history 'in order to cope with the conflict between mainstream accounts and the alternative ones they had grown up with'.

Epstein's (1998) research also shows that the two groups of students held different views on what constituted credible historical sources, the European American students ranking the textbook, teacher, and library books as the most credible, while the African American students privileged their family members as the most credible and textbooks as the least credible owing to the latter's exclusion of the histories of African Americans.

In Canada, research into students' identities and their influence on their historical identifications has been led by Peter Seixas and Carla Peck. Seixas's (1993) study examined the historical understandings of six Grade 11 social studies students of different ethnicities in an urban and multi-ethnic high school. He found that the students' and their families' experiences, inasmuch as they related to their ethnic identities or immigration status shaped their ideas about the concepts of historical significance, agency, change, and empathy.

Peck's (2010) doctoral research also explored the relationship between young people's ethnic identities and their views of history, specifically their views of historical significance. In a four-part study, Peck engaged a group of 26 Grade 12 students in an urban area in British Columbia. Interested in understanding how their ethnic identities influenced their ascriptions of historical significance to events in Canadian history, she first asked participants to provide extensive information about their ethnic identities by answering both close-ended and open-ended questions. This followed the recognition of her own social location as a white researcher, and not wanting to make assumptions about participants' identities.

She then created diverse groups of two-to-four participants and tasked them with completing a 'picture-selection' task—similar to Levstik's (2000) timeline activity—where, as a group, they had to pick from thirty images the ten they felt were the most significant. In subsequent group and individual interviews participants were explicitly asked to consider how their ethnic identity might influence their ascriptions of historical significance.

The data revealed that participants' ethnic identity strongly influenced their choice of narrative templates as well as the criteria they used to select the events for their

timelines. For example, two of the participants, Will and Ethan, although having created a timeline together, selected different templates, both drawing on their ethnic identities to justify their selections. Will, who described himself as a Canadian with British ancestry drew on the ‘Founding of the Nation’ narrative to explain the timeline. He attributed his selection of the early events on the timeline to the fact that this was when his ‘ancestors came and started to do things’ (Peck, 2010: 601). Ethan, who described himself as ‘a person with many different racial origins’, used the ‘Diverse and Harmonious’ narrative in constructing Canadian history.

Although, as Peck (2010: 602) notes, Ethan refuted the idea that his ethnic identity had any effect on his selection of events, he selected the passing of Multiculturalism Act as the most important event, demonstrating the influence of his ethnic identity. As he explained his choice, ‘Where would Canada be if it wasn’t multicultural, right? Like I might not be able to live here if it didn’t accept multiculturalism’.

While Epstein’s (1998), Seixas’s (1993) and Peck’s (2010) research deals primarily with the impact of racial (in Epstein’s case) and ethnic (in Seixas and Peck’s case) identity<sup>7</sup>, other studies have shown the influence socioeconomic, cultural, political, and gendered identity markers have on students’ understanding of and orientations to history. There are calls to expand this research to looking at various identity markers simultaneously, with Peck (2017: 220) herself admitting that studying ethnic identity alone ‘belies the messiness of identities’.

A smaller but growing number of scholars (e.g. Pollock, 2014) have also signalled for the need to expand this research to teachers and teacher candidates. One of the biggest proponents of the Historical Thinking Concepts, Lindsay Gibson (2019), in a recent tweet indicated that historical thinking needs to start considering the role of identities and explore ‘*How do teachers’ and students’ identities impact their understanding of the past, present, and future?*’

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<sup>7</sup> This discrepancy merits some reflection. Notwithstanding the fact that researchers are drawn to study different things for a plethora of reasons, the fact that both Canadian studies focussed on ethnicity while the US study focussed on race is suggestive of the broader view that many Canadians hold that race is only something that exists in the United States.

Despite these calls and the compelling evidence offered by the broader studies on the influence of teachers' identities, there is a dearth of studies in history education research that have taken teachers' and teacher candidates' identities as their focus. Smith's (2000) case study is one exception.

With the aim of understanding how his social studies teacher candidates' backgrounds influenced their views of multicultural education, Smith (2000) selected two students from his social studies methods course—May, a white middle class female and Brenda, a white working class female—who held opposing views of multicultural education and had different background experiences of diversity. Whereas May saw multicultural education as divisive, Brenda felt it was crucial. In terms of their personal backgrounds, May had been raised in a conservative Baptist family and had had very little interaction with people of different racial backgrounds. Brenda had grown up in a military family that had moved around a lot and, consequently, had lived and gone to school with people of different backgrounds.

Smith (2000: 159) gathered multiple types of data that, taken together, illuminate the influence of both teacher candidates' identities on their views of multicultural education. His study included written papers that asked them to consider 'the strengths and limitations their social identity presented to their effectiveness as a social studies educator' and 'whether their background influenced their teaching of social studies' (Smith, 2000: 160). He invited them to describe 'the students that they "got along with," and the students who did well in their classes' (Smith, 2000: 160). Finally, interviews, observation of both teacher candidates on placement in the classroom and questionnaires and focus groups with the students they taught all led him to conclude that May and Brenda's different views can be considered at least in part as the result of their 'race, gender and social class; their previous experiences with diversity; and support for ideologies of individualism' (Smith, 2000: 171).

May, who had 'white, female, and middle-class identities; a lack of experience with and knowledge of people who held different beliefs, values, or experiences; and an acceptance of an ideology of individualism' (Smith, 2000: 171), taught in a way that excluded the perspectives of different cultural groups in the curriculum and was not sensitive to the different students in her classroom. May did not think her cultural

background nor that of her students affected their learning and demonstrated an ignorance of how racism, sexism and classism affected her students.

According to Smith (2000), Brenda's very different approach to teaching history—a systematic incorporation of different perspectives across her teaching, a discernible effort to make connections between the history she taught and her students' lives—can be partly explained by her different social class. While both participants were white females, Smith (2000: 172) notes that:

Brenda's working class background placed her in a tension with the dominant culture [as she was] forced to reconcile her knowledge of her parents' hard work with an ideology of individualism, which explained her family's working-class position as resulting from laziness.

Brenda's methodical inclusion of the perspectives of women and people of colour was also in part attributable to having moved around a lot and the resultant exposure to difference, Smith (2000) noting that her school experiences—what Salinas and Blevins (2013) would term her 'experiential knowledge'—'had made her aware of the system of racism' (170).

Smith's findings underscore the intersectional view that 'race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but rather as reciprocally constructing phenomena' (Hill Collins, 2015: 1), and consequently, they need to be considered alongside one another. Looking at individuals through a single lens fails to grasp the complexity of identities. For although both participants in Smith's study were white and female, their different social class and family upbringing/experiences contributed to very different approaches to multicultural education.

According to the research reviewed in this section, teachers' multiple identities influence their pedagogies. However, as the studies also highlight, there are no simple correlations between teacher identity and teacher pedagogy. Indeed, while this study was driven by the view that examining teacher candidates' identities can contribute to a fuller understanding of how they are positioned to take up a history for 'unlearning racism' (Ladson-Billings, 2003), identities were approached as 'fluid, dynamic,

changing and changeable, in different contexts and times' (Allard and Santoro, 2006: 118). Additionally, although the theoretical framing of this study is in critical race theory (CRT), which underlines 'race' as the central identity marker, CRT recognizes—in its adherence to the principles of Intersectionality—that race is inflected by other social divisions (i.e. race is gendered and classed) (Anthias, 2013).

### **3.7 Chapter Summary**

Following the previous chapter's aim to shed light on the silence-making of official history, this chapter drew on the literature to show that teachers are intimately part of this production, their choices having the power to extend or disrupt the silences that mark the official curricula, and in turn, to uphold or challenge the 'stranger making' (Ahmed, 2012) that schools engage in.

I began by considering the possibility of history teachers taking up the critical approaches that were discussed in the previous chapter, presenting evidence that suggests that they have the freedom to determine to a certain extent how and what they teach. However, while presenting research that shows how teachers' choices have an impact on students' views and understandings of history, I had to point to the number of studies attesting to the fact that many teachers are resistant to teaching beyond the master narrative.

This was followed by a discussion of literature showing that teachers' views on the purpose of history education and on their roles as history teachers, as well as their knowledges, are determining factors in what and how they will teach. I raised the question of why history education researchers have not engaged in either of these areas of research systematically—in spite of the overwhelming evidence. Our understanding of teacher candidates' views on purpose remains primarily based on anecdotal evidence (from history teacher educators), while what history teacher candidates know is only partially and vaguely explored. I further pointed to the tendency to study the two separately, and how this provides an incomplete picture.

Finally, I focused on the scarcity of examining teachers' identities in history education research. Referring to the large body of research that has explored the influence of

teachers' identities on their pedagogical choices as well as specifically history students' identities on their historical identifications, I argued for the need to also consider history teacher candidates' identities.

As I will highlight in the methodology section, the methods I employed and research decisions I made were driven by a) the realization that history education as it stands serves to exclude certain bodies (i.e. racialized and Indigenous students) from fully belonging to the Canadian nation; and, b) that teachers have the ability to challenge these shortcomings. How to best support future teachers in challenging the silences of the master narrative and teaching a history for 'unlearning racism' is what I sought to answer by focussing on their knowledges, their views on the purpose of history education and their roles, and their identities.

# Chapter 4 Methodology

## 4.1 Introduction

Based on a critical review of the literature on knowledges, purpose, and identities as described in the previous chapter, I determined that a better understanding of these three phenomena would illuminate how teachers are positioned to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’. Thus, the study set out to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are teacher candidates’ understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching Canadian history?*
- 2. How are they influenced by their identities?*

This chapter provides a roadmap of the methodology of my study. In Section 4.2 I begin by describing critical race theory’s origins, its application in the field of education, its adaption to the Canadian context, and its influence on this study. Section 4.3 then sets out to explain the decision to adopt a qualitative approach composed of a number of data gathering instruments and how this enabled a rich and innovative approach to data collection, which is discussed in detail in Section 4.4. Following this, Section 4.5 details the selection of sites and participants. Section 4.6 then provides the different methods that were used to analyze the data followed by a step-by-step explanation of the process itself in Section 4.7. The chapter concludes with a discussion regarding the question of how to assess the quality of critical research (Section 4.8), ethical considerations (Section 4.9), and a reflection on the impact of my identities on the research (Section 4.10).

As becomes clear, exploratory research is never a linear process. Rather, it is one that moves back and forth between reading, writing and doing, the researcher adjusting instrumentation and epistemology to context, adapting to unforeseen circumstances, and embracing new insights. Although challenging at times for the novice researcher, it is this very unpredictability that makes the research process one that is both exciting and worth savouring. It is my hope that in addition to providing the reader with detailed information of the research process, this chapter communicates both the challenges and delights that this research has presented. Just as bell hooks (1994: 7) reminds us of the importance of joy and excitement in the learning process so should we remember



their rightful—albeit often forgotten—place in the research process, which is a learning process in and of itself.

## **4.2 Theoretical paradigm**

### *4.2.1 Critical race theory and its origins*

This study is primarily located in critical race theory (CRT). CRT first emerged in American jurisprudence scholarship in the 1970s in response to the failure of critical legal studies to include race and racism in its critique of the legal system. Black legal scholars and activists called attention to the racism that was pervasive in the law and the criminal justice system. They argued that liberal legal discourses, couched in principles of meritocracy and equal opportunity, ensured that whites continued to benefit from the law more than Blacks (Crenshaw, 1988).

Although as Crenshaw et al. (1995: xiii) maintain there is no ‘canonical set of doctrines or methodologies to which CRT scholars all subscribe’, there are a number of widely agreed upon defining elements of CRT. Gillborn (2006: 20) outlines them in a ‘conceptual map’ as follows:

- racism as endemic... ‘normal’ not aberrant nor rare: deeply ingrained legally and culturally;
- crosses epistemological boundaries;
- critique of civil rights laws as fundamentally limited;
- critique of liberalism: claims of neutrality, objectivity and colour-blindness, and meritocracy as camouflages;
- call to context: challenges ahistoricism and recognizes experiential knowledge of people of colour.

The starting point of CRT is a recognition of the pervasiveness of racism. Racism is not exceptional, nor uncommon, but rather, intrinsic to the very make-up of society. It has become so ingrained in the structures and social order, however, that it is often regarded as natural and ordinary (Delgado and Stefancic 2000).

CRT further refutes the idea that racism can be chalked up to intentions, and instead focusses on it as outcome. CRT rejects liberalism, which in its claims of meritocracy, colour-blindness and the twin pillars of neutrality and objectivity, serves to deny the

historical nature of current inequalities and wrongly presents race as a fixed category, 'devoid of social meaning' (Matsuda et al., 1993: 6).

CRT places particular importance on the experiential knowledge of people of colour, with a view that people of colour's voices and 'insights into the operation of racism and their understanding of being racially minoritised' (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011) enable them to make discerning analyses of society. Much CRT research thus employs storytelling, or counter-narratives as a tool. Storytelling not only serves as a way for racialized bodies to 'speak back', but their stories can also serve as a 'transformative tool to challenge liberal racist ideology' (Rollock, 2012).

Finally, CRT is interdisciplinary. This allows for the CRT researcher to draw from outside the discipline, and to incorporate different theories. This criss-crossing of theories, or what Gillborn (2006b: 10) terms 'theoretical eclecticism' offers a pragmatic flexibility and further allows for CRT to adapt to its different settings.

While still firmly rooted in the groundwork laid out by legal CRT scholars, CRT has since found a home in many other disciplines, 'travelled' outside the United States, and given way to multiple offshoots (e.g. LatCrit, critical whiteness studies, critical race feminism). The following sections delineate CRT as applied to the field of education and, in particular, its adaptation to the Canadian context, before describing how CRT informs this study.

#### ***4.2.2 Critical race theory in education***

Gloria Ladson-Billings' and William F. Tate's 1995 article *Towards a Critical Race Theory of Education* marked the advent of critical race theory in education. They argued that multicultural reforms, located in liberal discourses, did not take into account power and racism in the educational system. Only through a proper theorizing of race and racism could we understand the inequitable schooling experiences of Black students.

In the context of education, CRT is broadly agreed upon as:

a framework or a set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze and transform

those structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial positions in and out of the classroom' (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002: 25).

Underlying this view is that while schools (cloaked in the ideals of meritocracy) operate to uphold and produce oppression and marginalization, they have 'the potential to emancipate and empower' (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002: 26).

Ladson-Billings (2003: 8) points to social studies education in particular as the potential 'curricular home for unlearning racism', explaining that 'The historical, social, economic, and political records provide compelling blueprints for the way the nation has recruited the concept of race to justify hierarchy, inequity, and oppression' (Ladson-Billings, 2003: 8).

Educational research that is framed by a CRT perspective rejects the liberal principles of neutrality, objectivity, colour blindness and meritocracy professed by the school system, arguing that they serve 'as camouflages for the self-interest of powerful entities of society' (Tate, 1997: 235). Knowledge is not neutral. Quite the opposite, what counts as knowledge 'worth knowing' (i.e. the knowledge that is taught in schools) is that which serves to maintain the power and privilege of the dominant group (Love, 2004: 229). Much CRT-driven research in education has consequently been devoted to challenging the assumed universality and neutrality of dominant knowledge and privileging the experiential knowledge of subordinated peoples (Love, 2004: 228).

CRT-driven educational research further rejects liberalism for its emphasis on incrementalism, which it argues enables the status quo to persist. An end to schooling inequities requires radical changes. Aligned with this view, CRT researchers reject the view of the objective and neutral researcher, instead seeing the research act as one that is political (Hylton, 2012). Beyond simply documenting the racism in education, in its commitment to social justice, CRT research seeks to transform it (Hylton, 2010: 341).

### *4.2.3 Critical race theory in Canada*

Edward Said (1983: 227) writes in his essay on the travelling of theories that as theories move to new spaces and times, they are to a certain extent transformed by their receiving context. The shape CRT has taken in the Canadian context is one such example, where many scholars have adopted and adapted CRT to the historical specificity of ‘race’ and racism in Canada (Dua, Razack, and Warner, 2005; Thobani, 2007). This adaptation is worth noting.

Dua, Razack, and Warner (2005), all members of Canada’s RACE (Researchers and Academics of Colour for Equality/Equity) network and some of Canada’s leading Critical Race Feminists, argue that traditional CRT scholarship has failed to account for Indigenous experiences of racism and colonization. They call for an interpretation of CRT that integrates and emphasizes this continued colonization into its critiques (Dua, Razack and Warner, 2005: 6).

Thobani (2007: 16), also a member of RACE, has similarly argued for highlighting the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada, calling for the need to distinguish between the Indigenous ‘other’ and the immigrant ‘other’. She explains that although immigrants have experienced racism at the hands of the Canadian state and their inclusion has been ‘qualified’ at best, they too:

have been party to the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples[...] The more immigrants have sought their own inclusion and access to citizenship, the more invested they have become, with very few exceptions, in supporting the nation’s erasure of its originary violence and its fantasies of progress and prosperity.

Without a proper acknowledgment of the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples, CRT research risks reinforcing racism and obscuring the white settler colonial project that undergirds racism in Canada (Dua, Razack and Warner, 2005: 2).

### *4.2.4 Critical race theory’s influence on this study*

In explaining how he came to embrace the CRT perspective in his own research, Kevin Hylton (2012: 25) writes:

CRT offered a theoretical frame that enhanced my critical lens and enabled me to draw from other scholars unafraid to make bold statements about, and challenge, the racialised order of things.

My own rationale echoes Hylton's (2012) words and was reinforced by the tendency in Canada to view racism as external to the national multicultural project (Boyko, 1995). Indeed, race and racism are usually talked about in the Canadian context as they relate to the United States. Nevertheless, despite this active distancing racism is still one of the most volatile social issues in Canada. By foregrounding racism in both Canada's history and present (along with other systems of domination), this research challenges the 'dominant imaginary' of Canada as 'a tolerant, multicultural society' (Razack, Smith and Thobani, 2010: ix).

CRT was also deemed as a good guiding framework for this study owing to its commitment to challenging dominant ideology, or what Solorzano and Yosso (2002: 28) call 'majoritarian stories'. Love (2004: 228-229) describes majoritarian stories as:

the description of events as told by members of dominant/majority groups, accompanied by the values and beliefs that justify the actions taken by dominants to insure their dominant position that has long been taught in schools.

The official history of Canada is a majoritarian story, characterized by a 'willful forgetting' (Razack, Smith and Thobani, 2010: xvi).

CRT's valuing of experiential knowledge encouraged me to centre the experiences and narratives of three of my racialized participants whose stories serve to challenge the oft professed neutrality of schools and teacher education programs, highlighting the ongoing racial inequality that racialized teacher candidates face.

CRT was also used in order to avoid falling into the liberal trap that marks much of the research on social studies education in Canada. While there is a growing body of research on students' (and to a lesser extent) teacher candidates' historical knowledge (or lack thereof), the research typically has not focused on how the exclusions and silences in teacher candidates' knowledge have material consequences on the lives of students—from both marginalized and dominant groups.

This leads to the final, and perhaps most important reason a CRT framework was used to guide this study. Adopting a CRT perspective was deemed necessary when one considers the ongoing disparity in school success between white students and Indigenous and Black students in Canada, despite a professed commitment to multicultural education (Pascal, 2016), and the popular view of Canada as a ‘race-neutral liberal state’ (Razack, Smith, Thobani, 2010: 8). A perspective that rejected slow, incremental policy changes and offered more critical and radical recommendations was needed.

Importantly, this study heeds the RACE network scholars’ call and takes care to actively foreground the colonization—both past and present—of Indigenous peoples in Canada. At the same time this thesis cannot claim to be a decolonizing project. Heeding Tuck and Yang’s (2012) caution that researchers not attach the term ‘decolonizing’ to research that does not work toward and centre as its project the repatriation of Indigenous land, I do not use the word to describe this study. While decolonizing has been used more broadly in many contexts to refer to research that seeks to challenge hegemonic understandings, in the Canadian context, decolonizing is not, as Tuck and Yang (2012) state, a metaphor.

What this study does do is focus on the ongoing colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada and how the silences in the master narrative of Canadian history contribute to anti-Indigenous racism that casts Indigenous peoples as victims (of their own doing) and fails to acknowledge their resilience and agency. Thus, a more accurate descriptor is that this study, while situated in critical race theory and focused on anti-racism, attends to the different and unique racism experienced by Indigenous peoples in Canada as well as works to situate all racisms within the context of Canada’s settler-colonial history.

#### *4.2.5 Two guiding concepts*

##### **Intersectionality**

Although one of the main critiques levelled against CRT has been that in its privileging of ‘race’ and racism it overlooks other forms of oppression, Hylton (2010) calls this a

myth: CRT, while maintaining the central role of racism and the constitutive role of ‘race’, acknowledges the intersecting forms of oppression.

Indeed, the fact that legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1988), who is credited with having written one of the key founding texts of CRT, also coined the term *Intersectionality*, suggests that an intersectional understanding of systems of domination has always undergirded CRT.

Importantly, as Hill Collins and Bilge (2016: 64-65) explain, intersectionality predates its naming by Crenshaw in the 1980s, many of its core ideas having been elaborated in the preceding decades by African American women within social movement settings. These women challenged the single-focus lens on social inequality adopted by the respective social movements (e.g. anti-racist movements, feminism, unions), where one category of analysis was seen as paramount (i.e. race within the civil rights movement, gender within feminism, class within unions). This single focus worked to discount their experience as:

‘simultaneously black *and* female *and* workers...[leaving] little space to address the complex social problems that they face[d]. Black women’s specific issues remained subordinated within each movement because no social movement by itself would, nor could, address the entirety of discriminations they faced’ (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016: 3).

In response to these shortcomings, they developed their own political organizations and used language that spoke to their multiple identities (i.e. ‘Black feminists’) as well as elaborated intersectional analyses of the shortcomings of the social movements of the time, speaking up and out via essays, political pamphlets, art and other creative means (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016: 65). By the time Crenshaw (1998) coined the term ‘intersectionality’, marking its advent into the world of academia, it was a robust grassroots critical praxis.

While similar to CRT there is no one single definition of intersectionality, it is widely agreed upon that intersectionality is an ‘analysis claiming that systems of race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, and age form mutually constructing features of social organization’ (Hill Collins, 2000: 299). Put differently, we cannot begin to

understand people's experiences by only focussing on one axis of oppression, but rather need to understand experiences as shaped by multiple axes that influence one another. CRT research has always been acutely aware of this multidimensionality of oppressions, as evidenced by its commitment to exploring 'how raced inequities are shaped by processes that also reflect, and are influenced by, other dimensions of identity and social structure' (Gillborn, 2015: 278).

In the context of this study, an intersectional lens brought a greater level of complexity to how I attended to participants' identities' influence, specifically on my three outlier participants' experiences. It also served to problematize certain participants' tendency to skirt the influence of their dominant racial identity (e.g. being white), instead pointing to their other subordinate identities (e.g. being homosexual) in their search for innocence. Intersectionality highlights our complicities (e.g. a white gay man's experience of homophobia cannot be understood outside his white male dominant position in society) and it reminds us that we can hold multiple dominant and subordinate identities. Consequently, no one can be presumed 'off the hook'.

### White Supremacy

Studies of whiteness in teacher education have long been characterized by explorations of 'white privilege'. While few critical scholars would disagree with Roediger's (1991) claim that 'race studies that do not sufficiently address whiteness are at best disingenuous and at worst ineffective' (cited Leonardo, 2009: 9), many (see, for example Apple, 1998; Gillborn, 2006) warn that uncritically studying whiteness can in fact lead to a re-centring of white interests. As Gillborn (2006: 319) notes, uncritical forays into whiteness risk '[masking] the structural power of white identifications...and serve to ensure that higher education remains an institution predominantly operated *by* white people *for* white people'. Leonardo (2004) shares this view, arguing that the focus on 'privilege' serves to obfuscate the structures and actions that make domination possible.

It is out of this recognition that many researchers based in CRT, speak instead of *white supremacy*. Although the word denotes images of the Klu Klux Klan and other cruder forms of race hatred, Gilborn (2015) explains how the concept of white supremacy, as



understood by Critical Race Theorists speaks to a less obvious yet more comprehensive form of race politics. As Ansley (1997: 592) writes:

[By] ‘white supremacy’ I do not mean to allude to only the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings.

Because whites overwhelmingly control power in a white supremacist system, they have ‘little incentive to work to eradicate racism’ (Rollock and Gillborn, 2011: no page). Derrick Bell (1980), one of the founders of CRT, argued thus that any advancements in race equality were the result of what he termed ‘interest convergence’. According to Bell (1980: 523), ‘the interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites’. Desegregation of schools in the United States (*Brown vs Board of Education*) was one such example, where desegregation, Bell argued, was not about racial justice, but rather about cleaning up the United States’ image on the international stage. Many CRT education scholars further maintain that desegregation of schools in the United States did not significantly improve the education of African American students.

This study is premised on the view that the education system is one of many institutions that works to uphold white supremacy. Through its active silencing of Canada’s history of racism, colonization, and slavery, ‘it perpetuates a view of Canada as a fair and tolerant society, despite the reality of pervasive racism and sexism’ (Pon, Gosine and Phillips, 2011: 389). History teachers make choices everyday—whether aware of it or not—that either challenge or uphold white supremacy.

### **4.3 Qualitative study**

Although there is no one way to conduct CRT research (Crenshaw et al., 1995), given its commitment to challenging dominant views of objectivity and neutrality and its call to foregrounding race and racism throughout the research process (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002), CRT methods are unapologetically political. At the same time, CRT

researchers—driven by what Hylton (2012: 27) terms a ‘pragmatic politics’ (i.e. they are focused on how to bring about material social change)—opt for research methodologies that enable a disrupting of racism.

Owing to its focus on recovering individual, silenced stories, CRT research has tended to employ qualitative methods (Decuir-Gunby, J.T. and Walker-Devose, D.C., 2013).

Qualitative methodology sees as its objective to develop a holistic understanding of social phenomena that attends to the complexity and contextual nature of experience (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016). In contrast to quantitative research, which is focussed on ‘testing hypotheses to establish facts’, qualitative research is concentrated on ‘discovery and description...and extracting and interpreting the meaning of experience’ (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016: 170).

In thinking about how to best engage in a critical and comprehensive study of teacher candidates’ understandings of Canadian history, orientations to teaching Canadian history and the influence of their identities on both, it became clear that a qualitative methodology would allow me to gather a rich body of data. This, in turn, would provide a holistic understanding of how the teacher candidates in this study are positioned to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

While interviews tend to be the research method that people associate with qualitative methodology, interviews are but one of the many research instruments that qualitative researchers make use of. For the purpose of my study, I decided to employ multiple qualitative methods alongside interviews. This in part stemmed from the widely held view that multiple methods can serve to corroborate or contest the data gathered through other methods (i.e. triangulate the data), as well as bring more clarity and nuance to data than a single-methods study. The decision to use multiple methods to collect data from my participants also emerged out of my positioning as a teacher. Just as any good educator uses a range of tools to access the knowledges and understandings of their students, so too must a good researcher draw on a variety of methods (e.g. visual, written, spoken) in order to gain authentic—albeit always mediated—understandings of their participants’ views.

In combining a questionnaire—which included a mapping activity, a timeline activity, open-ended questions and a section on demographic information—with interviews and reflective questions, I was providing participants with multiple venues and ways to express their understandings of Canadian history and orientations to Canadian history education.

A qualitative methodology was also chosen due to its acceptance—albeit varied—of the imprint of the researcher on the research. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998: 4) explain, ‘Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world’. Such a view aligns well with CRT’s understanding of the researcher as not a neutral observer, but one who is wholly implicated in the research process.

As with any research project, the chosen methods are not the only methods that could have been used but were decided upon as they were deemed to be the ‘best fit’ for answering the research questions. In my case, as I combed through the existing work that had looked into students’ (and a few on teachers’) pre-existing historical knowledge and understandings and the influence of their identities, three main methods jumped out at me: a mapping activity, a timeline activity and a narrative writing activity. The next section will describe my decision to use the first two and not the third.

At the same time, the final methods that a researcher elects to use are not necessarily the ones they initially set out to use. In my case, I at first intended on using focus groups as a follow-up to the questionnaires; I explain in section 4.4.2 why I abandoned this plan in favour of interviews.

The decision to use already existing methods came in response to a criticism levelled against research in social studies teacher education as being scattered and random, rarely building on the work of others (Adler, 2008). While many successful studies and dissertations have opted to use just one of the instruments described (e.g. mapping activity), the decision to use a number of instruments in concert with one another enabled me to access participants’ understandings and orientations from different angles, and in turn, to corroborate the findings. While under no pretense that the data collected encapsulates the entirety of participants’ views and understandings, which

are themselves always shifting, the methods used brought me ‘nearer to the truth’ (Denzin, 1978) of my participants’ understandings of and orientations to teaching Canadian history.

#### *4.3.1 A note on numbers*

While this study adopted a qualitative research design, some readers might interpret my decision to use a questionnaire, traditionally the purview of quantitative researchers, as well as my decision to present the data alongside its frequency (i.e. through percentages) as indicative of a mixed-methods approach.

As will become clear in section 4.4.1, however, my questionnaire used a variety of open-ended directions and questions that beckoned a narrative response from participants. The one section of the questionnaire—the timeline activity—that might be construed as more quantitative given its closed-ended nature (i.e. participants were tasked with selecting their level of knowledge from four options that were then tallied, as well as circling the ten historical events they felt were the most important for students to learn), was used to both corroborate the data gathered from the more open-ended mapping activity as well as serve as a springboard in the interviews for a discussion with participants on their understandings of their knowledges (and the silences in their knowledges), as well as their views on what was historically significant.

The decision to present the results of each of the sections of the questionnaire alongside their frequency was inspired by researchers like Becker (1970) who see numbers as adding a valuable precision that verbal terms such as ‘some, many’ do not afford. Importantly, as Maxwell (2010) notes, the use of numbers in qualitative research does not render a study ‘mixed-methods’ but rather, can serve to enrich the qualitative data presented. In particular, he argues, providing numerical data about the distribution of views or observations amongst participants not only helps to identify the uniformity of the data across the individuals studied but also the diversity of the data. Quoting Sandelowski, Voils, and Knafl (2009), he writes that ‘quantitizing’ qualitative data in qualitative research is done ‘to facilitate pattern recognition or otherwise to extract meaning from qualitative data, account for all data, document

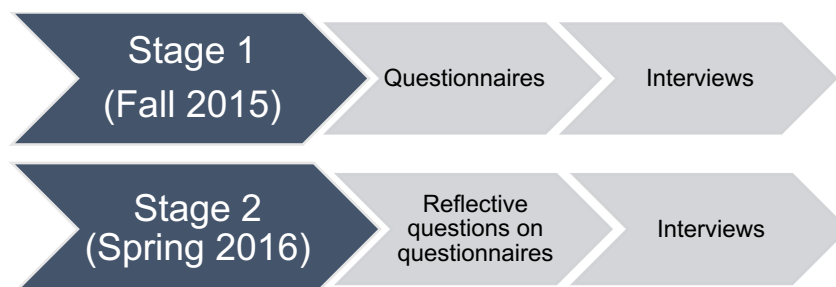
analytic moves, and verify interpretation’ (Maxwell, 2010: 476). This study, thus, claims its place among qualitative research, while rejecting what Sandelowski (2001) refers to as the long-held myth that ‘real qualitative researchers do not count’.

## 4.4 Methods

As mentioned above, I used a variety of methods to collect data, including a questionnaire, interviews and reflective questions. In addition to this multi-pronged approach, as the research originally set out to identify whether and how participants’ understandings and views shifted throughout the program, the research was multi-staged. Stage 1 took place at the beginning of the history methods course (Fall 2015), and Stage 2 took place at the end (Spring 2016).

Figure 1 illustrates the data collection process. Below it I describe in detail each of the methods employed, what data I hoped to get from each, and their respective limitations. In Section 4.4.5 I explain the decision to not include most of the data from Stage 2 in this thesis, as it became clear to me that there was a deeper story to be told about three of the participants.

**Figure 1: Data Collection Process**



### 4.4.1 Questionnaires

Participants were first asked to complete a questionnaire (see Appendix A) at the beginning of the academic year (Fall 2015). Questionnaires were administered during the history methods course and took approximately 45 minutes to complete. Fraenkel and Wallen (2001: 376) note the effectiveness of questionnaires in ‘[describing] some

aspects or characteristics (such as abilities, opinions, attitudes, beliefs, and/or knowledge) of the population of which that group is part’.

The questionnaire was made up of four parts. Parts 1 and 2—the first an open-ended mapping activity, the second a closed-ended timeline activity—served to get a preliminary understanding of participants’ knowledges and understandings of Canadian history as well as their views on what is historically significant. Part 3, a series of open-ended questions about their views on the purpose, challenges and aims of history education sought to get an initial impression of their orientations to teaching and knowledge more broadly. Part 4 collected demographic information via both open and closed-ended questions to understand who the participants were.

I piloted the initial questionnaire on two recently graduated history teachers in the late spring of 2015. The first pilot participant was a white, 27-year-old lower-middle-class male who held a master’s degree in Canadian history and with whom I had completed my undergraduate degree in history. The second pilot participant was a white, 35-year-old middle-class woman who had gone to the same teacher education program as the male. I used a convenience sampling method to recruit the pilot participants, wherein I connected with individuals who I knew through others. While convenience sampling is not the optimal sampling method, given I was based in Scotland until the spring before moving back to Canada for the year to conduct my research, it was what I had access to.

Although the pilot was originally supposed to consist of four participants who represented a diversity of racial, ethnic, gender and class identities, the other two participants were unable to take part at the last minute due to other commitments. Despite this shortcoming, the pilot proved to be a worthwhile undertaking as the two pilot participants provided me with detailed feedback on the layout, duration and content of the questionnaire. This, ultimately, led to three changes:

First, while the questionnaire I piloted on the two participants began with the demographics section on the first page, I moved this part to the end of the questionnaire following the participants’ indication that describing different aspects of their identity at the beginning of the questionnaire had skewed their maps.

Second, while I had not imposed a time limit on any of the four-part questionnaire's sections, and instead just given them 45 minutes for completion (the timeframe I assumed I would have in each classroom), one of my pilot participants spent 40 minutes working on his map and then rushed to complete the rest of the questionnaire in the last five minutes. Both participants agreed that by providing at least a rough indication of how much time should be spent on the mapping activity, participants would feel less pressured to write down everything and instead be incentivized to select what they deemed to be most significant. Thus, I added a 15-minute suggested time limit to the map.

Third, while the timeline activity initially only included three levels of knowledge—'Never heard of', 'Have heard of' and 'Know in detail'—both participants indicated that their knowledge of many of the events fell between 'Have heard of' and 'Know in detail'. Consequently, I added a fourth level of knowledge for participants to choose from—'Intermediate comprehension'.

Overall, the pilot was also an instructive exercise in that both participants indicated that they had enjoyed the open-endedness of the mapping activity; and the more structured and focused timeline activity, which they found to be a good complement to the mapping activity. They both answered the questions on purpose, challenges and reasons in detail and pointed out that they had not once been asked during their teacher education programs why they wanted to become history teachers.

This 'trial-run' also reversed my initial plan to have participants fill out a new questionnaire in Stage 2. Instead, as both pilot participants asserted, returning original questionnaires to participants at the end of the school year and asking a series of reflective questions would be a) more manageable (i.e. I would not have to analyze two maps for each participant), and b) still allow participants to do their own analysis of their changing views and orientations.

The four parts of the questionnaire are described in detail below.

### Questionnaire Part 1: Mapping activity

Part 1 of the questionnaire provided participants with a blank page and asked them to

‘map out’—using words, images or both—what they considered to be the most significant events, actors and themes in Canadian history. They were then requested to provide a rationale for their selection and to indicate the items they felt most and least confident teaching. An image of the mapping activity is provided in Appendix A.

The mapping activity was inspired by Seixas’s use of a mapping activity in his 1997 study on Grade 11 students in British Columbia. Seeking to identify how students’ views of historical significance were influenced by their ethnicities and family backgrounds, Seixas (1997: 22) tasked his participants with mapping out what they thought were the most significant events in the history of the world.

This served as my initial diving board into participants’ knowledges and views of ‘what history’ is important (and in turn, unimportant). It also provided some insight into how they conceptualized history.

#### Questionnaire Part 2: Timeline activity

Heeding Seixas’s (1997) counsel that it is prudent to make use of multiple approaches to get at participants’ ascriptions of historical significance, and because I was particularly interested in how teacher candidates’ views and orientations would influence the teaching of the mandatory Grade 10 history course, I followed the open-ended mapping activity with a closed-ended timeline activity (see Appendix A).

This activity was inspired by Esptein’s (1998) work exploring the differences in African American and European American students’ historical perspectives of American history. More recently, Peck (2010) used a timeline activity to explore the influence ethnic identity played on Canadian students’ ascriptions of historical significance. Other history education scholars have also used a version of a timeline activity.

On the second page of the questionnaire, participants were provided with a list of 23 events in Canadian history that had occurred between 1914 and the present (the period covered in the mandatory Ontario Grade 10 Canadian history course). They were first asked to indicate their level of knowledge of each event on a 4-point scale (no knowledge; have heard of; intermediate comprehension; know in detail). The second



task had them select the 10 events on the timeline they felt were the ‘most important’ for students to learn in Grade 10, and then describe their reasoning behind their selection.

Events were compiled from a variety of sources. Seeking to get at both their official and counter knowledges, the timeline included events that fit the master narrative of Canadian history as well as ones that ran counter to it, either through centring racialized bodies as actors, or pointing to structural racism. (For a brief description of each event, see Appendix B).

Cognizant of the fact that a researcher’s own selections are necessarily incomplete and partial, I asked a number of colleagues and practitioners to review the events and provide feedback. These included my pilot participants; two of my former colleagues from my own History Methods course who were very critical and politicized in their views of history teaching; a racialized Canadian doctoral colleague whose focus was also on anti-racist education; and the teacher educators who were to partake in the study. Study participants were also given the opportunity to add any events they felt were missing at the bottom of the timeline.

Whereas the timeline activity is the centrepiece of both Epstein (1998) and Peck’s (2010) work, and as such their renditions of it are much more elaborate and indeed interactive, in this instance it was used more in line with Seixas’s (1997) approach: to provide another angle from which to access participants’ ascriptions of historical significance. It was also used to provide an initial gauge of their knowledge of specific events, taking note of the different levels of knowledge between those that make up the master narrative and those that run counter to it<sup>8</sup>.

Together, the map and timeline provided participants with both a broad open-ended and a more focused closed-ended task from which I could make inferences regarding

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<sup>8</sup> While most research on teacher candidates’ knowledge has either focused on their knowledge of historical thinking, or on their overall knowledge, my decision to distinguish between official and counter knowledges is based on Salinas and Blevins (2013) who show that while one can understand the gaps and silences of the official history, it is only with counter knowledges that one can move beyond doubting to challenging it.

their views of which and whose histories matter, and conversely, which and whose don't.

### Why not written?

It should be mentioned that in electing to use existing instruments, the mapping activity and timeline activity were not the only two considered. Another tool used widely by history education researchers to discern participants' understandings of history is a writing exercise wherein they are asked to write the history of ('fill in the blank') as they see it. This instrument is most closely associated with Létourneau's (2006) work with Quebecois youth on their views of their province's history where they were asked to 'describe the history of Quebec as you see it'.

While Létourneau's (2006) research sheds an important light onto the dissonance that exists between public memory and scholarly history as evinced by his participants' narratives of victimization (which stood in stark contrast to the work of Quebec historians that problematizes the narrative of oppression), after much consideration and consultation with supervisors I decided not to use such an approach. The reason was two-fold. On the one hand, as a young researcher who was dependent on teacher educators giving me access to their teacher candidates, I was mindful of taking up class time, and felt that a writing activity would require more time. In addition, I was aware of the seemingly colossal request of asking participants to write the entire history of Canada, and the distress it might incite; this, in turn, could lead to a refusal to participate. From a logistical point of view, given that few university students 'put ink to paper' anymore, it would be arguably be unreasonable to expect participants to write the entire history of Canada by hand. Therefore, effectively administering the writing activity in the current digital climate would require asking teacher candidates to bring a laptop to the course. This could then raise questions of accessibility (i.e. not everyone may have one) and unpredictability (i.e. even those who have one may forget to bring it).

Given that I was using the questionnaire as more of an initial gauge—where the data collected would be supplemented by in-depth interviews that would in the spirit of CRT engage the participants in a dialectical and critical reflection, centring power and racism—I decided that the mapping activity in combination with the timeline activity

were ideal instruments. They a) offered participants the choice of using images or words (in the case of the maps); and b) provided them with both a broad open-ended task (mapping out Canadian history) and a more focused and closed-ended task (selecting particular events from Canadian history).

### Questionnaire Part 3: Purpose, challenges, aims

Part 3 of the questionnaire shifted the focus from participants' understandings of Canadian history to their orientations to Canadian history education. In this section participants were asked three open-ended questions. The first asked what they saw as the purpose of history education, following the work of Barton and Levstik (2004) who argue that history teachers' choices are intrinsically linked to and informed by what they see as the purpose of history education: to change how and what teachers teach, you need to change what they see as the purpose of history education.

The second question asked participants to describe what they saw as the challenges of teaching Canadian history in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in order to understand what their preoccupations were, which in turn could provide more insight into what they saw as the purpose of history education.

Finally, participants were asked to write three reasons why they wanted to be a history teacher. Combined, it was hoped that these questions would elucidate how participants perceived the role of the history teacher and what they saw as the aims of teaching history.

### Questionnaire Part 4: Demographic information

Part 4 of the questionnaire comprised a series of open and closed-ended questions eliciting demographic information. This follows VanSledright, Kelly and Meuwissen's (2006, quoted in Peck, 2010: 585) view that 'studying ideas about historical significance among learners remains only a partially successful endeavour without collecting sufficient data on their biographies'.

Following Intersectionality's emphasis on 'expanding systems of power beyond race, class, and gender' (Hill Collins, 2015: 14), I also asked questions concerning sexual orientation, ethnic identity, age, and hometown. Participants were prompted to indicate

their highest degree completed, and the number of university Canadian history courses they had taken in order to get an idea of the amount of post-secondary history education they brought with them.

Questions on gender, ethnic and racial identity, social class and sexual orientation were all open-ended, following the recommendation of a number of LGBT and race-related organizations' research sites on how to conduct ethical demographic surveys.

It should be mentioned that religion was not included in the questionnaire, an oversight on my part that became evident when during the interview one participant referred to her religion as her main identity. This omission demonstrates, as Allard and Santoro (2006: 120) have written, that 'as researchers, our values and understandings are embedded implicitly in the projects through which we seek to better understand others'. Asking participants to describe their identities in the interview served in part to mediate this as it gave them an opportunity to refer to aspects of their identity that though important to them might not have been asked in the demographic section.

#### *4.4.2 Interviews—Stage 1*

Following the completion of the questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sub-group of the participants.

Interviews are unrivalled in their ability to garner rich and detailed information from participants through the personal contact they afford. In addition, beyond eliciting rich description, the one-on-one dynamic that interviews provide enables the critical researcher to transform ignorance and misapprehension (Guba and Lincoln, 2008). Blaisdell's (2009) research provides one example of interviews framed by CRT, where he used his conversations with teachers to challenge the liberal, apolitical orientations they brought to teaching, actively confronting the racism of the teachers in his study.

In this study, interviews enabled me to get a more detailed and nuanced understanding of participants' views that had not been revealed in the questionnaires. They equally allowed me to engage them in critical questioning that sought to move the research beyond being merely descriptive to educative and transformative.

Interviews also led to complicating my initial readings of the maps. One such example relates to the inclusion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) on participants' maps: The CPR is regarded in popular culture as the ultimate seal of Canadian identity, what united Canada from sea to sea; and thus, its appearance on a map immediately suggested a nation-building narrative.

However, I was compelled to reconsider this reading when one of the participants indicated in her interview that she had put the CPR on her map as it represented an example of Canada's racist immigration policies, noting that the Chinese workers who built the most dangerous parts of the railroad had after its completion been sent back to China.<sup>9</sup> This highlighted the benefit of using interviews to confirm (in this case, trouble) the findings of the questionnaires.

While the social interaction that the interview affords is one of its main strengths, it also presents a number of possible pitfalls. First and foremost, the quality of data collected depends largely on the interviewer's skill. As Barbour (2014: 112) notes, 'Interviewing is both an art and a science'. It requires not only the ability to ask questions that elicit rich information, but also, to actively listen and to be quick to react.

Even when conducted by the most talented of interviewers, interviews as a method have been criticized by many scholars who argue that they produce contrived data, or what Silverman (2013: 51) terms 'manufactured data'; this, in contrast to the data collected from observation which he terms 'naturally occurring data'<sup>10</sup>.

While I remain mindful of the fact that what people say and what people do does not always correspond, and that there is a risk of participants 'telling you what they think you want to hear' I decided that the benefits of interviewing, namely the face-to-face interaction it affords and the connection, reflection, disclosure, and intimacy it in turn fosters, far outweighed the potential shortcomings.

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<sup>9</sup> For an in-depth description of the central role of Chinese workers in building the CPR and the racism and poor working conditions they endured see <http://www.library.ubc.ca/chineseinbc/railways.html>

<sup>10</sup> In contrast to Silverman, I believe that observation can be an invasive method that results in a performance that is not as natural or pure as Silverman would have it.

It should be mentioned that in the initial stages of planning, I considered using focus groups, following the idea that history is a collective process and that engaging teacher candidates in discussions on their differing views on significance and purpose could support one of the underlying aims of the research: to engage teacher candidates in the idea that history is constructed and mediated through power and we interact with it differently depending on how close (or far) our identities align us from power.

However, I changed my mind following my attendance at a Canadian Society for Studies in Education conference in the spring of 2015, where history professor Timothy Stanley (2015) discussed how he begins every course by telling his students that his class is not a safe space; and that as much as he can try to make it safer, he does not expect students to share personal stories or their experiences of oppression. I was struck that I too could not ensure that the focus groups would be a safe space. Given that I was asking participants to reflect on their own identities in relation to Canadian history, a rather personal undertaking, it would be more ethically responsible to conduct interviews where they would be assured the privacy and safety of the one-on-one interview.

A semi-structured format for the interviews was elected as it offers the interviewer some flexibility, as well as the option to further probe beyond the answers given to initial questions (Thomas, 2013).

Interviews were loosely organized into two sections, with the first covering questionnaire responses, and the second focussing on identity and its relation to the previous section. While a series of questions was elaborated (see Appendix C), it was by no means a regimented script. Rather, the questions served as a springboard to engage teacher candidates in deeper analysis of the production and silences of Canadian history, how their ascriptions of historical significance were intimately caught up in this knowledge production as well as influenced by their identities, and the political nature of history education and the role of the history teacher.

#### Interviews Part 1: Questionnaire responses

Participants were first asked to tell me more about their map, its layout, what it included, what might be missing and why. They were then asked to consider the items

they had indicated they felt most confident and least confident teaching and why this might be the case.

We then moved on to the timelines. Participants were asked to reflect on why they had indicated a strong knowledge of certain events in Canadian history and not others, and where they had learned about them. While I was interested in what participants knew and likewise what they did not know, I was equally interested in how such an activity could serve to help them identify the gaps in their own knowledge and think about the reasons for those gaps. In particular, I was interested in how they rationalized strong and weak knowledge, and in guiding them to a critical consideration of what had been included in and excluded from their own history education. The questioning was to prompt them to think about how knowledges are inextricably tied up in issues of power, whose story counts, and what serves the national narrative.

Following a commitment to foregrounding racism and power and correspondingly interrupting the invisibility of whiteness, in cases where participants did not identify, for example, that the majority of the events they did not know pertained to racialized communities or were examples of state racism, I would point out and ask them to reflect on this theme.

Participants were then invited to elaborate on their selection of the top 10 most important events for students to learn, and to consider whether there was a narrative that ran through their selections. I asked them to reflect on the events they felt were important and whom these events included, whom they excluded and what sort of narrative of Canadian history they supported.

We then moved on to their orientations *vis-à-vis* Canadian history education and I asked participants to elaborate on the answers they had given to the questions regarding its purpose, the challenges of teaching Canadian history in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and their reasons for becoming history teachers. A number of complementary questions that sought to have them consider the political nature and uses (and abuses) of history were posed at this time. Specifically, participants were asked ‘Is history education political?’ and encouraged to consider how the choices they make as teachers could either empower or further silence certain students in their classrooms.

## Interviews Part 2: Identities

The next section of the interview centred on identities. Participants were invited to describe their identity in their own words. They were asked how their identity influenced their responses in the questionnaire and their orientations to Canadian history more broadly. Finally, they were asked whether they had seen themselves reflected in the curriculum when they were students. They were also asked whether they felt their students' identities influenced their orientations to Canadian history; and how as history teachers they could recognize their students' diverse identities and histories through their teaching.

At the end of the interview, participants were given the opportunity to provide final comments or ask questions. Following each interview, I wrote a few reflective thoughts on the major themes that surfaced and made a note of any recurrent themes and discrepancies that were emerging. Interviews were then transcribed.

While often referred to as the grunt work of the thesis, transcribing can serve as the first stage of analysis as it is a good way to familiarize oneself with the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 87). Thus, while highly time-consuming, I would consider transcription an important part of the process.

### *4.4.3 Reflective questions*

In order to see whether and how participants' understandings and orientations had changed throughout the course, I returned to the group in April 2015 at the end of their year. Participants were given their original questionnaires and asked to answer some reflective questions pertaining to what they had initially written down.

The reflective questions were organized into three sections. Section A centred on knowledge, confidence and historical significance. Participants were asked whether they would change (add/remove) anything about their maps and why; whether their confidence levels had increased in the areas they had relatively low confidence in or knowledge of at the beginning of the year; and what (if anything) they had learned from the course that they felt would support them in teaching alternative perspectives of Canadian history.



Section B asked participants to review what they had written down as the purpose, challenges and reasons for teaching Canadian history and to discuss whether now that they had been in a classroom, their views had shifted at all.

Section C asked them to reflect on their identities and how or whether they had influenced their experience as a teacher candidate. They were also asked to think about any instances where their identities influenced their interactions with their students, mentor teachers and the curriculum.

#### *4.4.4 Interviews—Stage 2*

That same spring, following the administration of the reflective questions activity in class, a second interview was conducted with all twenty of the original interviewees. In this instance, the interview served as a space for participants to expand on their reflections, as well as a space to revisit some of what we had talked about in our initial interview. It enabled me to ask questions about their experiences in their practica and the course.

#### *4.4.5 Changing directions*

At this point, it is important to explain that although the research project was divided into two stages, this thesis focuses primarily on the data collected during the first stage. While I had originally intended to use the second stage of the data collection to identify any shifts or changes in participants' understandings and orientations, and in turn draw some tentative conclusions as to whether the program was having an impact on participants' readiness and willingness to take up a history for 'unlearning racism', this plan changed.

Returning to the research in the spring of 2019 after having taken two years of leave, as I read through the analyzed data from Stage 1 as well as the preliminarily analyzed data from Stage 2, it occurred to me that the data collected in the second stage was not the most interesting story of my research. Indeed, despite observing some shifts in participants' understandings (yet very limited changes in their orientations to teaching history), the data illustrated the slow and incremental changes that are to be expected of multicultural approaches to education: added perspectives to a narrative structure

that nevertheless remains largely uninterrogated. What became further evident was that any changes that I had identified could not necessarily even be attributed to the program, and thus any conclusions as to the impact of the program would be imprudent.

What did jump out at me during my review of the data was that the research had a more interesting story to tell, one that I was giving some space to, but not enough. In rereading three of my participants' data, whom I had initially called my 'outliers' and had planned to discuss at the end of my first findings chapter, it became clear that such a move would relegate them to a post-script in my research. Their stories and experiences warranted more space and analysis.

I found that these three teacher candidates stood apart from the rest of the participants in terms of their knowledges, views on the purpose of history education and their own role as well as understandings of the impact of their racial (and other identities). Their stories also highlighted the ongoing racism that marginalized teachers entering the profession continue to face, countering the dominant discourse that teacher education in Canada is a neutral space.

Centring their voices was furthermore in line with one of CRT's central tenets, which involves a 'recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of colour' (Matsuda et al.: 1993: 6). CRT researchers have long advocated for the use of marginalized people's stories and personal narratives (what they term 'counter-stories or counter-narratives') as 'a tool for exposing, analyzing and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege' (Solorzano and Yosso, 2002: 32).

Thus, while my second findings chapter was initially earmarked for the data collected in Stage 2, with the help of my second supervisor, who encouraged me to pivot, I decided instead to dedicate this space to the voices and experiences of these three participants, the counterstory of my research. While I was initially hesitant to step off the path I had carefully plotted for the thesis, this move brought me closer to my goal of 'walking the talk' (Hylton, 2012) that CRT research requires of anyone who lays claim to be doing CRT work.

## 4.5 Selection and recruitment

In order to recruit participants for this study, a criterion sampling approach, wherein ‘all participants must meet one or more criteria as predetermined by the researcher’ (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016: 333) was used. The criteria for the selection of participants was as follows:

- All participants were currently enrolled in an Ontario Bachelor of Education program.
- All participants had History as one of their teachables and were currently taking a history methods course<sup>11</sup>.

Conscious of the fact that the most direct line to history teacher candidates was via their history methods course in the Bachelor of Education (BEd), I first selected the sites (i.e. BEd programs) from which I wanted to recruit participants using a purposive sampling technique. I then contacted the history methods course instructors at each of the selected sites to see whether they would be willing to allow me to administer the questionnaire in class to interested teacher candidates. I then visited the classes to which I had been granted access and presented my research to history teacher candidates and asked them to participate.

### 4.5.1 *Selecting the sites*

The purposive sampling method, which ‘affords the researcher a certain amount of discretion regarding who should be included in the study’ (Ritchie, Lewis and Elam, 2003: 96) was used to select the research sites I would draw participants from. While the study did not set out to—nor have any pretence that it could—be representative of

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<sup>11</sup> Some Bachelor of Education programs offer a combined history, social studies and political science methods course. Therefore, while any teacher candidate in the course was welcomed to complete the questionnaire and reflective questions (cognizant that the research instruments were educational), the data of participants who did not have history as one of their teachables was excluded from analysis. Additionally, some programs have both Consecutive and Concurrent students enrolled in the same history methods course. In this instance, I included the Concurrent students’ data as the only difference was that they were still completing their history degree and therefore may have fewer history courses than their Consecutive peers who all came to the program with a completed degree. Of the 12 Concurrent study participants, seven of them were in their final year and thus the number of history courses completed was the total they would complete during their program. The other five participants’ patterns mirrored those of their Consecutive colleagues.

all history teacher candidates in Ontario (there are sixteen teacher education program providers in Ontario) I was mindful of the diversity of the province and the distinct contexts and local histories in which the sixteen programs, and in turn potential participants, were located. As Schick and St. Denis (2005: 297) observe ‘local narratives are no less important than those of the nation...for tracing discourses of identity formation’.

Ontario, Canada’s most populous province, encompasses both urban and rural communities and its Northern and Southern regions have distinct histories and demographics. Beyond differences in overall population (Southern Ontario’s population is twelve times larger than Northern Ontario’s) clear differences in specific populations exist: Northern Ontario has a higher Indigenous population. Large cities in the south are very ethnically and racially diverse. Smaller cities in both regions tend to be predominantly white.

As became evident through examining the different programs’ websites, these regional differences have an impact on the focus of the BEd. Since my overall aim was to assemble a diverse group of history teacher candidates, it was important to draw them from a diversity of programs.

At the same time, the selection of sites was shaped by considerations of feasibility (Miles and Huberman, 1994) and manageability. Given that I would be travelling to each of the sites in the fall and in the spring and staying for several days in order to conduct follow-up interviews, I needed to consider finances (e.g. transportation, accommodation costs). I also needed to consider how long it would take me to get from one site to the next as the plan was to conduct each stage at each of the sites as close together as possible.

Taking these considerations into account, I plotted the sixteen BEd programs onto a map and guided by Table 1, whittled the list down to five programs. Together, they represented an—albeit imperfect—diversity of regions, demographics, and population size, while at the same time a manageable number of participants. Although as Table 1 indicates the desired number of sites was four, I selected five sites in order to allow

for some flexibility should one of them not work out. As will become clear below, this precautionary measure was warranted.

**Table 1: Desired criteria for research sites**

Desired sample	Criteria for selection	Desired diversity
4 Ontario Bachelor of Education programs (20 teacher candidates/BEEd = 80 questionnaire participants, 5 teacher candidates/BEEd = 20 interview participants total)	Bachelor of Education program in Ontario offering training in Intermediate/Senior division History	Region (northern, central, southern)  Demographics (multicultural, monocultural, Indigenous)  Population size (small, medium, large)

Having selected five sites, I then contacted the history teacher educator at each via email and introduced myself and my research (see Appendix D for the Introduction letter). While I contacted them in their capacity as ‘gatekeepers’ of the teacher candidates, I also saw them as active stakeholders in the preparation of future history teachers who could not only potentially benefit from the research but also help inform it. Therefore, when I sent my initial letter of introduction asking them to allow me to come to their classroom to recruit potential participants and administer the questionnaire, I attached the questionnaire and provided them with the opportunity to offer their input.

Of the five teacher educators I contacted, I received positive responses from all. However, one of them, while very keen, indicated that he was only teaching the second half of the course and thus referred me to the individual who would be teaching the first half. This teacher educator greeted the invitation to participate with less enthusiasm, expressing reluctance at taking up class time to have students complete the questionnaire. This site was therefore removed.

The four other teacher educators who agreed to have me come to their class to administer the questionnaire to interested teacher candidates helped me set the wheels in motion for my visit to each site. While the aim was to administer the questionnaire

as close to the start date of the course as possible in order to be able to get at teacher candidates' pre-existing conceptions of Canadian history, due to a number of factors (i.e. courses beginning at different times; not being able to be in many places at once; having to go through various sites' Research Ethics Boards) not all of my visits could occur right at the beginning of the term; however, all took place sometime during the first month of the respective courses.

Unfortunately, one week prior to my visit to the fourth site, faculty there went on a strike that lasted nearly a month. As lost class time had to be recouped in the weeks following the strike, the course instructor asked whether we could move my visit to the winter semester. Given that the research sought to identify the understandings and orientations teacher candidates held at the beginning of the course, and I had conducted the questionnaire at the three other sites in the fall of 2015, I decided that administering the questionnaire in the winter would not provide data consistent with the other data. Thus, this site was removed, leaving three.

While I had accounted for losing one site in my planning, the second site represented a particularly significant loss to the study. It was the only university located in Northern Ontario, with a strong focus on Indigenous knowledge and teachings. While I found some solace in Barbour's (2014: 72) words that often factors beyond our control make it impossible to achieve our ideal diversity of participants, this marks one of the biggest limitations of my study. It is my hope that future work give attention to history teacher candidates from Northern Ontario, and their distinct contexts and local histories.

Despite this shortcoming, the three final sites<sup>12</sup> from which participants were drawn provided a diversity of participants and a rich array of data. For purposes of ensuring the anonymity of participants, specific information about each of the sites is not included. Given that this was neither a case study nor a comparative study, I believe that such an omission does not disadvantage the reader. As my priority lies in protecting participants, providing detailed information for the sake of credibility when

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that these three sites came with four teacher educators, as one of the courses was split into two semesters and had two different instructors.

it risks making it possible to identify some of the participants was not seen as ethically sound.

The analysis section shows that, primarily for pragmatic reasons, the data were originally analyzed according to site (i.e. this approach was a) more manageable; and b) I had promised to each teacher educator that I would provide them with a report of my initial findings of their class). At the same time, however, this ensured that I did not dismiss the role of context.

#### *4.5.2 Selecting the participants*

Having secured three sites, I moved on to Phase 2 of the selection process, which involved recruiting participants from each of the classes.

Upon arrival at the study site, I introduced myself and distributed to each teacher candidate two numbered consent forms (see Appendix E) that explained the purpose of the multi-staged study. After providing sufficient time to read the consent forms, we went over them together, addressing any questions they had. I explained that if they were also interested in participating in an interview outside class time, they could opt into this by ticking off a box on the form and providing me with their contact information. Teacher candidates who were interested in completing a questionnaire were asked to sign both forms, return one to me and retain the other for their records.

Upon turning in a signed consent form, teacher candidates were given a questionnaire with the corresponding number. Having the same number on their consent form and questionnaire enabled me to return their questionnaire to them in the spring. I explained that consent forms and questionnaires would be stored in separately locked filing cabinets and I would only match them up prior to my second visit so that I knew whose questionnaire belonged to whom.

While aware that this lack of full anonymity meant that the answers they provided might be somewhat sanitized, given that this study formed the basis of an *education* thesis, I felt that providing them with the opportunity to reflect on the changes in their understanding of Canadian history and views of Canadian history education at the end

of the year—which required them to be identifiable—outweighed the need for complete anonymity.

In order to ensure that participation was entirely voluntary and to show that it would have no bearing on their standing in the course, the course instructor left the room for the duration of the recruitment process and administration of the questionnaire, which altogether took a total of one hour.

Later that day, I contacted every participant who had indicated interest in being interviewed and requested that they provide me with a convenient date and time to meet over the next week. Interviews, which were audio-recorded, were held in a quiet space on campus in order to ensure privacy and sound quality of the recording.

When I returned to each site in the spring to conduct Stage 2 of the data collection, I invited anyone who had completed a questionnaire in the fall and who wished to participate in the second stage to come collect it. In providing me with their last name I found their associated number and gave them their original questionnaire.

Participants were given five minutes to look over their questionnaire before I handed out blank pieces of lined paper and asked them to answer a number of questions I wrote on the board in sequence. This took approximately 45 minutes. Interview participants from Stage 1 had been contacted in the weeks prior to my second visit to each site to schedule a second interview to take place following the reflections activity.

#### *4.5.3 Participant demographics*

Ninety-one teacher candidates from three Bachelor of Education programs completed the questionnaire in the fall of 2015. Due to a number of reasons, which I will outline below, only 46 participants' data is included in this thesis. Table 2 presents an overview of the demographic make-up of the 46 study participants.



**Table 2: Participant Demographics (N=46)<sup>13</sup>**

Demographic	Description
Age	Average age: 24; Median age: 23; Youngest participant: 19; Oldest participant: 40
Gender	23 female, 22 male, 1 trans male
Sexual orientation	41 straight, 1 gay, 1 bisexual, 1 asexual, 1 queer, 1 prefer not to disclose
(Dis)ability	43 no disability, 1 brain injury, 1 mental illness, 1 prefer not to disclose
Hometown <sup>a</sup>	26 large Ontario, 7 medium Ontario, 2 large outside Canada, 2 small Ontario, 2 rural Ontario, 1 medium outside Canada, 1 small outside Canada, 1 large other province, 1 rural and small Ontario, 1 small and large Ontario, 1 medium and large Ontario, 1 Ontario (specific location undisclosed)
Ethnic identity <sup>b</sup>	22 Canadian, 8 European, 6 Scottish, 4 Polish, 2 Lebanese, 2 Italian, 2 Dutch, 2 Indian, 2 German, 2 Portuguese, 2 Philipino, 2 Chinese, 2 British, 2 Irish, 1 French Canadian, 1 West Indian, 1 African, 1 Jamaican, 1 Métis, 1 Puerto Rican, 1 South American, 1 Croatian, 1 Serbian, 1 Spanish
Racial identity <sup>c</sup>	32 white, 13 racialized, 1 Indigenous
Social class	30 middle-class, 7 upper-middle class, 3 working class, 2 lower-middle class, 1 poverty line, 1 low socio-economic class
First generation to attend university?	20 yes, 25 no, 1 first generation on one side
Highest degree completed	29 Bachelor's degree, 10 currently completing Concurrent BEd, 5 Master's degree, 2 Advanced diploma
# of Canadian university history courses	22 '1-2 courses', 11 '3-5 courses', 8 '6-10 courses', 5 'more than 10 courses'
Program	34 Consecutive, 12 Concurrent

<sup>13</sup>Due to space constraints, I have included this abridged version in the text in order to provide the reader with a broad understanding of the make-up of the study participants. The demographic information reflects the participants' self-identification. More detailed information of each participant's demographics can be found in Appendix F.

<sup>a</sup> Rural, small, medium and large population centres were defined according to Statistics Canada definitions. Some participants indicated more than one hometown.

<sup>b</sup> The number of ethnicities listed is greater than the number of participants as many listed more than one ethnic identity.

<sup>c</sup> Although cognizant that the term 'racialized' does not capture the diversity of different groups' experiences, I have elected to use it to broadly capture the shared experience of non-white individuals of being 'marked' and sorted (Miles, 1989) through the social process of racialization. A more complete account of participants' descriptions of their racial identities can be found in Appendix F.

Of the ninety-one participants who completed the Stage 1 questionnaire, only 75 had History as a teachable (with 16 who were in the combined Social Studies and History methods course however, did not have History as one of their teachables having their data immediately excluded). Of the 75, 46 reviewed their questionnaires and completed the reflective questions in the spring of 2016. The drop in numbers from Stage 1 to Stage 2 can mainly be attributed to University #1, where participation was halved owing to the fact that Stage 2 was conducted on Easter Monday. Although Ontario universities do not officially observe this holiday, many teacher candidates (approximately one third) were absent from class. Of the teacher candidates present that day, three-quarters of the class completed Stage 2, while the remainder worked on a final group project that was to be presented at the end of the class. As we were nearing the end of term, this was the only day that the teacher educator could have me take up class time.

Participation at University #2 remained largely unchanged, with all of the original participants but one (who had left the program) taking part in Stage 2. The one individual who did not take part had left the program. Finally, at University #3 participation saw a small drop in Stage 2 owing to the fact that this program did not see teacher candidates return to their courses following their final placement in schools. Therefore, in order to conduct Stage 2, on the suggestion of the course instructor, I organized an optional pizza night where participants were invited to come and review their questionnaires and answer the reflective questions. While I originally only anticipated a few participants showing up, a majority of the class attended—a testament to the course instructor or to the powers of free pizza!

As one of the initial objectives of the research was to identify the shifts and changes in participants' views, the final data set consequently included only the 46 participants who had completed both Stages 1 and 2.

Of the 46 participants, 20 completed two interviews, one in the fall and one in the spring. Interview numbers, contrary to the questionnaires, remained unchanged from Stage 1 to 2.

One of the potential grounds for this consistency in interview numbers was that the face-to-face interaction of the interview allowed participants to get a better understanding of my motivations for and the importance of the research. Furthermore, as one participant observed following our second interview, ‘No one ever really asked me what I thought of Canadian history and how I connected to it.’ Interviews in addition to striving toward a consciousness raising that Taylor and Medina (2013) argue is the first step of any critical inquiry, provided a space for teacher candidates to reflect on their experiences in history education as students and now as soon-to-be teachers.

## **4.6 Data analysis tools**

From managing the data to organizing and analysing it, data analysis constitutes a complex sequence of steps in the research process that requires a thorough description. Just as any dance choreography provides a detailed written notation of the sequence of steps, so too must the data analysis section of a study.

Data analysis becomes even more intricate in research where multiple instruments have been used to collect data and, thus, different methods of data analysis may be required. The method of analysis selected for one piece of collected data (e.g. the maps) may be inappropriate for the analysis of another (e.g. interview transcripts). As Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) remind us, the method of data analysis selected must align with the data collected.

The approach to data analysis must also be compatible with the conceptual framework undergirding the study (in my case CRT), as well as the researcher’s style. This last point is vital and explains in part why I chose not to use a computer software program such as NVivo to analyze the data, instead doing it manually. While agreeing with other researchers on the limitations of computerized handling of data (Merriam, 2009)—especially in critical analysis—I also, quite simply, prefer working with paper and pen over screen and mouse. Though often under-emphasized, so much of the way we approach research is driven by personal preference (Peshkin, 1988: 18).

Given that my research adopted a multi-pronged approach to data collection and consequently gathered a variety of qualitative data, a multi-pronged approach to data analysis was needed. Thus, while the maps were analyzed using a combination of two critical approaches to reading texts, the interview transcripts and open-ended questions in the questionnaire were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-phase thematic analysis framework with a CRT lens applied.

Finally, the timeline activity, as it was a closed-ended item was first analyzed by tallying the boxes beside each event that indicated varying levels of knowledge as well as the 10 events participants had circled as the most important for students to learn in the Grade 10 Canadian history class. This was followed by an analysis of the timeline rationales using Braun and Clarke's (2006) model. Below I describe in detail these three methods of analysis before explaining how the actual analysis was undertaken making use of these distinct methods.

#### *4.6.1 Maps*

Although following the administration of the questionnaires I did a quick skim of each map and wrote down some initial observations regarding the structure (e.g. was it linear? circular? thematic?), the timespan covered (e.g. pre-contact to present day) and any obvious themes, the formal process of analyzing the maps combined two critical approaches to readings texts.

The first approach I adopted was a 'textual deciphering' technique modelled on critical race theorist Gloria Ladson-Billings' (2003) own usage of it to analyze social studies policies and curriculum. This approach to reading the maps appeared to me particularly appropriate as it 'requires us to look, not only at what is present in [...] documents, but to ask pointed questions about what is missing' (Ladson-Billings, 2003: 10). The master narrative of Canadian history can be understood as much through what it excludes as what it includes. Therefore, an approach that was attuned to what was missing seemed especially fitting.

The decision to adopt textual deciphering as the method of analysis for the maps seemed even more appropriate given the attention it pays to the question of 'by whom' the documents under analysis are created. This approach to text moves beyond the

conventional content analysis in that it relies on more than just counting words or images, instead aiming to situate the words in their context and authorship (Ladson-Billings, 2003). Given that part of my focus was on how teacher candidates' identities inform their historical identifications, turning the lens to the person behind the map was a key component of the analysis. I drew out three questions from this approach that I planned to use to guide my analysis of each of the maps:

1. What is present?
2. What is missing?
3. By whom were they created?

In order to test this approach, I selected five maps at random and analyzed them using these four questions. While I felt that the first two questions elicited important information, it became apparent that focussing on only what was present and what was missing overlooked an important dimension of *how* items that were present were represented. Indigenous peoples were present in two of the five maps I had selected; however, the ways in which they were represented differed significantly. On one map, they were cast as victims ('Cruelty to Natives'). The other map, quite different in its description ('Natives fight for the rights they once had'), cast them as agents. Focusing only on the dichotomy of represented/not represented would miss this point.

At the time that I was grappling with this dilemma, I attended the 2016 Governor General Awards for Excellence in History Teaching Symposium. In one of the workshops, professor Timothy Stanley proposed a framework for conducting an anti-racist analysis of primary sources (Stanley, 2016). Though similar to textual deciphering in that it focused not only on what (in this case *who*) was present but also *who* was missing, it went deeper, attending specifically to the question of *how* things were represented.

Following the workshop format of the symposium, Stanley led us through an analysis of both a historical document and a contemporary document (the current day's newspaper). In groups, we were given the task of reading our primary sources and to answer the following questions (Stanley, 2016):

Thinking in terms of age, 'race', ethnicity, language, gender, ability, disability, sexuality...1. Who is represented? (i.e.

included); 2. How/where are they represented? 3. Who is not represented? (i.e. excluded); and 4. How is difference signified?

As the preamble to the questions as well as the answers that the groups came up with indicated, such an approach welcomes an intersectional analysis, attending to the multiple exclusions and (mis)representations in texts. While questions 1 and 3 converge with the focus of Ladson-Billing's (2003) textual deciphering, in this case zoning in on *who* is present and *who* is missing, question 2 (*How/where are they represented?*) added an important dimension that I felt was missing from my initial set of questions.

I therefore added the following three questions into the script, feeling that combined with the textual deciphering questions they would ensure a rigorous and critical reading of the maps:

1. What is present? **Who is present? How/where are they represented?**
2. What is missing? **Who is missing?**
3. By whom were they created?

The final element my analysis considered was the language used on the maps, inspired by historian Michel Trouillot's (1995) discussion on the importance of terminology in his book *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. In a chapter devoted to Columbus where he problematizes Columbus's 'discovery' of the Bahamas as a single event, Trouillot (1995: 114) briefly turns his focus to the various terminologies that have been used to describe this 'event'.

Speaking to the resistance that proposals by historians and activists during the 1990s to change the language from 'discovery' to 'conquest' ignited, he explains, 'Terminologies demarcate a field, politically and epistemologically. Names set up a field of power' (Trouillot, 1995: 115). Given my interest in centring power, I decided to add a question on the terminology used. Thus, the final set of questions that guided me through the analysis was comprised of the following:

1. What is present? Who is present? How/where are they represented?
2. What is missing? Who is missing?
3. By whom were they created?

#### 4. What terminology is used?

##### 4.6.2 Interviews, open-ended questions and rationales

In order to analyze the other data (interview transcripts, open-ended questions on the questionnaires, and timeline rationales) I determined that I needed a method or a scaffold that would support a rigorous CRT-inspired analysis that attended to issues of power/domination.

My search for such a framework brought me to Braun and Clarke's (2006) 6-phase thematic analysis, which presented me with a step-by-step guide of how to analyze qualitative data while at the same time offering the flexibility to apply a CRT perspective, foregrounding power and racism. Their view of analysis, not as a linear process but rather a recursive one 'where you move back and forth as needed, throughout the phases' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 86) also aligned with my natural style of research, which involves a sort of dance with the data in that it moves back and forth between data and literature.

Further, Braun and Clarke's rejection of themes 'emerging' or being 'discovered'—noting that this wrongly suggests 'a passive account of the process of analysis... [denying] the *active* role the researcher always plays in identifying patterns/themes' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 80)—aligned well with one of the central assumptions of CRT: that the researcher is a social being, situated in the research process (Hylton, 2010). Although both come from the field of psychology, and although their article is directed at qualitative psychologists, they indicate that this approach is useful beyond psychology. As I read through the 6-phases, I was convinced of its suitability for guiding my analysis of the written and spoken data.

**Table 3: Braun and Clarke’s Phases of Thematic Analysis**

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Description of the process</b>
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

(Braun and Clarke, 2006, Table 1: 87)

As indicated in Table 3, thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2006) begins with a familiarization with the data (Phase 1) wherein the researcher engages in a repeated reading of the data, taking notes and writing them in the margins or on post-it notes. Though often rushed through, they argue that this first phase is fundamental to a rigorous analysis. Luker (2008: 199) echoes this sentiment, suggesting that you should know your data well enough to be able to recite it in your sleep.

Only once the researcher has a thorough grasp of their data should they begin to generate (note the active) initial codes (Phase 2). As Braun and Clarke (2006: 89) explain, at this point you want to produce codes for as many potential themes/patterns as possible. Given that my research was positioned in the CRT-perspective I was particularly attentive to how the codes that were generated related to the concepts of power, racism, and silence.



Phase 3 entails organizing the initial codes into what they call ‘candidate themes’ and gathering extracts that exemplify each theme, while Phase 4 involves reviewing these initial themes at two levels: The first, by putting all the coded extracts from each theme together to determine whether there is a coherent pattern that runs across them; and the second, by returning to the entire data set and assessing whether the generated themes reflect them accurately (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 91). Themes are then accordingly broken down into subthemes, grouped into a broader theme, or dissolved altogether.

The fifth stage sees the researcher defining themes and creating names that ‘identify the “essence” of what each theme is about’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 92); while the sixth and final phase involves the writing up of what they call an ‘analytic narrative’, with extracts interwoven across each theme and an argument presented in relation to the research questions.

Studying this ‘recipe’ for thematic analysis helped me to demystify data analysis. It offered a clear strategy for engaging my data, while providing the space to apply a CRT-lens. Additionally, placing so much importance on familiarizing myself with the data meant that I spent much more time than I had originally intended in getting to know the data, which in turn, I believe, resulted in a more exhaustive analysis.

#### *4.6.3 Timelines*

The first part of the Timeline activity, where participants were asked to go over a list of various events, check off their level of knowledge and select the ten they felt were most important for students to learn, was analyzed by tallying the numbers in each of the columns. Following this, I examined participants’ written rationales for their selections and the explanations they provided in the interviews, in both cases using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis in combination with a CRT-lens.

### **4.7 Data analysis process**

Given that the research was multi-staged, data analysis took place after both Stages 1 and 2. Nevertheless, as I was aware that numbers would likely drop in the second stage and the data set would change, I did not want to undertake the full analysis until I had

completed the second stage of data collection. The analysis that took place after Stage 1 can, therefore, be considered as a prolonged ‘familiarizing myself with the data.’

Below is the step-by-step process I followed to analyze the Stage 1 data once both stages of the data collection were completed, moving between the different types of data and methods of analysis.

*Step 1: Re-familiarizing myself with the old data and familiarizing myself with the new data*

Once I had completed Stage 2 of the data collection and had finalized the number of participants (46 participants had completed both Stages 1 and 2, 20 participants had additionally completed two interviews) I re-read all 46 questionnaires and the 20 interview transcripts from Stage 1. This was an important step as seven months had passed between the two study phases.

I also studied the participants’ answers to the reflective questions asked in Stage 2, making notes and identifying initial patterns and themes that stood out. Finally, I transcribed the second set of interviews. Once I had a relatively strong grasp of the overall data set, I decided I was ready to begin the coding process and began with the Stage 1 data.

*Step 2: Analyzing the maps using the textual deciphering/anti-racist questions*

I first placed all of the 46 maps alongside one another. Given it was not a comparative study, I was not so much interested in differences between the sites but rather in identifying codes and themes that ran across the entire data set. However, so as not to overlook any major discrepancies between the different research sites as well as having committed to each teacher educator that I would provide them with a summary of my findings of their teacher candidates’ views/understandings, I grouped the maps from each site together.

Laying them out together allowed me to visualize them as a whole and to identify themes within each individual site; it also enabled a horizontal view of results across the three sites that may have been missed otherwise.

Guided by the six questions I had elaborated as my analytical tool, I proceeded with the analysis of the maps, starting with the first question, 'What/who is present?'. As aforementioned, aware of the risk of not analyzing 'what' alongside 'how', I made sure to accompany every answer to the 'what', with 'how' it was included. All the data was also inputted into an Excel spreadsheet with the various questions in different columns so that I could easily manipulate the data.

By way of the six questions, I engaged in a critical analysis of each of the maps, which provided some indication of participants' overall knowledge and ascriptions of historical significance as well as the silences and omissions that marked them.

#### *Step 3: Coding rationales of maps and interview transcripts*

In order to answer *why* participants had included and excluded certain elements I then re-read all the responses to the question below the map, 'Why did I choose these events, themes and actors?'; and I compiled the rationales they provided in the same Excel sheet. For the interview participants, I also went back to the interview section where I had asked them to expand upon their rationales, and in turn added these to the Excel sheet. With all the rationales on one spreadsheet I was able to generate a list of codes. Given that CRT foregrounds issues of power and exclusion, particular attention was devoted to issues of power and exclusion in the participants' rationales.

I then moved on to the timelines. In addition to providing me with supplementary data on the teacher candidates' different knowledges, I wanted to see whether the events they selected as important for students to learn supported the same narrative as the events that they had put on their maps communicated and whether the rationales provided would echo the ones linked to the maps.

#### *Step 4: Tallying timelines*

Timelines were first analyzed by tallying the levels of knowledge of each event. I then sorted the events according to level of knowledge, and wrote down some initial observations, identifying whether the knowledge participants had (and did not) were part of the master narrative or counter-narratives. Consistent with the approach to analyzing the maps, I started by analysing the timelines from the first university and

once finished, repeated the same steps for the other two. I then tallied the 10 most important events participants had selected across the questionnaires, and again identified commonalities between those they felt were important and those they felt were unimportant.

*Step 5: Coding rationales of timeline selections and knowledge of events*

In order to understand how participants rationalized their timeline selections in responding to the prompt *'Please describe your reasoning for your selection of the 10 events,'* I coded as many themes as possible with special focus on the ways the rationales related to power, silences, and racism. I then went back to the interview transcripts, namely where I had asked participants a) why they thought they had strong knowledge of certain events and weaker knowledge of others, and b) to expound on the reasoning for their selection of the ten events. I entered all the rationales into a spreadsheet and then generated a series of codes that I placed beside the codes I had elaborated from the map rationales.

*Step 6: Coding answers to purpose, challenges and reasons*

As the next step, I analyzed the participants' written answers (and verbal elaborations) to the questions on purpose, challenges and reasons. Their answers were again entered into an Excel sheet, which allowed me to generate a list of codes that I placed beside the previous two.

Reading the transcripts and open-ended questionnaire questions through a CRT lens, I was particularly interested in how participants approached education, specifically history education (with a political standpoint lying at one end of the spectrum and a neutral standpoint lying at the other); how they conceptualized their role as history teachers; and whether the challenges they foresaw acknowledged the omissions and exclusions that mark the curriculum.

*Step 7: Coding identity*

In order to analyze the influence of teacher candidates' identities on their answers in the questionnaire I re-examined all the data (i.e. questionnaires and interviews) for every participant—this time beginning with the demographics section—to see whether

there were any clear ways in which there appeared to be a connection between a participant's identity markers and their answers. I identified a few obvious connections. However, guided by researchers who have argued that it is not so much identity itself but an individual's *understanding* of their identity that matters, I turned my focus to the interview discussions I had had with each of the participants, and how they described their identities or how they thought their identities influenced their understandings. Compiling all the data, I generated a series of codes.

*Step 8: Searching for candidate themes across the data*

Once I had completed the coding of all the data, I began sorting the codes across all sections of the research into potential themes that would help answer my questions: 1. *What are teacher candidates' understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching Canadian history?*, and 2. *How are they influenced by their identities?*

Codes that formed a theme were highlighted in one colour and extracts that embodied each theme were gathered and put on post-it notes which I placed beside the corresponding theme. Again, while the focus was on the themes that emerged across the entire data set, I also looked out for any major discrepancies that had come up through the analysis.

*Step 9: Reviewing all the candidate themes*

This visualization allowed me to review the candidate themes across all the sections of the research. Following Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestion, I employed Patton's (1990) dual criteria of internal homogeneity and external heterogeneity to appraise the themes I had identified. As they note, 'Data within themes should cohere together meaningfully, while there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes' (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 91).

While in certain instances I broke down themes, in others I grouped candidate themes into broader ones. Certain candidate themes were also dissolved as they did not reflect the overall dataset. Importantly, as I was interested in understanding how their knowledges, views on purpose and identities positioned them to take up a history for 'unlearning racism', themes that were not relevant to this goal were dissolved.

### *Step 10: Defining themes*

Finally, once I was satisfied with this process, I named the themes and grounded them in an analytic narrative that all tied back to the implications they would have for a history education for ‘unlearning racism’.

## **4.8 Assessing the quality of critical research**

The criteria for determining the ‘goodness or quality of an inquiry’ (Guba and Lincoln, 2008: 258) depends on the paradigm guiding the research. As Northcote (2009: 109) rightly states, research should be judged ‘by the very tenets of its being’.

Accordingly, given that my research is situated in the CRT paradigm, it would be unreasonable to judge its quality using the standards of validity, objectivity and generalizability—criteria traditionally used by positivist researchers. Instead, I believe the quality of this research can be judged according to the three main criteria used to assess critical research more broadly (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 114), namely:

historical situatedness of the inquiry (i.e., that it takes account of the social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender antecedents of the studied situation), the extent to which the inquiry acts to erode ignorance and misapprehensions, and the extent to which it provides a stimulus to action, that is, to the transformation of the existing structure.

In response to the first criteria, this study is situated in a particularly unique moment in Canada, the data collection coinciding with the release in 2015 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 5-year report on residential schools and their legacy and its accompanying 94 Calls to Action that forced a reckoning with Canada’s racist past. At a time when Canadians were being compelled to re-examine their past, preparations were underway for the celebration of Canada’s sesquicentennial (150<sup>th</sup> anniversary) that was set to take place in 2017. Thus, the research was conducted during a period when Canadians found themselves making choices as to what to remember and recover, and how these choices in turn would guide the future of the country.

At the time of submission, the streets of North America are filled with crowds demanding justice for Black lives, and in Canada, calls for a reckoning with our own

racist reality are being broadcast across the country. Coupled with various reports over the last few years by the United Nations that call out the abhorrent conditions faced by Indigenous peoples in Canada (Coalition for the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples, no date) and point to the insidious ways anti-Black racism continues to operate through Canadian institutions (The Huffington Post, 2017), one cannot turn a blind eye to the past and its ongoing repercussions that undermine the popular view of Canada as historically benevolent and presently ‘post-racial’. Critical research on history education and specifically new history teachers has arguably never been more relevant.

At an institutional level, at the time of data collection the educational context in Ontario was undergoing a transformation, where 2015 marked the first year of transition to a 2-year Bachelor of Education program from the long-standing 1-year program. As Kathleen Lynch (2010: 582) observes, ‘Times of transition within institutions are times that offer opportunities for resistance, for finding spaces to create new initiatives’. The timing was ripe for research that proposes alternatives and changes to teacher education.

Such changes are necessary when one considers that Black and Indigenous students in Ontario continue to have disproportionately higher rates of suspension and drop-out (Pascal, 2016). As the former Deputy Minister of Education and current professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Charles Pascal exclaimed in a 2016 blog post on the need to implement anti-racist education, ‘If not now, when?’

As regards Guba and Lincoln’s (1994: 114) second criteria, ‘the extent to which the inquiry acts to erode ignorance and misapprehensions’, in engaging teacher candidates in reflection on the silences in their knowledge and views of historical significance as well as bringing identity into the equation, this research attempted to shed light on the constructed and politicized nature of history and history teaching. Through posing questions that challenged the view of the neutral history teacher, underscoring that teachers have choices to make, this study engaged participants in a debunking of the neutrality of history education and a recognition of their complicity in either furthering or challenging racism.

Finally, regarding the extent to which the research provides a stimulus to action—Guba and Lincoln’s (1994: 114) third criteria—I believe that my interaction with the participants and the discussions we had revealed the need to challenge the silences in the master narrative of Canada and to teach alternative perspectives of Canadian history. Whether they in fact act on this in their future teaching will depend on a number of factors. However, it is my hope that this reflexive process has triggered in them a sense of agency and urgency.

I can say with more confidence that the discussions with the teacher educators to whom I presented the initial findings ended with all of them indicating that the findings would help them reconstruct their future courses. Evidence of this ‘talk moving to walk’ can be found in three of the teacher educators’ actions: one decided to reproduce the mapping activity so as to get an idea of where his teacher candidates were at the beginning of the year as well as to serve as a springboard into discussing the influence of their identities. The second, following our discussion on the tendency among teacher candidates to cast Indigenous peoples as victims and in so doing engage in ‘misrecognition’ (Taylor, 1992), decided to focus on emphasizing the agency of Indigenous peoples in Canadian history and to engage her students more broadly in an examination of the different portrayals of different marginalized groups to challenge the notion that more content is all that is needed. The third, after hearing that her teacher candidates had learned much from their colleagues’ diverse perspectives had decided to create more group assignments where they would be asked to create units drawing on these different perspectives.

When combined with my commitment to maintaining an ethical approach (as will become evident below in the proactive steps I took to ensure that my research prioritized participants’ well-being), and an engagement with my own social positioning *vis-à-vis* the research, I believe this study represents a critical, honest and timely contribution to the current body of literature on history education.

## **4.9 Ethics**

Vital to the undertaking of any research project with human participants are ethical considerations that place the welfare of those participating in the research as the



priority. As Hill Collins (2000) suggests, we must be driven by an ‘ethic of personal accountability’ as researchers. All research, no matter how seemingly innocuous, presents potential risks and it is the researcher’s responsibility to take proactive steps to assess and in turn minimize them. Although ‘Ethics’ is often included at the end of the methodology chapter, it in fact precedes all the other steps. At the same time, although ethics is often discussed in terms of the steps that were taken to obtain approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB), ethical considerations continue long after the green light has been given. For it is at this point that the researcher must work to ensure that participants’ welfare is being protected at all times and that she/he maintains the approval of those participating.

Given that my home institution is located in Scotland and the research was conducted in Canada, this study was guided by both the British Educational Research Association’s (BERA) ethical guidelines (2011) and the standards of the *Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS): Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (2010) as set out by the Government of Canada.

After familiarizing myself with BERA’s guidelines, I first obtained ethical approval from the Moray House School of Education’s Research Ethics Board (REB) at the University of Edinburgh in the early summer of 2015. Following this, I completed the TCPS Course on Research Ethics (CORE), a ten-module online course intended to support Canadian researchers, in order to ensure that I was well-informed of the Canadian standards and that any potential discrepancies between the two systems were resolved. I then underwent a number of other steps as required by the participating sites, including gaining the universities’ respective Research Ethics Boards’ approval, presenting the potential risks and ways that I intended to alleviate them to both teacher educators and participants, and providing all of the teacher educators with my research instruments for feedback.

Altogether, this took a total of four months, during which time I became aware of all the potential risks of my project. In addition to developing strategies to proactively protect participants, I developed a strong sense of the responsibility a researcher has to her participants. This sense of responsibility became all the more real once I began conducting the research and hypothetical participants turned into actual people.

One of the central components of ethically-sound research is ongoing consent from participants. Informed consent was first obtained from all participants at the beginning of the project. During my first visit to each of the participating history methods courses, I presented potential participants with a consent form that disclosed the purpose and possible benefits and risks of participating in the study, as well as the ways in which the research could be used in the future. The form also indicated that participants had the right to withdraw from the research at any point and that anonymity would be ensured through the use of pseudonyms as well as careful stewardship of the data.

The teacher educators left the classroom before I went over the consent form and remained outside for the duration of the questionnaire so that teacher candidates could a) ask any questions they had about the research; and b) choose not to participate and work on something else. In order to stress that their participation was voluntary, both the course instructor and I reiterated that their participation would have no bearing on their standing in the course and the instructor would not have access to any of the data apart from receiving an anonymized report of my initial findings following the completion of the course.

In addition to obtaining participants' consent at the beginning of the project, I revisited their consent verbally at the beginning of each subsequent stage. Furthermore, I began every interview by informing participants of their right to refuse to answer or skip any question. In the spirit of transparency, and following the CRT paradigm (and in particular the spirit of Intersectional research) wherein the relationship between the researcher and participant is more interpersonal, I also gave participants an opportunity to ask me any questions they had, be it regarding my own background, research aims or interests.

Although I did not set out to conduct research with any identified vulnerable populations, it struck me during the research process how research participants, who oftentimes as in my own case are strangers, will entrust you with personal information (e.g. disclosing a mental illness). In such cases I responded to these disclosures with care, providing the space for the participant to discuss further if they wanted to. In one case this meant that the interview lasted much longer, and in another, that the line of

questioning was completely derailed. This experience demonstrated to me what prioritizing participants' well-being meant in practice and reminded me of the importance of care in research.

## 4.10 Reflexivity

In general, reflexivity is an explicit self consciousness about the researcher's (or research team's, and/or the research funder's) social, political and value positions, in relation to how these might have influenced the design, execution and interpretation of the theory, data and conclusions (Griffiths, 2009: 17).

Reflexivity has become a constituent element of any research project, however, how one goes about engaging in and documenting it varies.

I used a variety of methods to identify and monitor how my own subjectivity was influencing the research. In addition to the commonly-used memo-writing and keeping of a journal used by many researchers, while being mindful of maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality that my participants had entrusted me with, I presented my work at conferences and to groups of other doctoral students as well as wrote emails to friends and family documenting my observations and feelings about the research.

Though rarely mentioned as a means of engaging in reflexivity, these email exchanges proved to be a particularly germane space for critical self-reflection. This was owed in part to the fact that it forced me to communicate my observations and reflections in such a way that was comprehensible to someone other than myself; and it allowed me to untangle thoughts that in my journal entries remained 'knotted'. The responses I received served to further illuminate how my subjectivity was shaping the research, as senders ruminated over my reflections, sharing their own takes and thoughts.

Just as important, these emails allowed me to share the challenges undertaking a PhD entails. By bringing my support networks into the process as sounding boards I was also able to counteract one of the biggest struggles doctoral students face: loneliness. Sadly, at the beginning of my PhD too often would I hear other doctoral students say that no one in their family or friends knew what their research was about I therefore

took it upon myself to ensure that my closest friends and family were aware and involved in all stages of the research.

Presenting my work at conferences to different audiences (e.g. history teachers, doctoral students, teacher educators, history education scholars) at different stages of the research served as another opportunity to engage in dialogue and get feedback that helped highlight the partiality of my findings. In particular, presenting my work to the members of the Centre for Education for Racial Equality in Scotland's Doctoral group, a group of primarily racialized doctoral students helped sharpen my critical lens.

Although reflexivity is often equated with introspection, my experience underlined how looking outside oneself to others can help shed light on one's subjectivity. This relational approach can also help ensure that critical reflection does not turn into 'egotistical posturing' (Gillborn, 2008: 197), which is a risk when writing to oneself about oneself. Taken together with the journal entries and memo-writing, these dialogues allowed me to identify my own subjectivity. Borrowing Peshkin's (1998) characterization of his subjectivity as 'subjective I's' I describe my three 'I's' below.

While we bring all of ourselves to the research process, the particular circumstances of each research context bring to the fore certain aspects of our subjectivity (Peshkin, 1998: 18). Thus, while these 'I's' represent only part of who I am, I believe they influenced the research most profoundly.

### The Educator I

As much as my experiences as a learner inspired me to undertake a PhD, my identification as an educator informed the design of the research. This is most evident in my decision to use a multifaceted approach to gathering the data. Just as a teacher draws on a number of techniques to get at students' knowledge, I felt it was imperative that I provide a variety of ways for participants to demonstrate their knowledge and understandings of Canadian history. Therefore, the mapping activity, which allowed them to use their creative capacities, drawing or writing, was complemented by the timeline activity which involved reading and ticking a box according to their perceived knowledge. Those participants who also participated in interviews were further able to communicate their knowledge and views verbally.

The decision to return to participants at the end of the year and provide them with their initial questionnaires and ask them to reflect on the shifts in their views and understandings was also largely driven by pedagogical motives. Beyond serving to identify how and whether the program was impacting their views, I also saw the reflective questions activity as an opportunity for teacher candidates to identify the gaps and changes in their own knowledge. Although I have elected not to report on the majority of the data collected in Stage 2, the pedagogical benefits of it alone justify its undertaking.

While I was located in the field of Education, as well as the CRT paradigm where research is seen as inherently educative and political, it was important that I struck a balance between the educational motivations, and research motivations. This was perhaps one of the biggest challenges I faced: ensuring that the Educator I did not undermine the Researcher I.

### The Anti-racist I

Having dedicated much of my previous education and work to the study/challenging of racism, I entered the PhD with a strong sense of the 'Anti-racist I'. Indeed, my adoption of CRT indicates a strong commitment to centring race and racism. Although one of the examiners of the proposal suggested I expand my net in thinking about systems of domination to include other categorizations, I did not immediately take this on.

My initial reading of maps and the comments I made indicate a sole focus on racial subordination/exclusion. It was only during the second reading, and after having read the literature on Intersectionality that I became aware of the silences in my own commentary. Failing to give credence to the role of class, gender, and other factors in shaping participants' answers and to pay attention to the raced/gendered/classed silences in their understandings was providing an incomplete picture of the complexity of identities and ways that power and subordination operate.

I sought to challenge this tendency in myself by employing Mary Matsuda's (1991: 1189) 'other question' in order to 'understand the interconnection of all forms of subordination...' As she explains (Matsuda, 1991: 1189):

When I see something that looks racist, I ask ‘Where is the patriarchy in this?’ When I see something that looks sexist, I ask, ‘Where is the heterosexism in this?’ When I see something that looks homophobic, I ask, ‘Where are the class interests in this?’

#### The white, middle-class, heterosexual, able-bodied settler I

Finally, the last ‘subjective I’ informed both how I read the data and how I was read by participants. Being of white, European descent and middle-class, heterosexual as well as able-bodied, I am in a privileged position to challenge the silences in Canadian history that my research has led me to be acutely aware of. As I seek to support future history teachers in challenging the silences, I must acknowledge that many of these individuals have not just studied, but in fact lived them. Confronting them is not an option for everyone. The fact that I have a choice to be critical—or not—and challenge the silences—or not—is in itself a privilege.

In addition to having a choice, as Gillborn (2008: 199) has noted, when white researchers choose to undertake radical analyses, their analyses are often less easily dismissed than the work of minoritized scholars. I am indebted to the work of Black and Indigenous scholars who for a long time have not only been levelling unapologetic and sophisticated critiques of the silences that mark Canadian history in schools but have also described the consequences of these silences on racialized and Indigenous students.

In terms of the ways that my white, European, middle-class, heterosexual able-bodiedness informed the way participants read me, whereas Black researchers (and educators) are often accused of ‘being angry’ (Dlamini, 2002) and undertaking research for personal and political reasons, my inquiry was not met with any obvious suspicion from participants. The reception I received is perhaps best summed up by one of my white participants (Participant #65) who in her response to my question *How has your identity shaped your interaction with students?* wrote:

Teaching in a largely white, upper-middle class school, I think my identity actually helped me—I think students perceived me as having ‘authority’ or ‘distance’ to examine events that addressed islamophobia/racism without me just being perceived as ‘angry’. As certain students exhibited prejudicial

attitudes, I think my unit would have been more challenging for me had I not been white (more student pushback).

While I knew that it was unavoidable that my own identity would shape my interaction with participants, I made every effort to ensure that my racialized participants felt comfortable. Thus, I began every interview with an acknowledgement of my racial identity and my commitment to anti-racist education; and throughout the interview I tried to engage with the participants in such a way that ‘accepted as valid their experiences, thoughts and interpretations and meaning making’ (Agyeman, 2008: 81).

In the case of my white participants, I worked hard to ensure that they did not feel comfortable to the extent that it led to what Goffman (1969, cited in Smith and Lander 2012) calls ‘team collusion’. Team collusion involves the creation (whether intentional or not) of a solidarity between performers that enables them to ‘express with impunity unacceptable things about the audience and about themselves’ (Goffman, 1969, quoted in Smith and Lander, 2012: 340).

In their article on the different reactions they elicited from teacher candidates as a white and Black teacher educator seeking to engage their students in a critique of whiteness, Smith and Lander (2012) discuss the unintended collusion that Smith, the white teacher educator experienced with her teacher candidates. Noting the potential consequence of this collusion—that it can lead to ‘white talk’ (McIntyre, 1997) wherein critical conversations on whiteness are circumvented—they argue that ‘the White teacher educator must remain critically cognisant of this particular manifestation of privilege in a predominantly White class’ (Smith and Lander, 2012: 341). I actively worked to challenge this potential of collusion, further probing at comments that white participants made in the interviews that served to deny the impact their whiteness had on their historical identifications.

While as Peshkin (1988: 20) warns, attuning oneself to one’s subjectivity does not ‘exorcise [the] subjectivity... [It enables one] to manage it—to preclude it from being unwittingly burdensome—as [one] progress[es] through collecting, analysing, and writing up [one’s] data’ (Peshkin, 1988: 20).

## 4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter set out to provide a comprehensive description of the study's methodology. In Section 4.2 I described how a CRT-perspective, adapted to the specificity of race and racism in Canada—lending particular attention to the colonization of Indigenous peoples—framed this study.

Sections 4.3 and 4.4 described the decision to adopt a qualitative approach that incorporated a variety of tools to gather data including a questionnaire that was made up of a mapping activity, a timeline activity, open-ended questions, and a demographic information section; interviews; and, reflective questions. I discussed how I used the timeline activity—what might appear at first glance as a quantitative tool—as a means to corroborate the data gathered through the mapping activity as well as a jumping off point into critical discussions with participants on their knowledges and understandings of Canadian history; following which I explained the decision to complement the qualitative presentation of the data with percentages, noting that this did not signal a mixed-methods study, but rather an attempt to bring some more precision to the distribution of views amongst participants. The benefits and challenges of employing a variety of data collection instruments were discussed, outlining how it not only provided a rich, multi-layered body of data, but also enabled the corroboration and triangulation of data. I then explained the change in direction the research took, describing how original plans were replaced with new ones that brought me closer to 'walking the talk' of CRT research.

The selection of sites and research participants was detailed in Section 4.5. I described how a total of 46 Ontario history teacher candidates completed the questionnaires and the reflections activity. Twenty of these participants additionally participated in two interviews, one in the fall of 2015 and one in the spring of 2016.

Sections 4.6 and 4.7 provided an in-depth description of the different methods of analysis that were used that cohered with the respective forms of data collected, and presented a detailed sequence of how the data were analyzed.



Careful consideration of the ethical responsibilities of the researcher and a concerted effort to render the study one that meets the criteria for determining the quality of critical research are highlighted in Sections 4.8 and 4.9, as is a proactive attempt to identify and acknowledge how my own subjectivities influenced the research in Section 4.10.

What is evident in both the data collection and data analysis and what I believe constitutes one of the main strengths in the methodology of this study, is an effort to build on the work of others. In some cases, this meant adding a critical edge to an existing instrument or method, while in others, it is seen in the combining of approaches. This critical and innovative approach to the research enabled a critical discernment of Ontario history teacher candidates' understandings and orientations to Canadian history as well as how they are influenced by their identities, and recommendations on how history classrooms can become the curricular home for 'unlearning racism'. The following chapter presents the first set of research findings.

## Chapter 5 Findings 1: The story

### 5.1 Introduction

This study set out to understand how history teacher candidates are positioned to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’. Guided by the existing research that points to the importance of teacher knowledges, views on the purpose of education, and identities, I designed a research project that creatively combined a variety of research instruments in order to be able to explore all three. The previous chapter discussed how the large and distinct sets of data were gathered and analyzed.

This chapter presents the key findings of the analysis of the 46 maps and 20 interviews undertaken during Stage 1 of the research. These findings answer the two research questions, ‘What are Ontario history teacher candidates’ understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching Canadian history?’ and ‘How are they influenced by their identities?’

In Section 5.2 I first present the findings from the maps. An analysis of the content helps to illuminate the knowledges my participants have of Canadian history and the silences that mark their understandings, while their rationales provide some preliminary insight into their views on the purpose of history education. Findings from the timelines documented in Section 5.3 further illustrate participants’ knowledges—and lack thereof—as well as shed more light on their views regarding the purpose of history education. Section 5.4 presents the results from the short answer questions on the purposes and challenges of teaching Canadian history as well as the reasons for becoming a history teacher which make clear their orientations to Canadian history education and their views on their role as history teachers. Finally, section 5.5 zones in on the topic of identities which was explored partly through the questionnaires, and partly through the interviews. The interview data, which provided a more nuanced and detailed expansion of the questionnaire data is integrated across each of the different sections.

The summary revisits each section briefly, weaving the different findings that were identified across the various components of the research into five overarching themes.

These themes are discussed in the ensuing chapter, with consideration for what they mean for a history education for ‘unlearning racism’.

## 5.2 Maps

Inspired by Stanley (2016) and Ladson-Billings’ (2003) respective anti-racist analysis frameworks for evaluating texts, as well as Trouillot’s (1995) emphasis on paying attention to terminology, my analysis of the maps was guided by the six questions as shown below in Figure 2:

**Figure 2: Analysis framework**

- *What is the layout of the map?*
  - *What/Who is present? How are they represented?*
  - *Why are they present?*
  - *What/Who is not present?*
- What terminology is used?*
- 

### 5.2.1 What is the layout of the map?

Following the idea that it would provide some indication as to how participants approached history, prior to analyzing the content of maps, I analyzed the maps’ layouts. Table 4 presents the six types of layout that I identified.

**Table 4: Map layouts**

Layout	Number & Percentage of Maps
Linear and chronological	15/46 32%
List	10/46 22%
Mind maps	6/46 13%
Images	5/46 11%
Random	5/46 11%
Complex	5/46 11%

The most prevalent layout of the maps was a linear timeline, an unsurprising finding when one considers the linear and chronological format in which history has traditionally been taught in Western society.

The second most common layout was lists. Although predominantly organized into separate columns for events, actors, and themes, lists were sometimes presented as one long catalogue of Canadian history's 'best hits' untethered from any overarching narrative. While participants had been tasked with drawing a map of Canadian history that included what they thought were the most significant events, actors and themes, I had not expected them to present an inventory of disconnected historical events, actors and themes. Such a layout typifies the rote memorization approach to history where students memorize basic facts at the expense of developing a more complex understanding. As I analyzed the content of the lists, it became clear that the 'facts' included were predominantly the ones that make up the master narrative: the wars, Canada's growing independence, white European male politicians.

When asked to explain their lists and if any narrative could be drawn that connected the various items, these participants were unable to tie them to one another, instead expressing a view of history as a series of fragmented events, actors and themes. At the same time, they were unable to go into detail about most of the items, confirming a very basic or what I term a '*Cole's Notes understanding*' of history—they knew the overarching concepts but were pressed to provide any detail.

The remaining maps were organized in one of four ways. Some participants drew mind maps with Canadian history or Canadian identity at the centre and legs sticking out to various events, actors and themes. Others presented a less organized, more random scattering of events, actors and themes, and when asked to expand upon their maps, they likewise demonstrated a fairly erratic understanding.

Interestingly, although they had been asked explicitly to 'draw a map of Canadian history', few participants took this request literally and actually produced images. At the same time, most of those that were drawn reflected the Canadian stereotypes. Yet some participants demonstrated more critical understandings through their drawings. Participant #85, for example, whose map was a series of images with a few words tacked on, had drawn a turtle to represent Turtle Island<sup>14</sup>, explaining in his interview

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<sup>14</sup> Turtle Island is the name many Indigenous peoples use to refer to the continent of North America. The name emerges out of a number of Creation stories. While the stories vary depending on the storyteller, in many versions the turtle is said to carry the earth on its back.

that ‘Canada’ the nation was a very new thing and that ‘Canadian history’ was relatively negligible compared to the thousands of years that Indigenous peoples lived and cared for the land before Europeans arrived.

At the same time, a handful of participants presented layouts that suggested a more sophisticated and complex view of history. This included one participant (#57) organizing his map according to overarching and interrelated concepts (e.g. conflict, cooperation, identity) which, as he explained, were themes that repeated themselves throughout history and bled into the present. Another participant (#83) organized her map according to types of history (social, economic, political, cultural), explaining the distinct yet overlapping categories as indicative of the complexity of history. Another participant presented a circular and timeless understanding of history through spiraling rings (#87), while another plotted events and actors along an infinity symbol, explaining that this symbolized history as endless and repeating (#76). Apart from a few exceptions, it was this last group of maps that tended to feature content that broke from the master narrative.

### 5.2.2 *What/Who is present and how are they represented?*

As mentioned in the methodology chapter, any discussion on ‘what or who is present’ needs to be mediated by ‘how it is presented’. Table 5 shows what and who were present on at least 30% of the participants’ maps while the discussion that follows details how they were represented.

**Table 5: Map contents**

What/Who is present	Number & Percentage of Maps
Indigenous-related content	40/46 87%
WWI	37/46 80%
WWII	35/46 76%
British and French	31/46 67%
White, male, political leaders	30/46 65%
Confederation	26/46 56%
The Great Depression	20/46 43%
War of 1812	15/46 33%
Canadian Pacific Railroad	14/46 30%

### Indigenous-related content (87%)

Given the long erasure of Indigenous content from Canadian history, the high percentage of participants to include it on their maps was initially seen as positive. However, as the following sections indicate, the manner *how* Indigenous content was presented was fraught with issues. While a few of the participants (5%) simply wrote ‘Aboriginals’ or ‘Indigenous people’, and some portrayed Indigenous peoples as actors (15%), the majority of maps described Indigenous peoples as either acted upon (45%) or supporting actors (35%). Below I present the various ways in which Indigenous peoples were depicted.

#### *Indigenous peoples as ‘acted upon’*

Most strikingly, approximately 45% of the time that Indigenous peoples were included on the maps, they were cast as recipients of actions done unto them: not as actors, but rather as ‘acted upon’. ‘Economic/political exclusion (First Nations)’ (Participant #83), ‘First Nations, Inuit & Metis (cultural disintegration and physical extermination)’ (Participant #39) and ‘Cruelty to Natives’ (Participant #1) are just some examples of how Indigenous peoples were shown as victims.

The fact that nearly half of the participants who provided Indigenous content did not cite any agency, resilience or contributions suggests there is a critical need for the development of this specific content among teacher candidates. Faden (2015) asserts that it is not only what is included and what is excluded in the story that indicates value judgements, but who is cast as the heroes, agents or protagonists in that story. Accordingly, it is telling that despite being included by almost all participants, for over half of them, Indigenous peoples were either seen as an effect of history as opposed to having affected history or, as the section below describes, as secondary to the story of Canada.

#### *Indigenous peoples as ‘supporting actors’*

The second most common way (35%) that Indigenous peoples were presented in the maps was in relation to Europeans, as supporting actors. This is evidenced in the various descriptions (e.g. ‘French settlers open relations with Natives’ (Participant #61); ‘European explorers arrive in Canada, encounter First Nations peoples’ (Participant #65); ‘Samuel de Champlain establishes first contact’ (Participant #68);

where Europeans were presented as the initiators, or the prime movers, while Indigenous peoples played the subservient, supporting role.

The timespans that the maps covered provides further evidence of the casting of Indigenous peoples in a supporting role. Over 80% of the maps contained no content that predated the ‘arrival of Europeans’, evoking Bhabha’s (1994, cited in Schick, 2014: 94) statement that ‘the settler is the originary presence who makes history in an otherwise presumably unstoried place’.

#### *Indigenous peoples as ‘actors’*

In contrast to the above depictions, approximately 15% of the instances where Indigenous peoples were included on maps portrayed them neither as acted upon, nor as secondary characters, but rather as actors in their own right. This varied from describing Indigenous knowledge and the primacy of Indigenous peoples in Canada (e.g. ‘First Peoples—their knowledge of the land; North America’s first inhabitants [*sic*]’ [Participant #57]); to conveying the historic and contemporary agency, political organization and activism of Indigenous communities (e.g. ‘Natives fight for what they had’ [Participant #3], ‘Idle No More’ [Participant #87]); to highlighting the vitality of Indigenous cultures (e.g. ‘Change and dynamism of Indigenous cultures’ [Participant #76]).

#### *Lack of confidence*

Finally, in addition to the problematic and incomplete portrayal of Indigenous people on a majority of maps, the low confidence levels cited by many participants further tempered the initial optimism sparked by the widespread inclusion of Indigenous content. Indeed, although most participants included Indigenous content on their maps, when asked to indicate which items they felt least confident teaching nearly half pointed to the Indigenous content. They largely attributed this to a lack of knowledge.

When probed as to why they had such little knowledge, they cited the lack of attention that had been given to Indigenous history throughout their own education. As Participant #20 explained, ‘In grade 10 it was mostly focused on WW1, WW2, the Great Depression and then some modern stuff, but the Native stuff was hardly touched on’.

Participants explained that the Canadian history courses they had taken in university—often first year survey courses—covered such vast periods that there was little time left for Indigenous history. For many, university was the first place where they had learned anything at all about Indigenous history. Participant #31 explained:

I only really learned about this [Indigenous history] last year. And because it was all of Canadian history, it covered such a large time span, we never, it was basically one class per topic so I never got a really in depth understanding. I think they're [Indigenous peoples] definitely important in Canadian history, so hopefully I can learn more about them, but I just feel that as of right now I've not had, or I've not done a lot of work on them.

### The Great Wars (WWI 80% and WWII 76%)

The Great Wars were the next most prominently featured items on the maps, casting doubt on Granatstein's (1998) assertion in the 1990s that Canada's military history had been snubbed for 'niche' topics, like social history.

Though both WWI and WWII were for the most part presented matter-of-factly, in some instances they were accompanied by a descriptor. For example, the World War I Battle of Vimy Ridge, was included by one participant (#72) as 'Vimy Ridge—A Nation is born', while another drew the Vimy Ridge Memorial on their map, describing it as an 'early sign of independence' (Participant #20). This is perhaps unsurprising when as Faden (2015) observes, the narrative of Canada coming of age in the Battle of Vimy Ridge is found in every contemporary Canadian history textbook.

In the case of WWII, some participants cited Canada's decision to join the war after Britain as a sign of its growing independence. One participant (#3), for example, highlighted Canada's emerging independence post-WWI by juxtaposing 'Great War—Canada has to join' with 'WWII-Canada chooses to join 1 week after England'. Another participant (#61) was more candid in his portrayal: 'WWII, Canada joins Britain to show their independence'.

### *Strong confidence*

Despite WWI and WWII being listed on slightly fewer maps than Indigenous content, they were most often cited as the areas participants felt most confident teaching—the



rationale being the emphasis placed on the wars in school. As Participant #19 explained:

Just because of the amount of times in history courses that those two subjects [the Great Wars and Confederation], or topics have been emphasized. Like, generally speaking, in Grade 10 when you start, you learn about the Great Wars and Canada's involvement. Everyone always mentions Vimy Ridge, so it's one of those things that keeps getting pounded into the Canadian psyche because it's a form of nationalism in a certain sense, which is never a bad thing, but it's always nice to get more of a breadth of information.

Another participant (#23), discussing why he felt so confident teaching Vimy Ridge, referred to the same phenomenon:

I think that it's definitely that I'm more knowledgeable about it, like when we studied World War 1 in Grade 10 history, we focused a lot on Vimy Ridge and I chose to write my paper that year on Vimy Ridge. And I believe I was in Grade 12 and I did a Co-op kind of class and they put me into another history class to kind of help the teacher and I was in another Grade 10 history class so I did a lot of stuff with Vimy Ridge as well so it's more just that one part of Canadian history I've learnt the most about it repeatedly.

Participants were able to discern that their levels of confidence in certain areas were owed in large part to the attention those topics (i.e. the wars) had been given in their own education, and low confidence levels in turn were partly due to the fact that those other items (i.e. Indigenous history) had hardly been covered. Yet when asked 'Why do you think the wars were focused on more than Indigenous history?' they often presented explanations such as 'These events dominate the change, growth and development of Canada' (Participant #44) or referring to the Battle of Vimy Ridge, 'It shows Canada's strength, like here's where we really showed ourself [*sic.*]' (Participant #84). Only a few went further and made the connection between the fact that the wartime stories supported the proud nation-building narrative of Canada, while Indigenous histories ran counter to the story of progress and development.

Given this lack of ability to assign their contrasting levels of confidence and knowledge to the promotion of certain stories over others, one can infer that owing to

their higher levels of confidence in the wars over Indigenous-related content participants will be more likely to teach former over the latter.

#### British and French: Canada's 'two founding peoples' (67%)

Sixty-seven percent of the maps referred to the British and the French peoples. In most cases, they were discussed in the context of their arrival and eventual settlement and founding of Canada. Although 'colonization' was mentioned on 12 of the 46 maps, only one used the term 'colonizers', the majority instead referring to settlers. Primarily, the British and the French were mentioned in relation to one another—as the two founding peoples of Canada—with only a few references made to the presence of Indigenous peoples and the intricate ways in which both were dependent on the latter for their survival.

#### White male political leaders (65%)

For the most part the role of the actor and nation builder appeared to be reserved for white, male politicians. Over 65% of the maps included one or several of these figures, epitomizing what den Heyer and Abbott (2011: 613) term 'the grand narrative' of English Canada, where the white British male is cast as the lead actor and other contributors are for the most part omitted.

The five most frequently cited actors were all former Prime Ministers—John A. Macdonald, Pierre Trudeau, Lester B. Pearson, William Lyon Mackenzie King, and Robert Borden. The French navigator and founder of New France, Samuel de Champlain, was also listed on several maps.

Primarily, these men were presented simply by name, however, in certain instances they were presented as drivers of (positive) change (e.g. 'John A. Macdonald—building a nation' (#44); 'Samuel de Champlain brings Europe to Quebec' (Participant #72); 'Trudeau—creation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, bilingualism and multiculturalism added to the constitution' (Participant #44).

Although there was a recognition of the racism experienced by certain groups—albeit, in much vaguer terms with the word 'racism' only appearing on one of the 46 maps—the actors mentioned above were missing from those storylines. Instead, the maps only

referred to those on the receiving end—‘Treatment of racial/ethnic minorities’ (Participant #82), ‘Treatment of Chinese immigrants’ (Participant #83), ‘Treatment of Indigenous peoples’ (Participant #13) and ‘Indigenous peoples weren’t treated overly nicely’ (Participant #72).

Confederation (56%), the Great Depression (43%), the War of 1812 (33%) and the Canadian Pacific Railway (30%)

The other most frequently included events on the maps (as indicated in Table 5) are indicative of what I would call the proud nation-building narrative of Canada: from the War of 1812, which is fondly celebrated by Canadians as ‘the successful defence of a small colony against attack by a much larger neighbour’ (The Canadian War, 2012); to Confederation, which presented the union of the three provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Canada under the Dominion of Canada; to the Canadian Pacific Railroad which is heralded for having joined Canada’s east and west coasts, creating ‘a connection between distant and remote Canadians that helped defy gravity and prevent a pull south to the United States’ (Dunn and West, 2011); and finally to the Great Depression, out of whose ashes emerged the social welfare system for which Canada is known today. All these events contribute to the myth of Canada as one of ‘enterprise, of the overcoming of adversity through sheer perseverance and ingenuity’ (Thobani, 2007: 33).

On the maps—similar to WWI and WWII—these events were for the most part simply listed by name. A few participants, however, provided more elaborate and sometimes unexpected descriptions, while others offered more details in interviews. The War of 1812 for example was depicted very differently on two maps. One participant presented it as an episode of Canadian triumph: ‘War of 1812—burning down the White House, American relations today’ (#15). When asked to expand on this, she explained, ‘It’s important because it was when we beat the United States’. This image aligns with the narrative that MacDonald (2012) notes has long been taught: ‘Many Canadian children grow up learning their forebears triumphed after American aggressors tried and failed to invade what was then a British colony’.

In contrast, another participant (#88) wrote on her map, ‘War of 1812 (Natives are the ones who lost)’, highlighting the fact that following the War of 1812 the British, no

longer in need of military alliances with First Nations, began an expedited process of settlement pushing First Nations off their land and onto reserves.

Three study participants also wrote more than simply ‘CPR’ on their maps. Two referred to its oft cited role in uniting the country: ‘CPR-Bringing Canada together, Creating Canada’ (#15); and ‘Canada is connected from sea to sea by the railroad’ (#44). The third instead wrote of the forgotten actors who built the railway: ‘Involvement of minorities in building railway across Canada’ (#13).

### *5.2.3 What/Who is not present?*

While white, male political leaders were included on 65% of the maps and listed a total of 75 times, non-white, non-male, non-political actors remained for the most part missing. Of note is that when these outside actors were included, they were presented not as individuals but as a group.

For example, although Indigenous peoples were cited on the majority of maps, only two individual Indigenous actors—Louis Riel and Tecumseh—were named, and this on fewer than 20% of the maps. Louis Riel, the Métis leader and politician who led the resistance against the government in the Red River Rebellion appeared on seven maps. Tecumseh, a Shawnee chief whose alliance with the British enabled them to fend off the Americans in the War of 1812, appeared on one map. As the following sections indicate, other non-white, non-male actors were even fewer and farther between.

#### **Black actors and Black history**

Only two maps made reference to Canada’s Black history. The first, authored by the sole self-identified African Canadian participant in the study (#29), included ‘Immigrants (Europe, Africa, later on Americans)’. Participant #80, in referring to the War of 1812, wrote ‘War of 1812: repercussions, especially on Black loyalists’. If one was to base one’s understanding of Canada on a close reading of the maps, it would not be apparent that Black Canadians have long been present in and contributed to Canada and are the third largest visible minority group in Canada.

### Women and women's history

Women's history appeared on just over a quarter of the maps. Of note was that while more than half of them referred to women's suffrage, only one explicitly described women as actors and agents: 'Women fight for equality' (Participant #3).

Only two women were specifically named on the maps: Laura Secord, a War of 1812 heroine appeared on two maps. Nellie McClung, a suffragette most widely known for her membership in the Famous Five, a group of women who fought and won the Persons case, which saw the legal recognition of (some) women and allowed them to apply for public office, was included on one map. This stands in stark contrast to the 35 named men who appear in over 65% of the maps.

### Immigrants and racialized Canadians

The term 'immigrants' appeared on only four maps, while five referred to 'minorities'. The broader term 'immigration' figured on seven maps, while 'multiculturalism', often trumpeted as the ultimate symbol of Canada, only appeared on nine.

Like Indigenous peoples, when included, both immigrants and racialized Canadians were more often referred to as recipients of actions, primarily as the victims of poor treatment: 'Treatment of Chinese immigrants' (Participant #83); 'Social: treatment of racial/ethnic minorities (Jews, Japanese, etc.)' (Participant #82); 'Treatment/mistreatment of minorities in Canada' (Participant #13). Only one participant used the word 'racism' and ascribed responsibility: 'Discrimination/racism by British toward ethnic minority' (#32).

While a few maps offered specific examples of racism toward minorities (Japanese internment camps appearing on two maps, and the Chinese head tax on one), their contributions were only presented once: 'Involvement of minorities in building railways across Canada' (Participant #13).

### Social histories

Finally, social histories were found to be secondary if at all present on participants' maps. Labour history was not included in the majority, apart from a few mentions of the Winnipeg General Strike. The extraordinary exception was one participant (#66),

who self-described as working class, whose map was entirely dedicated to labour history.

LGBTQ history was referenced on only two maps, one referring specifically to the 2007 decriminalization of sexuality and the other to the legalization of gay marriage. Other social movements or events were conspicuously absent.

#### 5.2.4 *Why are they present?*

The question that completed the analysis of maps sought to get at participants' rationales for what they had included. Aware that I could not assume what would lead participants to include and correspondingly exclude certain things from their maps, I asked participants to explain underneath their maps their rationales for the content and followed-up on this question in the interviews. I sorted and coded the written and interview answers and identified ten different rationales. It should be noted that many participants made use of multiple rationales to explain the different items on their maps.

**Table 6: Participants' rationales for their maps' content<sup>15</sup>**

Rationale	Number of Participants & Percentage
What I learned in school	16/46 35%
Help to understand present-day Canada	15/46 33%
Influenced/shaped Canadian identity	12/46 26%
Demonstrate Canada's independence and strength	8/46 17%
Need to centre Indigenous perspectives	7/46 15%
First things to come to mind	6/46 13%
Marked change(s) in Canada	4/46 9%
Personal connection	4/46 9%
Show both sides	3/46 7%
Social justice	2/46 4%

<sup>15</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100% as some participants provided multiple rationales.

### What I learned in school (35%)

*'They were the main events I remember being taught in high school and all I could remember off the top of my head'. (Participant #64)*

As Table 6 indicates, the most common rationale provided by participants for their selections of the 'most significant events, actors and themes' was that this was what they had learned in school. Equally, they rationalized their exclusion of certain histories as a result of not having learned them. Of particular note was that many referred specifically to what they had learned in the Ontario Grade 10 Canadian history course and not their university courses.

When asked in the interviews why they were drawing on the knowledge they had learned in Grade 10 history, several of them explained that they had taken the bare minimum of required Canadian history courses in university<sup>16</sup>, and therefore, the Grade 10 course formed their basis. As Participant #61 explained when I asked him where he had drawn the items on his map from:

Just from what I've learnt back in the past, the only thing is, when I was going to university and I got my history degree, I barely took any Canadian history classes. So, this is basically going back to 7, 8 and mostly 10.

He was not alone. Numerous participants stated that their knowledge of Canadian history was inadequate, Participant #65 explaining:

My knowledge at present of Canadian history is actually a bit limited, having taken the minimum number of history courses in university for it to be one of my teachables. So, these are the events that I remember learning about in high school and university.

### Help to understand present-day Canada (33%)

*'The reason I chose these events and actors is because they represent the formation of Canada today'. (Participant #42)*

The second most common rationale provided for the content of the maps was that they helped illustrate how Canada came to be what it is today. As Participant #32 wrote,

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<sup>16</sup> As Appendix F shows, nearly half of the participants had taken only one or two Canadian history courses in university. Many of them indicated during the interview that it was in fact only one course, in order to fulfill the entrance requirement.

‘[These events and actors] helped shape Canada, as a country, into what it is today (its complexion, culture, laws, policies, society).’

While the majority of participants referred to the present, only one, Participant #91, explained how the items she included on her map helped to understand present-day inequalities. She explained how the content on her map concerning colonization, residential schools and the Indian Act helped to understand the current poverty of many Indigenous communities. Similarly, the items related to women’s history that she had included helped explain the systemic barriers that women continue to face today.

#### Influenced/shaped Canadian identity (26%)

*‘I chose these events, themes and actors because I believe that it was after World War One that Canada really cemented its identity and independence despite not being completely recognized’. (Participant #84)*

Following closely behind understanding present-day Canada, the third most commonly cited rationale for the inclusion of an event or a person was that they had shaped Canadian identity. This rationale was used primarily by participants to justify the listing of various actors (namely white, male politicians) as well as the wars. A few others used it to explain their inclusion of events or themes whose presence was minimal (e.g. ‘immigration’ [Participant #68]; ‘diversity’ [Participant #20]; ‘the welfare state’ [Participant #76]).

#### Demonstrate Canada’s independence and strength (17%)

*‘These are some moments that established Canada’s place on the world stage’. (Participant #13)*

Eight participants explained their selections as representative of Canada becoming a player on the world stage, which was intrinsically linked to its growing independence from Great Britain. Some participants referred broadly to the entire content of their maps, Participant #61 stating:

I chose these events because it said a lot about Canadian independence. These events showed its growth as a land region first providing materials to Europeans and then how it contributed enough to be considered a world power nation.



Others referred to specific events (most often the wars) as moments that established Canada as a force to be reckoned with. Referring to Vimy Ridge, Participant #20 explained:

It was one of those moments that Canada on a world stage was more than just a country that was formerly a British colony; it really stood out as a force that should be taken more seriously and definitely solidified Canada as a greater power.

#### Need to centre Indigenous histories and perspectives (15%)

*'The role/lives of Aboriginal Canadians is never integrated enough into our curriculum'. (Participant #86)*

Although Indigenous peoples were included in some way on most maps, only those participants who had centred Indigenous history and cast them as actors rationalized their decision to do so as an act of challenging these silences.

Some participants were quite outspoken in describing their maps. Participant #85 when asked in the interview to explain why he had centred Indigenous history responded that, 'The real history of Canada has been buried, altered, fixed, I don't want to say murdered but it's been fixed'. When Indigenous peoples do come onto the scene, he added, it is usually only at First Contact, denying their longstanding presence on and stewardship of this land.

While most who used this rationale were preoccupied with the lack of Indigenous content, a few also expressed concern with *how* one learnt about Indigenous peoples. Participant #57 explained:

You learn about First Nations people from the eyes of the colonizers, you learn, oh, we met them, and traded with them, and they helped us in these battles and then they kind of disappeared and we stopped paying attention to them.

#### First things to come to mind (13%)

*'Honestly, first things that came to mind'. (Participant #51)*

Six participants rationalized the content on their maps as simply the first things to pop into their head, indicating no other reasons behind their selections. As Participant #15

explained, 'They are the events and themes that stick out in my mind when I think of Canadian history'.

#### Marked changes in Canada (9%)

*'It's kind of a narrative of the big changes that happened in Canada, be it nationally or internationally'. (Participant #72)*

Four participants explained that they had selected the items on their maps because they illustrated changes in Canadian society. As Participant #53 wrote, 'I view history in terms of events that shaped generations and changed the status quo. In my opinion these events appear as the most crucial events in Canada's history'. While three of the participants referred broadly to all the items on their maps, Participant #23, who employed several different rationales, used this rationale when referring to two of the events on his map: 'These events highlight some of the biggest drivers of change in Canadian history. The wars and the economy are two of the biggest drivers of change in Canadian history'.

#### Personal connection (9%)

*'The above actors significantly shaped my own perception of my Canadian identity and how my own family shared in the Canadian immigration experience'. (Participant #39)*

Interestingly, only three additional participants joined Participant #39 in describing personal reasons for the content of their maps. Participant #87, the only Métis participant in the study, initially wrote, 'These were the first things to pop into my head,' adding, 'However, I feel they represent what is most significant to my historical knowledge and identity as a Canadian'. His map, it should be noted, was the only one displaying concentric circles that presented a circular understanding of time.

Two of the participants did not mention any personal connection to the items on their maps in their written rationales. However, when asked in the interviews to further explain their selections, both revealed very personal connections to several of the items. Participant #83, for example, explained that she had included 'the recession' because 'it was something that happened while I was alive. I remember my family struggling through it and my friend's parents lost money in stocks and things like that.' She explained her decision to include 'pulling out of Afghanistan' because her brother

was in the military, ‘so knowing he’s not going to be sent there, I thought that that was a huge development in political history.’

Participant #91, a single mother of six children who had primarily put Indigenous and women’s history on her map explained in detail her strong personal connection to the latter:

In terms of women, and women’s events in Canadian history, I just think being a woman myself and being raised by a very strong mother, very strong independent woman, I’ve always gravitated towards those histories. Because I love history and I can identify with some of the things and see the patterns of things that have happened in history, in Canadian history and I always can relate it back to the present of some of the systematic things that are in place. Like structurally and the institutions that are continuing to cause it to be a difficult situation for women, especially single women with children.

Apart from these four participants, no other personal connections were highlighted by the group.

#### Show both sides (7%)

*‘I think it’s important to show both the triumphs of Canadian history AND the tragedies’. (Participant #17)*

Three participants described their maps as illustrating both the ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ sides of Canadian history. What became apparent in these maps was that while there was a nod to include the ‘negative’ sides of Canadian history—Participant #13 explaining in her interview, ‘We need to also teach the dark histories of Canada’—they were bolted-on to the more ‘positive’ or ‘brighter’ sides of Canadian history.

In brief, the above rationales were employed by participants whose maps complied for the most part with the master narrative of Canadian history. From the centring of the wars and role of state leaders and the British and the French in building the nation, to the regulated inclusion of Indigenous and racialized actors/events, the maps conjured an image of Canada as a white nation whose true subjects are white.

#### Social justice (4%)

*'These themes are more about social justice and human rights. They show the flaws in Canadian society'. (Participant #88)*

While the 'show both sides' rationale saw participants who wanted to teach multiple points of view or both 'the good' and 'the bad' parts of Canadian history, two participants took a more disruptive approach, moving past simply adding some negative bits to the narrative that remains largely unchallenged, and instead emphasizing social justice as the aim of history education. As Participant #91 wrote:

I chose these events and themes because I believe they reflect the progression of sexism and racism in Canada. In teaching history, I believe it is essential for students to explore Canadian history in terms of social justice issues because part of citizenship teaching involves learning about becoming a productive citizen. And that involves caring about the rights of all Canadians.

What stands out about these comments is that in addition to exploring Canadian history in terms of social justice, Participant #91 was one of the few in the group to acknowledge the existence of sexism and racism in the present.

### **5.3 Timelines**

The mapping activity provided participants with a blank slate that served as a diving board into an initial discussion about their views on what they felt was important in Canadian history, in addition to their knowledge of and their confidence levels teaching different histories. The timeline activity, to which I now turn, sought to triangulate the data from the maps by recording participants' knowledge and views on the significance of preselected historical events.

All events selected occurred between 1914 and the present, the timespan covered by the Grade 10 Canadian history curriculum, which is the main Canadian history course the majority of participants were being prepared to teach. This provided a different angle from which to get at participants' knowledges as well as views on what was historically significant.

Table 7 illustrates the different levels of knowledge that the participants indicated of different events<sup>17</sup>; they are explored in the discussion that follows. I then turn to participants' selections of the 10 most important events for students to learn and the rationales they provided. As will become clear, these findings serve to corroborate the findings outlined in the previous section.

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<sup>17</sup> Due to space constraints I have only provided the title of each event. To see how events were presented in the questionnaire, see Appendix A. For a detailed description of each event, see Appendix B.

**Table 7: Participants' knowledges of timeline events**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Never heard of</b>	<b>Have heard of</b>	<b>Intermediate comprehension</b>	<b>Know in detail</b>
Komagata Maru	35%	37%	22%	7%
Vimy Ridge victory	2%	4%	37%	57%
Winnipeg General Strike	11%	13%	46%	30%
League of Indians	39%	50%	9%	2%
Chinese Exclusion Act	7%	33%	41%	20%
Indian Act amended	22%	33%	33%	13%
Persons Case	11%	20%	37%	33%
Great Depression	0%	2%	17%	80%
CBC created	7%	37%	37%	20%
Canada declares war	0%	4%	9%	87%
M.S. St. Louis	11%	39%	24%	26%
Japanese Internment	2%	7%	52%	39%
Lester B. Pearson peacekeeping	11%	22%	41%	26%
Canadian Bill of Rights adopted	2%	28%	46%	24%
Quiet Revolution	2%	35%	30%	33%
Africville eviction	52%	28%	11%	9%
Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program created	54%	39%	7%	0%
Multiculturalism policy	13%	24%	37%	26%
Charter of Rights and Freedoms created	2%	15%	33%	50%
Oka Crisis	15%	30%	28%	26%
The Yonge Street Uprising	43%	50%	2%	4%
Refusal to join Iraq war	0%	26%	46%	28%
Canada votes 'no' against UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous Peoples	41%	28%	17%	13%
Status of Women offices closed	61%	33%	4%	2%
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	4%	17%	46%	33%

### *5.3.1 Knowledge levels*

As Table 7 illustrates, more than half of the participants had never heard of the Africville eviction, the creation of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program or the closure of the Status of Women Offices, all examples of state racism/sexism. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority had minimal to no knowledge of Canada voting against the UN Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, the M.S. St. Louis, the amendment to the Indian Act and Komagata Maru—similarly examples of state racism; or the Yonge Street Uprising and the creation of the League of Indians—both instances of minority resilience and agency.

On the other hand, a majority of participants indicated either an intermediate or a detailed knowledge of Canada declares war, Vimy Ridge, the Great Depression, Lester B. Pearson's peacekeeping, the creation of the Canadian Bill of Rights, the implementation of Canada's multiculturalism legislation, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada's refusal to join the Iraq war, and the creation of the CBC, all key components of the master narrative.

Notably, most participants also indicated either an intermediate or detailed knowledge of the Winnipeg Strike, the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Persons Case, Japanese Internment, the Quiet Revolution, the Oka Crisis and the TRC. Although these events are instances of state racism or minority resilience/resistance, a number of scholars contend that they have been appropriated by official history and are often used as examples of 'how far we've come' (Montgomery, 2008).

Only four events—Vimy Ridge, the Great Depression, Canada Declares War, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms—the first three of which were also found on a majority of maps, were identified by a majority of participants as 'know in detail'.

While the participants' overall knowledge appeared fairly limited, participants' counter-knowledge was even more limited. The events they indicated primarily to have 'Never heard of' or only 'Heard of' are all evocative of either state racism or examples of minorities as principal actors. While this pattern jumped out at me, I wanted to see whether the participants were aware of it. Consequently, I asked them

in the interviews to explain why they felt they had strong knowledge of certain events and weak knowledge of others.

### Strong knowledge

Most of the interview participants did not appear to notice that the events they had a stronger knowledge of served the master narrative, while those they knew little about challenged it. They attributed their stronger knowledge of certain events primarily to the fact that they had been taught in school. As participant #75, explained matter-of-factly, these events had simply been the main focus in high school:

These are the ones that when I thought about what did we study, there were the moments that we studied. And they were the ones that continued throughout my own education. So that's why I know them in detail as opposed to the other ones.

Only a few participants made the connection that the histories they knew in detail tended to be those that painted a positive image of Canadian history, presenting the image of 'Canada the Redeemer' (Roman and Stanley, 1997). Participant #57 was among them, noting that these events are 'what is engrained in students' brains...they're all the proud moments they want us to remember'. For the most part, however, participants seemed to simply accept that because they had been taught, they were the most important events, suggesting an underlying assumption of knowledge as neutral.

At the same time, even fewer drew connections between their historical identifications, in this case knowledge of particular events, and their personal lives. Participant #83, perhaps the most open to drawing a connection between the history she knew and her upbringing, explained in the interview that she had a strong knowledge of things she had a personal connection to:

I think a lot of them, I think, comes from the way I was brought up...anything that is military I find personally fascinating through my brother or grandfather...The Yonge Street Uprising with the Metro Toronto Police. My dad's a cop, my aunt and uncle are cops, so anything to do with race and how the police are perceived through issues was quite a topic of discussion in our household...A lot of it is through family...



## Weak knowledge

In a similar vein, interview participants primarily attributed their weaker knowledge of certain events to its coverage in their own education; in this case, the events had either not been taught in school or had not been taught adequately. As observed earlier, they did not seem to draw a connection between what had not been taught, and how these omissions challenge the overall image of Canada. While a number pointed to the gaps in their own education concerning Indigenous peoples, they did not go as far as questioning ‘the why’: As Participant #44 explained:

There’s a massive hole of Aboriginal history in the Alberta Curriculum. So, what I do know is pieces that I’ve picked up myself. So, they do teach it, but not to the degree that I would feel confident at all in understanding or being able to, like I will have to do a lot of learning by myself before I’m able to teach those components.

Some teacher candidates further speculated that it came down to the teacher, Participant #19 explaining that although Indigenous history had been taught, it had not been emphasized by his teachers as important: ‘So that’s probably why. It’s just that if a teacher doesn’t have a spark for it, I generally don’t’.

Others attributed their lack of knowledge of certain events to the events being too recent. As Participant #13 explained, ‘We spend so much time learning about WWI and WWII that when we get to current affairs, there’s not much time left’. Others said it was on account of them being too specific, Participant #20 justifying his exclusion of Komagata Maru and the eviction of the Black citizens of Africville with ‘These were small one-off events’; while Participant #31 explained, ‘Some of these events are too specific, the Grade 10 history course doesn’t have time to go into such detail, Komagata while having an effect, is such a small thing in comparison to war’.

Many participants attributed the gaps in their knowledge to the fact that they had not taken many Canadian history courses in university. As a result, they were limited to—or at least mostly informed by—what they had learned in Grade 10. Participant #83 explained that because she had primarily focused on European history during her undergraduate studies, she ‘had to go all the way back to Grade 10’.

A tally of the number of Canadian history university courses taken, which study participants had been asked to declare on the last page of the questionnaire, confirmed that nearly half had only one or two Canadian history university credits. Over the course of the interviews it became apparent that for many, Canadian history was not their area of interest. As Participant #67 explained, ‘I just took the mandatory Canadian history course to gain acceptance to teacher’s college’. The participants who selected one to two Canadian history courses for the most part exhibited a fairly limited knowledge, suggesting some correlation between knowledge and number of university history courses. Some made the correlation themselves, Participant #65 writing under her map, ‘My knowledge at present of Canadian history is actually a bit limited, having taken the minimum number of history courses in university for it to be one of my teachables’.

One exception to this trend was Participant #76, who despite having only taken two semesters of Canadian history in university—again stating because it was mandatory—demonstrated one of the more sophisticated understandings and developed knowledges of Canadian history. This was not only revealed through his map and timeline selections, but also confirmed during the interview where he communicated a very solid understanding of counter-perspectives alongside the master narrative. As he explained, this was owed in large part to the reading he had done outside of school.

Lévesque and Zanzanian (2015) reason that ‘so long as [teacher candidates] are taking steps to fill the gaps in their knowledge’ fewer history courses may not necessarily be a bad thing. In the case of my participants, however, few of those who had taken the fewest number of Canadian history courses indicated having made any effort to fill the gaps in their limited knowledge.

Only a few participants reasoned that the events they had limited knowledge of evoked both racist and racialized histories. Even then, it was only after some prodding that they were able to recognize that these events were ones that challenged the narrative of progress and development, or ones that centred racialized people and Indigenous peoples as actors; and hence, events countering the idea of Canada as built by whites.

For example, Participant #80 initially attributed his limited knowledge of Komagata Maru, the creation of the League of Indians, the amendment to the Indian Act, the Persons Case, the creation of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program, and the Oka Crisis, to the fact that they were not taught. However, when I pressed him to think about why they were not taught, he reflected that they were all ‘darker moments’ in Canadian history:

Participant #80: Uhh, that’s just the stuff you don’t really get taught unless you take specific courses to deal with them. Like, I’ve only taken one Indigenous Studies course that was tied to history so for most of that it’s not taught in high school as much. You learn a bit....I guess.

I: Why do you think it’s not taught in high school? If you read the descriptions of the events you stated were not included in high school, is there a narrative that binds them together?

Participant #80: I guess they also tend to be darker moments in Canadian history or world history, so, again, unless you’re taking courses on the specific stuff, they tend to get pushed under the rug or they just...they give you a brief spiel and that’s it.

In his initial justification, Participant #61 explained that the events he had little knowledge of were ‘too specific’. When I further probed him to look at the events and tell me if there was a theme running across those he knew and those he did not, he realized with surprise that the ones he didn’t know much about were the more negative events. Rereading them he expressed his shock that Canada would reject a ship carrying refugees [the M.S. St. Louis], exclaiming ‘that’s not the Canada I know!’

He was not the only participant to admit being jarred while completing the timeline activity. Participant #83, in explaining the events she had indicated little or no knowledge of, stated:

I remember hearing about Africville, but the one that absolutely floored me, and I had never heard about, was the one on voting no against the adoption of the UN Declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples. Especially as Canadians, that for me, like, while filling out the survey I had to actually

take a minute, because I couldn't believe that that was a decision made by our government.

Participant #72 also initially tried to rationalize his lack of knowledge of certain events that were examples of state racism (e.g. Canada votes 'No' against the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples; the federal government closes 12 of the 16 Status of Women offices; TRC, residential school history (which he added); Komagata Maru; and the Chinese Exclusion Act) on account of the fact that they were more recent. He explained that due to time constraints 'history courses really drop off hard after sort of focussing on the 50s'. However, when I asked whether these were events that illustrated Canada's racist history, he conceded that 'they're not moments that fit into the narrative of Canada and nation building that people kind of make'.

### 5.3.2 Participants' Top 10 most important events

Following the knowledge activity, participants had been asked to select the ten events from the timeline they felt were the most important for students to learn. Table 8 presents the ten most cited events.

**Table 8: Participants' Top 10 most important timeline events**

Event	Number of Participants & Percentage
Great Depression	39/46 85%
Charter of Rights and Freedoms	38/46 83%
Canada declares war on Nazi Germany	35/46 76%
Vimy Ridge victory	34/46 74%
Persons Case	29/46 63%
Truth and Reconciliation Commission	29/46 63%
Multiculturalism policy implemented	25/46 54%
Japanese Internment	25/46 54%
Canadian Bill of Rights created	23/46 50%
Winnipeg General Strike	11/46 24%

Table 8 illustrates that the majority of participants selected events that lend support to the master narrative of Canada, namely the Great Depression, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada’s Declaration of War, Vimy Ridge, the implementation of Canada’s multiculturalism policy, and the Canadian Bill of Rights. Interestingly, while ‘multiculturalism’ only appeared on nine of the participants’ maps, in the timelines it was selected by over half as one of the most important events for students to learn. The three other events, which pertain to Indigenous peoples, women, and workers, are all related to emancipation or integration, or show progress. Of note is that events on the timeline that centred on coercion are missing from the top 10, except for Japanese Internment which as Montgomery (2005a: 330) has argued is the most widely talked about racist event in Canadian history. Events that demonstrated racialized groups’ resilience (e.g. Oka Crisis, Yonge Street Uprising) are similarly missing from the list.

### 5.3.3 Rationales for Top 10 most important events

**Table 9: Participants’ rationales for their top 10 selections<sup>18</sup>**

Rationale	Number of Participants & Percentage
Inclusive (show both sides [+s and -s])	14/46 30%
Help to understand present-day Canada	12/46 26%
Show Canada’s independence/strength	11/46 24%
Influenced/shaped Canadian identity	8/46 17%
Marked significant change	4/46 9%
Need to centre Indigenous history and perspectives	4/46 9%
Personal connection	3/46 7%

When asked to provide a rationale for their selections, participants employed many of the same rationales that they had used to explain the content of their maps. Just as 15 of the participants had attributed the inclusion of at least some of the items on their map to the fact that they ‘help to understand present-day Canada’, 12 participants used

<sup>18</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100% as some participants provided multiple rationales.

the same reasoning to justify their selection of the top 10 most important events on the timeline.

Most participants similarly pointed to events having either influenced/shaped Canadian identity, marked significant change, or displayed Canada's independence/strength. Just as in the mapping activity, only a few pointed to the need to centre Indigenous history and perspectives or referred to a personal connection.

The biggest contrast worth noting was that while only three of the 46 participants had rationalized the content of their maps as representing 'both sides' of Canadian history, 14 participants cited wanting to 'show both sides' as a rationale for their timeline selections. However, by all appearances, 'both sides' was limited to events that signalled progress and moves toward equality. Events that highlighted state racism were excluded either because they did not help students understand the overall story of Canada, or they were small in impact. As Participant #72 explained why he felt Komagata Maru, the eviction of Africville and the Yonge Street Uprising were the least important events for students to learn, 'These are all somewhat one-off cases, they didn't affect enough people's lives in Canada'.

## **5.4 Purposes, challenges and reasons**

The third section of the questionnaire sought to explore what participants saw as the purpose of Canadian history education and how they perceived their role as history teachers. The focus on 'purpose' followed Levstik and Barton's (2004), argument that what influences teacher practice is not so much disciplinary knowledge as teacher purpose. Consequently, only lending attention to what teacher candidates know (and do not know), which the two previous sections examined, would provide an incomplete picture of what was needed to make history education a space for 'unlearning racism'.

This section of the questionnaire, thus, served to explore what they saw as the purpose of teaching history and their role as a history teacher.

### 5.4.1 Purposes

**Table 10: Purposes of Canadian history education<sup>19</sup>**

Purpose	Number of Participants & Percentage
To help students understand the present	24/46 52%
To teach both the positives and the negatives	10/46 22%
To teach students to think critically about Canadian history	7/46 15%
Social justice	4/46 9%
Personal	3/46 7%

#### To help understand present-day (52%)

Just as many participants had drawn on a variety of rationales to explain their maps and timeline selections, they also provided numerous purposes for Canadian history education. However, the main purpose indicated by more than half of the participants was to help students understand the present. This is unsurprising when ‘helping students understand the present’ was listed as the second main rationale for both participants’ maps and their timeline selections.

Most of the participants who employed this rationale were vague in defining the concept of ‘present-day’. Participant #66, for example, wrote, ‘The purpose of history education is to provide a sense of where this country came from, in order to understand it in the present and future’. Participant #3 saw the purpose of history education to ‘Help students learn about what factors shaped the country they live in today.’

Only a few participants were more specific and critical in what it was specifically that history could help illuminate in the present, referring to history’s role in helping to understand present-day inequalities. Participant #75 explained how one can only understand Indigenous peoples’ financial dependency on the state if one understands the history of subjugation and colonization that it emerged from. Participant #76, for his part, explained that history helps to shine a light on ‘the many challenges facing

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<sup>19</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100% as some participants provided more than one purpose.

our country,' adding, 'the racism, sexism, and identity that we struggle with today: those have their roots in our history'.

#### To teach both the positives and negatives (22%)

The second most common purpose of history education provided was to teach both the positives and negatives, variously termed 'the good and the bad', 'our mistakes and our triumphs'. As Participant #40 wrote, 'To bring forth all the victories and mistakes our country has made and use history education for us not to repeat it'. Participant #86 also referred to blunders, writing, 'To teach students where our country came from, the mistakes we've made and the triumphs we've had.'

Many of the participants who expressed a willingness to include the 'negatives' or the 'bad', were careful to demand that they be taught alongside the 'positives' or the 'good'. As Participant #13 cautioned, 'You don't just want to focus on the bad parts of Canada'. Participant #61, while acknowledging that 'there were a few problem areas and mistakes that were made, some terrible choices, bad instances' made sure that I knew he was also proud of Canada's history stating, 'but, we did have really good moments as well'.

Indeed, six of the ten participants who described the purpose of history education as teaching both the positives and the negatives used the term 'mistakes'.

#### To teach students to think critically about Canadian history (15%)

Seven participants explained that the purpose of history education was at least in part to teach students how to think critically about history. Participant #44 explained that she wanted her students 'to know, understand and think critically about the events that have shaped our country and the people within'.

Participant #72 wrote on his questionnaire that the purpose of history education was 'to develop critical thinking and reasoning to draw your own conclusions'. In the interview he expanded on this idea:

So, instead of just listening to the teacher talk, or taking everything from the teacher or the textbook as gospel, you have to think/remember they didn't include things, they didn't



account for things, stuff like that. Not necessarily question everything but question some things.

Participant #91 went further, indicating that she believed we have to teach students to think critically about everything:

It's about just getting them to think critically about everything, not just history, everything. Like what you've been offered, what you're being fed on tv, in the newspaper, you've got to think about those biases that people come with and the lens they're looking through and you gotta think about, ok, also yourself, in terms of 'how do I feel about this?', 'what do I think about this?' not 'this is what my teacher says'.

Participant #80 warned of the consequences of not teaching students to think critically, arguing that without skills, you disenfranchise yourself. The past, he felt, could be used to understand and analyze the present and enable students to challenge what gets portrayed. He wanted to teach students to question and confront what they were told.

#### Social justice (9%)

Taking it one step further, four participants saw the purpose of history education as teaching for social justice. Beyond instilling critical thinking, these participants, while all having slightly different priorities—from exploring power and privilege, to protecting rights, to empowering students to take action, to moving toward reconciliation—all saw the purpose of history education as directly related to social action.

For Participant #87, the purpose of history education was to teach students 'how to uphold the rights of self and others'.

Participant #91, who as shown in the previous section wanted to help her students become critical thinkers, did not think that one should stop there. She saw the history classroom as a space where social justice could be explored, starting with a reflection by students about their own positioning in relation to power. 'In teaching Canadian history, I believe it's essential for students to explore Canadian history in terms of social justice issues...which means teaching them about privilege as well. Like where are they positioned'.

For Participant #57, the purpose of history education was to empower students to figure out how they want to change things. Accordingly, ‘it’s about empowering kids to vote, to take action...getting them to realize that they have the right to analyze and not be okay with aspects of their government or their culture and to change it’.

Finally, Participant #85 explained that speaking truth and moving toward reconciliation were a big part of history education. History education involved acknowledging, apologizing and making changes.

#### **Personal (7%)**

Similar to what was found in the map and timeline sections, very few participants referred to the personal in describing the purpose of history education. Among the three that did, two of them had also explained the content on their maps as being highly personal, and one had pointed out a personal connection to her timeline selection. For Participant #39, the purpose of history education was to ‘Begin to shape an understanding of how [students’] own experiences fit into the “Canadian experience”’.

Participant #91, who as described in the preceding section wanted her students to understand their privilege and positioning in relation to social justice, also wanted to help them recognize their personal connection to women’s history and the barriers women continue to face. As she explained, women’s history affects ‘their sisters, their mothers, themselves...’.

Participant #87, who as indicated above saw one of the purposes of history education as showing students how to uphold their rights and the rights of others also considered history education as a space to help students identify who they are.

#### **5.4.2 Challenges**

The answers to the question on what challenges teachers face in teaching Canadian history further highlight a fairly apolitical understanding of the purpose of history education among a majority of participants. As Table 11 shows, most participants were preoccupied with how to make history relevant and interesting or how to be inclusive. Only a few presented challenges that suggested a more political understanding of their role as history teachers.

**Table 11: Challenges of teaching Canadian history<sup>20</sup>**

Challenge	Number of Participants & Percentage	
Making it relevant/interesting	24/46	52%
Being inclusive of different histories and of different students	11/46	24%
Technology	10/46	22%
Contending with students' pre-existing knowledge	9/46	20%
Dislodging the master narrative	5/46	11%

### Making it relevant/interesting (52%)

The overwhelming response to this question was how to make history interesting and relevant to students, a majority indicating that it is regarded by many students as a boring subject, or irrelevant to their lives.

### Being inclusive of different histories and of different students (24%)

The second challenge mentioned by nearly a quarter of participants was being inclusive of different historical perspectives.

Much research has pointed to the tendency of white teachers to use the ‘cultural disqualification’ (Donald, 2009) argument—that because they are not Indigenous they cannot teach Indigenous history—to defend their decision not to include Indigenous content. Interestingly, only one of the participants (#66), who listed being inclusive as a challenge, employed this rationale. As he explained, ‘How do we tell the story of Canada without focusing on the European story? Like, how do we include First Nations, the Japanese, Chinese, I think that’s probably difficult for myself because I don’t consider myself a minority, so how do I talk about these issues?’ This may at least in part be attributable to the fact that, as Miles (2018: 294) notes, ‘The Truth and Reconciliation Commission brought the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians to the forefront of public discourse,’ rendering it more difficult to deny any relationship.

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<sup>20</sup> Percentages do not add up to 100% as some participants cited more than one challenge.

The majority of participants instead attributed the main barrier to being inclusive to a lack of time, explaining that there were too many things to fit into limited class time. As Participant #75 explained:

The challenge is that teachers have to choose what they want to teach and only have a semester. There is now a greater awareness of social issues and race issues and it's not difficult to teach them, but to find the time to do so, we just have more to include.

Associating the challenge of being inclusive with time constraints suggested that these participants subscribed to what Banks (1988: 37) calls an 'additive approach', which entails 'the addition of content, concepts, themes, and perspectives to the curriculum without changing its basic structure, purposes, and characteristics'.

A number of teacher candidates also indicated being concerned with how to be inclusive of the different students in their classroom, pointing to the fact that the rising numbers of 'New Canadians' among them could experience difficulties connecting with the curriculum. The challenge for some participants was being inclusive of diverse students who just 'weren't part of Canada's history' while at the same time contending with certain students' views that they felt didn't align with Canadian principles, placing the blame on the students.

Participant #85, conversely, shifted the responsibility to the teachers, arguing that many were ill-prepared for diverse classrooms. While his own high school experience took place in a setting where half the students were Asian and half were Indian, he conjectured that many of the teacher candidates who came from exclusively white schools '[don't] realize there's cultural differences and a need for a culturally responsive classroom'.

### Technology (22%)

The third most widely pinpointed challenge was technology. A number of participants complained that with technological advancements there is an abundance of sources/information available to youth—yet that they do not know how to think critically about it. Others pointed to the issues that increased technology-use entailed: shorter attention spans and how to teach history in 'tweets'.

### Contending with students' pre-existing knowledge (20%)

Students' pre-existing knowledge upon entering the history classroom ranked in fourth position. Participants talked about the difficulties in countering what students have learned at home, including prejudice, Participant #82 citing as the main challenge 'students who aren't open or willing to question their previous understanding of history and that they are easily influenced from learned prejudice at home'. Participant #49 similarly pointed to students coming into the classroom with 'pre-formed perceptions', and how difficult it was to challenge those ideas. Interestingly, none of these participants spoke about their own pre-formed perceptions—nor the need to confront them.

### Dislodging the master narrative (11%)

The final challenge mentioned by only a handful of teacher candidates who expressed concern about the curriculum itself went beyond the concept of an inclusive approach. Instead of asking 'how do you teach all this other content in addition to the existing content?'—the additive approach (Banks, 1988)—they worried how to dislodge the master narrative. For Participant #57, the biggest challenge was to decolonize the curriculum, especially when notions of 'what counts as historical knowledge' were still caught up in Eurocentric understandings of knowledge'. Another Participant, #75, explained that the challenge lay in moving past the self-congratulatory and pride-inducing view of Canada as 'the norm and all else is weird/wrong. Our lives in Canada are one possibility, not the only way'.

Of the five participants who referred to this challenge, all but Participant #57 attributed it to the fact that there are restrictions on what teachers can and cannot teach. Participant #80, who saw the main challenge as teaching controversial material that has been left out of the courses for years argued that teachers are restricted by the curriculum in what they are permitted to do. Participant #88 also referred to the restrictions on the content teachers are allowed to teach, noting that one risks being punished by going off course.

### 5.4.3 Reasons

The final of the short answer questions sought to identify teacher candidates' motivations for becoming a history teacher. This provided yet another window into their perception of the purpose of history education, and specifically how they viewed the role of a teacher.

**Table 12: Reasons for becoming a history teacher**

Reason	Number of Participants & Percentage	
Love it/passion for it	25/46	54%
To teach/get students to think about multiple perspectives	8/46	17%
To inspire students to think critically about history	5/46	11%
Teach it better than it was taught to them	4/46	9%
Social justice	4/46	9%

#### Love it (54%)

More than half of the study participants when asked why they had decided to become history teachers explained that they wanted to share their love for the subject. 'I want to share my passion for history' (Participant #82); 'I love history and love enlightening others with stories from the past' (Participant #3); 'It is my passion' (Participant #23).

#### Multiple perspectives (17%)

Eight participants continued down the inclusive approach path, indicating that they wanted to bring in more perspectives. As Participant #44 explained, in addition to sharing her love for history, she wanted to 'uncover/share histories that have not been told, or histories from different perspectives'. Participant #67 wanted to give students a perspective other than 'just the winner's side'.

#### Critical thinking (11%)

Interestingly, of the five participants who wanted to become history teachers in order to help further students' critical thinking, three referred to developing their own: Participant #65 cited 'the importance of critical thinking (which I am still working on myself!); Participant #49's aim was 'to encourage reflection on the history of Canada

and encourage students and myself to challenge internal conceptions of certain events’; and Participant #75 said that he wanted, ‘to encourage critical analysis of Canada...and reinterpret what I’ve taken as fact’.

#### Teach it better than it was taught (9%)

A handful of teacher candidates expressed a desire to teach history better than it had been taught to them, one participant (#39) stating that she had started university as a science major because she had found history so boring in high school. Only when she took a university history course did she discover her love for the subject. Another participant (#66) explained that he wanted to ‘Teach them in a way I wasn’t [taught]’, referring to the rote-memorization that had characterized his own history education.

#### Social justice (9%)

Finally, four participants indicated social justice as their reason for wanting to become history teachers. Participant #57 reiterated that he wanted to teach Canadian history in order to decolonize history, while Participant #91 explained that she wanted to ‘help students explore how issues of race, class and gender have been foundational in Canadian history’. Participant #85 was most succinct in his response, listing ‘1. Change; 2. Remember; 3. Reconciliation’. Participant #76 wrote that he wanted to ‘participate in historical truth-telling’ and ‘help heal some of the wounds of the past’ expanding in the interview that this truth-telling would serve to expose racism and sexism in Canada’s history and present.

#### *5.4.4 Is history education political?*

Apart from a few participants who clearly saw history education and their roles as intimately political, the answers to the questions on purpose, challenges, and reasons described above signaled overall apolitical views of history education and the role of the history teacher. While many alluded to an aspired objectivity through their answers, some were more forthright: As Participant #75 wrote, the purpose of history teaching ‘is not about sharing my perspective, I want to give my students an unbiased opinion’. Participant #39 reiterated this aversion, listing as one of the main challenges ‘presenting an objective perspective that isn’t biased by our own experiences’.

Participant #70 put as his third reason for wanting to become a history teacher, 'to paint a depiction of history from an objective view'.

The extent to which the pursuit of objectivity went for some was highlighted by Participant #83, who during our discussion on the women's movement indicated, 'Some people still believe women are still oppressed in Canadian society, and I won't comment whether I agree or disagree, but to know how far we've come today from what was going on in 1914 or 1939 at the beginning of these wars, that's important to teach'. Thus, she illustrated just how hesitant a number of participants were to voice any opinion.

At the same time, there was also a clear reluctance by some to include any political and potentially divisive content in the history classroom, one participant indicating that she did not want to teach government as 'it can get heated. So, I'll just do an overview of federal/provincial/municipal systems but wouldn't go further than that' (Participant #15). Another participant, (#66), justified not including the closure of the Status of Women Offices as an important event on his timeline because it was not an historical event, but rather, 'a political issue'.

Wanting to further explore and challenge the purported neutrality and objectivity of history education head on, I asked 'Do you think history education is political?' Interestingly, apart from Participant #84, who outright rejected the notion that history education is political ('If it is, it shouldn't be'), most of the participants misinterpreted the question to mean 'does history education cover political topics'. As Participant #23 reasoned, 'It can be. It can be social, it can be economic, it can be many things'. Participant #19, for his part suggested:

I think it's largely political. I think or believe that it's trying to gear students towards an understanding and perhaps an appreciation of the political realm. Calling it how it is, the younger generations, like 18-25 having the lowest voting. So maybe that's why they're tailoring it to it. But then again that's just one speculation. I don't have any definitive answers towards that. But yeah, I would say it's largely geared towards the political aspects.



As I became aware of the misinterpretation, I began to reword the question prefacing with ‘I don’t mean does history education cover political topics, rather is history education a political act?’ Still, a majority did not interpret the question correctly, suggesting that they did not see history education as a ‘power-laden process’ (Trouillot, 1995), nor recognize their complicity in it.

Of the 20 interview participants only six indicated that they thought history education was in fact political, a number referring to the curriculum writers’ including and excluding certain elements. For example, Participant #85 explained that it was political insofar as to the choice of who was introduced in the textbooks; history was written by the winning parties, its focus aligned with their victories and preferences.

Participant #72 initially responded by referencing countries like North Korea, Russia, China, explaining that ‘they obviously rewrite their own history’. When asked whether the same applied—perhaps simply in a more subtle manner—to Canada, he responded:

Ummm, I would say it’s not as much controlled, like it’s not as much involved in the political sphere. I mean, obviously the people making decisions, it’s absolutely political because they have to decide what to leave in and what to leave out and they kind of have to go through and decide which story to tell, so obviously that’s a bit of a contentious issue.

Of the six who acknowledged the political nature of history education, not all included themselves, or history teachers in general as among ‘the people making the decisions’. Only a few participants recognized that the choices they made could serve to either perpetuate or challenge the silences that have long marked the history curriculum. Participant #76 was blunt in his response:

Haha, what’s that line? ‘Everything is political.’ Yes. Yes, history is storytelling, storytelling is a moral activity, moral activities are political. I hold no truck for people who say things like, “Oh, you must present a fair and balanced curriculum.” Nothing is fair, nothing is balanced. These are not concepts that are easily managed and often impossibly managed. So, I think every time you step in the classroom and say something, you are performing an action and you have to be keenly aware of what the purpose of that action is for and what message you’re trying to communicate. Saying ‘But I

have an obligation to deliver the curriculum' is no defence for anything like that. Everyone is a thinking human; you can make the choices. You are a teacher; you need to make those choices for the sake of the students.

## 5.5 Identities

This final section of findings is devoted to identities. Here, my inquiry was two-fold: First, I was interested in understanding how and in what ways teacher candidates' identities influence their orientations to Canadian history. Given that my starting point was that we are all differently positioned in relation to history, I was not looking at *whether*, but rather *how* my participants' multifaceted identities appeared to inform their views.

Secondly, following Sleeter's (1993, cited in Rivière, 2008: 361) argument countering the assumption that, given the correct training, anyone can adopt a commitment to social justice pedagogy without an interrogation of their own racial identity, I also wanted to push participants to consider their identities and how they influenced their views. Although the previous sections indirectly allude to a reluctance or resistance by most participants to see any personal connection to their understandings and orientations, this line of inquiry was directly explored through the interviews where I asked participants to consider the impact of their identities on their answers in the questionnaire and views of Canadian history more broadly. The implicit question undergirding both questions, and which returns to the main goal of my research, was 'how do their identities (or their understanding of their identities) position them to take up a history education for 'unlearning racism'?

### 5.5.1 Direct influence

While mindful of the importance of avoiding essentialist approaches to analyzing any connections between participants' identities and their responses, I identified a number of tentative connections, some more discernible than others, during the analysis. Though I will discuss some examples, the more significant finding was how the participants perceived and acknowledged or denied the influence of their identities. Consequently, the majority of this section will be devoted to answering this second question. Nevertheless, I briefly turn to some of the more evident examples of the

influence of participants' identities on their views of history in order to show that the research that has been conducted on this theme with regards to students, equally applies to teacher candidates.

One of the clearest examples of the influence of participant's identity on their answers was with Participant #66. One of the only self-identified working-class participants in the study, his map was devoted primarily to Canadian labour history. Interestingly, in the written explanation of his map, he did not mention any personal connection to the content he had included, indicating simply that he was most familiar with these events and dates. During the interview, however, when I asked him to consider whether his working-class background had influenced his selections, he explained,

Yeah, I guess I would consider myself as coming from a working-class family. So, I guess trying to understand what the working class is, what their experiences were like...I did my master's thesis on Hamilton working class history so that was more real for me. So, that's kind of what sparked my interest in labour history...I guess that would definitely have influenced my interest in the Depression, the General Strike and things like that.

While, as indicated in my earlier analysis, Black Canadians were largely missing from the maps, one of the only participants to directly make any reference to Black history 'Immigrants (Europe, Africa, later on Americans)' on her map and to add 'Toronto opens Afrocentric school' to her timeline was also the only participant who referred to her African identity. 'I'm African/Jamaican, so technically African descent' (Participant #29). As she did not participate in the interview stage of the research, I was unable to determine whether she saw the influence of her identity on her historical ascriptions.

A third example of a tangible connection between the author and the content of the questionnaire was observed with the only Métis and indeed Indigenous participant (#87), who presented a circular map, evident of the cyclical view of history that as Marker (2011) has explained exemplifies Indigenous approaches to time. His map was one of the few that went beyond simplistic depictions of Indigenous peoples, speaking to their resilience in 'Idle No More' and the 'Oka Crisis' as well as pointing to concepts

such as ‘Environmental Reciprocity’. Unfortunately, he as well did not participate in an interview; however, in the written explanation for his map he appears to have drawn the connection to his identity, writing, ‘I feel they represent what is most significant to my historical knowledge and identity as a Canadian’.

Although as previously noted women’s history was for the most part missing from any of the maps, the few times that women and events that had had particular impacts on women’s lives were included was on maps that had been authored by female participants. Indeed, only one of the maps by a male study participant (#85) included any female-specific content. While my sample size precludes lofty conclusions, this finding may serve as a helpful reminder that identities can shape not only what we associate with, but just as importantly what we do not associate with.

### *5.5.2 Indirect influence*

At the same time, there were a number of participants who presented histories on their maps or added events to the timeline where the connection to their identities was not immediately obvious, yet, became clear during the interview.

For example, one of the maps to centre Indigenous history was drawn by a participant who had immigrated to Canada from China when he was 15. In the interview I asked him to explain what had sparked his focus on Indigenous history. He was very candid in describing his commitment to and interest in learning and teaching about Indigenous history drawing parallels between his own experience of racism and the racism that Indigenous peoples have faced in Canada:

I would say I feel connected to the Indigenous people of Canada because I feel the same, like they’re oppressed, not expressed, not listened to, nobody want to talk to them and hear their story, they’ve been left out, relocated, and it’s sort of...I’m not saying what my people have experienced is as bad, but I can feel them, I have this feeling where I can say ‘I’ve been through similar exclusion, not as bad as that, or as deep, but I have an empathy and connection with them, and I say, ‘yes, we should help each other’. (Participant #85)

Participant #57, who identified as ‘trans-male, queer and mixed-race’, also centred Indigenous history on his map, dividing it into three themes: ‘First peoples—their

knowledge of the land, North America's first inhabitants [*sic*]; 'The Environment of Canada—resources it provided vital to sustain previous and new settlers; Environmental make up that influenced climate and geographic formations'; and 'European colonizers—led to the attempted elimination of previously established societies; created the colony-setter dynamic'. Notably, he was the only participant to use the word 'colonizers' on his map. He also added 'Residential schools and the European colonies attempt to assimilate First Nations People' to his timeline.

In explaining his emphasis on Indigenous content, he acknowledged how his own exclusion from the curriculum had led him to wonder what else had been excluded, explaining:

Coming out as queer and trans, that was a whole other issue of it's not taught. I was, I guess 20, when I started questioning it, or 19 when I started questioning it, even though I knew when I was four years old. Honestly. But there were just no words for it until I was older. And then when that happened, it just opened the floodgate of questioning, well, what else have I not learnt? And realizing the injustices that happened to LGBT communities as well, it's such an interesting and unfortunate parallel between the LGBT community and marginalized, racialized groups of people, who have gone through their own oppressions, which are not comparable, but relatable.

Participant #57 also drew parallels between his mother's experience of having grown up in India under British colonial rule and the colonization of Indigenous peoples in Canada, explaining that this had instilled in him a sense of solidarity:

Decolonizing is such an incredible word that I only found out about you know within the past two or three years and understanding decolonizing in terms of even my own family. My mom is from India and she lived under British rule basically, she was taught by British nuns. And in my opinion, she doesn't even understand it, but was ripped of her culture. I don't know anything about...I know so little about my own culture which bugs me so much, you know? Same European people but different parts of the world. But I can relate to that feeling of I don't know what traditions I had because my family didn't necessarily hold onto that culture...

I: Or weren't able to?

Participant #57: Or weren't able to, yeah, absolutely. Which I think is more appropriate than didn't want to. It wasn't necessarily an easy choice, it was just kind of like this is what we need to do to survive.

What became apparent in many cases was a sort of 'empathy rooted in common experience' (Bascia, 1996: 156), not necessarily in relation to the same identity marker but rather to a shared experience of marginalization, that 'afforded them a particular empathy'; one that in turn had laid the foundation for a commitment to giving space to marginalized histories.

### *5.5.3 Transcending identities*

Notwithstanding the above examples, while most of the participants who held culturally dominant identities presented a linear history of progress that centred white, European men, this version of history (i.e. the master narrative) was the main one presented by the majority of participants—whether of culturally dominant identities or not.

At the same time, there were a few teacher candidates with culturally dominant identities who appeared not to subscribe to the master narrative. Participant #76, although white, male and from an upper-class family presented a circular approach to history and a commitment to the history of the underdog.

While these variations do not suggest that identity does not matter, they demonstrate the importance of not taking an essentialist approach to identities and a deterministic view of their influence. As Hopson (2013: 25) notes, 'Although individuals may share experiences and aspects of identity, they should not be automatically categorized together, or assumed to be the same in any regard'.

### *5.5.4 Negotiating identities*

In the questionnaire I had asked all participants to complete the demographic information page describing their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic identity, racial identity, social class, and some additional information. During the interviews I invited the 20 interview participants to describe their identities and in turn, how they

influenced their responses in the questionnaire as well as more broadly, their orientations to Canadian history.

Given my study was framed in critical race theory, I was particularly interested in how they negotiated their racial identity and its impact. Through the analysis a number of divergences between the white and the racialized teacher candidates were identified. I have consequently presented the findings according to these two groups even though, as will become clear, there were also intragroup differences.

### White teacher candidates negotiating their identities

Of the 20 interview participants, 11 were white. The ways in which they approached their racial identity varied. Through the analysis, I grouped them into one or more of four groups.

The first group consisted of two participants (Participants #1 and #44) who did not acknowledge their white racial identity in either the questionnaire or the interview. On paper, they both appeared to confuse ethnic with racial identity, putting down ‘Dutch’ and ‘German’ respectively. In the interview, neither made any mention of their racial identity when asked to describe their identity and how it might influence their answers:

I: In your own words, how would you describe your identity?

Participant #1: Uhhh, I think as an ethnically Dutch but civically Canadian. I participate more in the Canadian civic life than I do in the Dutch civic life, but I still identify with my old country. So that’s really how I would identify myself...(pause)...you know, just a person.

Participant #44, referred to her gender, sexual orientation, and social class but not her racial identity:

I: Can you describe your identity to me?

Participant #44: Ummm, now I see my identity as Canadian. As a female, identifiably female, heterosexual, middle-class female. With heritage ties to Western Europe.

The second group consisted of five participants who although writing 'white' in the questionnaire under racial identity and acknowledging their white racial identity in the interview, made no mention of it when answering the follow-up question, 'And how might your identity influence your answers in the questionnaire, and views/approaches to Canadian history more broadly?' Instead, they pointed to the influence of their social class (#66), their family (#83), or other aspects of their identity (#75, #80, and #76).

Only when I asked Participant #75 whether he felt his students' identities influenced their orientations to Canadian history did he indirectly acknowledge his own position of power (related to his whiteness and maleness) and its influence:

I'm a white male of slightly above average height who is well spoken. There is very little standing in my way. So that will be a lens that if you have students who are also white and male and standard height and are able to effectively communicate, that could blind them to the negative aspects in history.

The acknowledgement of his culturally dominant position, however, was later on in the interview tempered, when I asked him whether he felt represented in the history curriculum:

I: Did you feel represented in the history curriculum? Did you see yourself reflected in Canadian history when you were a student?

Participant #75: Looking at it now, I don't see myself represented because I would say in the hierarchy of things, I identify first with being gay, then with being white, then with being male. The white and male, to me they're not an important aspect of my identity, so the homosexual component just isn't there in history. There's very little discussed about it, at least until I got into my degree and that was explored in terms of rights issues.

What became apparent was that for him, his sexual orientation was the more important aspect of his identity and his whiteness and maleness did not figure as importantly.



The third group consisted of three participants who while acknowledging their white racial identity did not only actively reject, but were defensive toward the possibility that it might influence their responses/views of history. Participant #15 protested:

I think some people would think that because I'm white, I would only want white history. But that's not true. You have to have the Black history, the Indian, the whatever else, you need it in there because it's interconnected.

She extended this argument to her social class, indicating that, 'Just because I'm middle class doesn't mean I don't know what it's like to be poor' (Participant #15).

Participant #72 for his part acknowledged his whiteness and the sense of assumed membership it gave him to Canada; however, he added a caveat: 'But I mean, I've always been very inclusive, and considerate. I always try and think of other people when I say things, you know, like what am I missing out, what am I forgetting, stuff like that'.

Finally, Participant #84 in describing his identity as 'a very well off, middle-class male', added defensively, 'but I've worked hard for what I got', making it clear he had not gotten any hand-outs. Unprompted, he continued:

I view my identity as fairly neutral (i.e. not many roadblocks), and that allows me to skip over my biases. I liken my perspective to my skin: I'm white which means anything can alter or influence my perspective—a blank canvas able to analyze anything.

The last group, which was made up of just one individual, Participant #31, showed an acknowledgement of white racial identity and was the only to acknowledge the influence it had on her views on history:

So, I guess being...Canadian history was shaped quite a bit by those early European explorers. So you have the whole thing of like colonial power, and umm, white privilege. So I guess I see where that's coming from and I guess because my history, as I guess Caucasian, I've never...they were never technically the ones that were oppressed in history. So I guess it shapes me in that way in that I can learn about it, probably from, like I have a specific view of history, and certain prejudices,

different from someone who maybe in history was, like, still a Canadian today, but say an African Canadian. Obviously, my views are going to be different, so in terms of that I think my identity does have an effect.

Apart from Participant #31, the other white participants displayed varying levels of evasiveness and resistance surrounding their racial identity. Even among those who recognized it, it often came through indirectly at a different point in the interview, as in the case of #75, or was accompanied by caveats or vague language, indicating the race evasive tactics that other researchers working with white teachers on their white racial identities have observed.

The denial or restrained acknowledgement of the salience and influence of white racial identity also characterized participants' orientations to their other culturally dominant identities. Except for Participant #75, none of the male participants acknowledged their gender's influence on their approaches to teaching and views of Canadian history. Similarly, only a few middle-class participants conceded that it had had any influence on their views of Canadian history. This is unsurprising when as Allard and Santoro (2006: 124) note, 'Being middle-class, like 'Whiteness', has a normative sense about it and remains largely unexamined by those whose lived experiences are centred within this space'.

#### Racialized teacher candidates negotiating their identities

In contrast, the teacher candidates who tended to be more willing or able to describe their identities and their influence on their approaches to and views of Canadian history were the nine racialized participants. All were aware of their racial identity and more than half referred to its influence on their views of Canadian history and approaches to teaching it. Through the analysis I divided them into two groups.

The four participants who made up the first group acknowledged their racial identities in both the questionnaire and the interview. However, similarly to Group 2 of the white participants, they pointed to their other identities (i.e. age, ethnic identity, class) as the main influences on their views of and approaches to teaching Canadian history.

Thus, Participant #19, described himself as ‘a Canadian who is brown, my parents are both brown and not from this country, I’m a first generation Canadian’; yet when asked whether his identity had shaped his views of Canadian history he made no mention of his racial identity. Instead, he referred to the fact that he was raised in an upper-class family who could afford books, so he was able to read a lot about Canadian history.

When I asked him whether as a student he had seen himself represented in the curriculum, however, he explained:

To be honest, no. My parents’ heritage and background were neglected so I had to go to them for general knowledge. But even when it was brought up, later on in university, it was different than what my parents told me.

It was evident that although Participant #19 did not initially consider his racial identity, instead prioritizing his membership in the upper class, its influence was incontestable. Although, as Hopson (2013: 145) cautions, ‘we cannot expect educators to make [their race] central to their identities’, this was a reminder that they cannot leave it at the classroom door either.

Participants #20, #23, and #61 similarly acknowledged their racial identities but did not see a connection as to how they might influence their questionnaire answers, or their orientations to Canadian history in general. Participant #20 instead referred to his age and generation as the main influencers—‘I’m much more liberal [than my father]’—while both participants #23 and #61 pointed to their respective ethnic identities and cultural heritage (South American and Lebanese).

The second group of racialized teacher candidates was made up of five racialized participants who not only acknowledged their racial identity, but also the influence it had on their views on Canadian history and approaches to teaching it. Participant #13, for example, explained how her status as a ‘double-minority’ had influenced her views:

Now that I think of it, a lot of the responses I gave that I wrote about related to race issues and issues that affect minorities and technically I’m a double minority because I’m a woman and I’m a person of colour. So I think a lot of the topics that interest me in Canadian history and in general is the role of

women, which is so appealing to me because it depends on what context you're looking at, so the role of women in China, the role of women in Canada, the role of women in Aboriginal communities. It's so interesting so I wish I had more time to look at the role of women in all countries. And then the other thing, being an ethnic minority, I think that is the reason I picked certain events, like the transatlantic railway because that interested me because minorities were so involved in that in making something that connects Canada physically but at the same time were ostracized. So, I think me being a woman and an ethnic minority, I think that influences my understanding of history and my interests in history.

Even more outspoken, Participant #85 talked about the racism that he experienced on a daily basis since arriving in Canada from China as an immigrant and non-native English speaker. He indicated that these experiences had inspired a commitment to learn and teach Indigenous history, while at the same time empowering him to serve as a mentor to new immigrants and language learners.

Born in the Philippines but having grown up in Guam and then moved to Canada in Grade 7, Participant #67 not only pointed to the influence being a racial minority had on her views; but she also considered her experience as an immigrant to Canada as a means to connecting with diverse students, explaining, 'I know how hard it is to transition and change'.

Participants #57 and #91, respectively identifying as 'mixed-race but I am for the most part white passing giving me more privilege than those who aren't' (#57), and 'biracial however I know I have not experienced racial prejudice in the ways visibly biracial people have because I look more white' (#91), both acknowledged the influence their racial identity had on their views. Participant #57 also cited his trans and queer identities, while Participant #91 pointed to her identity as a single mother and a woman as equally important in shaping her views of Canadian history.

Finally, it is important to note that while seven of the racialized participants indicated that they had not seen themselves reflected in the curriculum as students, two had. Both Participant #13 and Participant #85 referred to a teacher who had integrated 'people like me' in spite of a curriculum that did not include them, showing the power of the educator to teach against the curriculum.

## Students identities

Curiously, the depersonalized ways in which the participants discussed their orientations to history was not extended to their students. When I asked whether they felt their students' identities influenced their understandings of Canadian history, all study participants—racialized and white—were quick to answer 'yes', many of them pointing specifically to their students' racial and ethnic backgrounds as playing significant roles: 'Absolutely, because everyone is the sum of everything that's happened to them so far' (Participant #72); 'I think their race influences them completely' (Participant #15); 'For sure. It's a big thing. I mean some of the biggest factors I think are economic class and I guess race and ethnicity. Those all definitely play a huge role in it' (Participant #20).

## 5.6 Chapter Summary

The multiple levels of data examined in this findings chapter first revealed limited knowledges of Canadian history amongst the majority of study participants. Despite some evidence on the maps of a recognition of the importance of centring Indigenous history, participants' limited knowledge led to oversimplified representations that 'misrecognized' Indigenous actors. The majority of participants' knowledge of Canadian history appeared to be guided by the established perspectives, invoking the 'usual suspects' (e.g. white, male) as well as events representative of the master narrative. Racialized actors and events that challenged the master narrative were few and far between.

The timeline activity confirmed low levels of knowledge and especially, counter knowledges. It further illustrated how most participants saw knowledge as neutral, offering a wealth of explanations for their lack of proficiency that sidestepped the multiple ways in which knowledge is distorted, unequally produced, and serves the ideological goings of the time.

Particular attention paid not only to the maps' content but also the language used throughout the interviews further revealed that most participants did not see racism as central to Canadian history.

The data further shows a fairly apolitical understanding of the purpose of history education. The often-cited argument that the main purpose of history education was to help their students understand the present suggests an apolitical view of the teacher's role, one limited primarily to the transmission of facts.

Finally, all levels of data point to the finding that a vast majority of participants did not see a personal connection to the history that they had included on their maps or had selected from the timeline. What appeared to be at play was a sort of 'professional distancing' where participants were either dismissive of any relation between the two, or only recognized or acknowledged it when probed.

The discussion chapter that follows considers the four themes I identified across all the data sets, based on an intensive analysis.

## Chapter 6 Discussion 1: The story

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented in detail the findings to each of the sections of Stage 1 of my research. This chapter discusses the main themes that I elaborated by taking a step back from the minutiae of each of the findings and reading them as a whole through a CRT lens. Although some themes were more evident in one section, indices of the same theme could be found in others. This is one of the advantages of using a multi-pronged approach: the multiple tools used for gathering data enable the researcher to confirm or challenge trends that appear in one section by reviewing the other sections.

Four major themes were identified:

1. The overwhelming majority of participants held limited knowledges—both official and particularly counter—of Canadian history.
2. Racism was not seen as constitutive of Canadian history by a majority of participants.
3. The majority of participants viewed knowledge as neutral and in turn held a depoliticized approach to teaching history.
4. Despite some noted divergences between the white and racialized participants' understandings of their racial identities, a majority of participants did not immediately see the influence of their identities on their understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching it.

Following is a discussion of the different themes, which, taken together, work to answer the research questions: '*What are Ontario history teacher candidates' understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching Canadian history?*', and '*How are they influenced by their identities?*'

In Section 6.2 I begin by discussing the teacher candidates' limited knowledges, noting the resulting 'misrecognition' and racist exclusions. Section 6.3 then engages in a discussion of how racism was not seen as constitutive of Canadian history, noting the multifarious means through which participants denied the integral ways that racism has shaped the formation and maintenance of the Canadian nation state. In Section 6.4 I engage with the teacher candidates' depoliticized view of history education, as well as their perceived roles, describing how this stance is in itself political (as is the

inaction that accompanies it). Finally, in Section 6.5 I first describe the ‘depersonalizing’ that a majority of participants engaged in, and how such an approach serves to negate the complicity of all teachers in the histories that are excluded and likewise included. I attend to the divergent ways that identities were approached by both white and by racialized teacher candidates, reminding us that ‘race is always there’.

The chapter concludes with a summary that considers what the themes mean for a history for ‘unlearning racism’. It also points to the exceptions to these themes, setting the stage for the chapter that follows.

## **6.2 Limited knowledges**

Upon close analysis of the different sections of the findings, the most glaring theme identified among a majority of participants was the relatively limited knowledges of Canadian history—both official but in particular counter.

The fairly rudimentary, surface level layout of most maps, including a scattering of random events from the master narrative indicates that the majority of participants held only very basic knowledges of Canadian history.

The ways in which the content was presented is further evidence of a partial, and indeed distorted, knowledge. Despite the majority of maps including some Indigenous content, it was for the most part limited to the hardships and victimization experienced by Indigenous peoples. Participants predominantly demonstrated little to no knowledge of the agency of Indigenous peoples.

The portrayal of Indigenous peoples as ‘acted upon’ is not unique to my inquiry, many researchers pointing out how the ways Indigenous peoples are commonly cast serve to undercut their strength, resilience and contributions. O’Connor (1994, cited in Levstik and Barton, 2004: 168) found that when tasked with writing narratives of US history, 24 US college students portrayed Native Americans ‘as the recipients or victims of actions undertaken by others’. More recently, Dion’s (2009) research on how to alter the consciousness of non-Indigenous peoples through education found that non-



Indigenous teachers and students' understandings of Indigenous peoples are caught up in notions of victimhood.

While acknowledging and confronting the attempted systemic erasure and genocide of Indigenous cultures is a critical part of any history class that seeks to engage in an honest discussion about Canada's settler-colonial history and its legacy, presenting Indigenous peoples and history only through this 'single story' (Adiche, 2009) denies the agency and resilience of Indigenous peoples. Indeed, as the commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) underscored throughout their 5-year mandate, the residential schooling experience—arguably the most acute example of the attempted genocide of Indigenous culture and peoples—is itself a story of resilience, one of survivors. The maps in this study for the most part did not speak to this story.

Further missing from the maps were the longstanding and ongoing contributions of Indigenous peoples to Canada. This gap was also identified by the TRC (2015: 331), the Calls to Action not only stressing the importance of developing curricula on the history and legacy of residential schools (Call #63); but also emphasizing that governments, in consultation and collaboration with Survivors, Aboriginal peoples, and educators, make curriculum on 'Aboriginal peoples' historical and contemporary contributions to Canada a mandatory education requirement for Kindergarten to Grade Twelve students' (Call #62).

Equally striking were the low comfort levels that participants expressed *vis-à-vis* teaching Indigenous history, with almost half of them pointing to Indigenous history as the area they had the lowest confidence in. Consequently, while the strong presence of Indigenous content on the maps suggested an awareness of the significance of Indigenous history, the skewed ways in which Indigenous actors were presented—predominantly as victims—combined with participants' stated lack of confidence teaching Indigenous content suggested its inclusion would a) not necessarily extend to their teaching; and if it did, b) enact a violence through its 'misrecognition' (Taylor, 1992).

The concept of ‘misrecognition’ was popularized by Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor (1992) who in his famous ‘Politics of Recognition’ explains how our identities are in part shaped by the *recognition* of others, oftentimes the *misrecognition* of others. As he writes:

And so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being. (Taylor, 1992: 25)

Applying the politics of recognition to the maps, the depiction of Indigenous peoples as victims or peripheral can serve to inflict harm on Indigenous students. It should be noted that I am cognizant of the criticism that has been levelled against Taylor’s (1992) liberal ‘politics of recognition’, Dene scholar Glen Coulthard (2006: 10) explaining that it wrongly implies that by ‘institutionalizing a liberal regime of mutual recognition we can somehow transcend the breadth of power at play in colonial systems of domination’. Put otherwise, positive representations of Indigenous actors and history in the classroom do not work to restructure ‘the racist capitalist economy and the colonial state’ (Coulthard, 2007: 11).

Nevertheless, in the face of ample research that shows the need for positive representations of students’ cultures (i.e. recognition), I am hesitant to completely dismiss the utility of the notion of recognition. As Kanu’s (2002: 114) research on First Nations students’ perspectives of their learning highlights, positive representations are needed for Aboriginal students to ‘validate their identity, motivate them to participate more in class, and help them develop pride in their own culture and people’. James and Turner’s (2017) study on the schooling of Black students also underscores the importance of students seeing themselves positively reflected in the curriculum, their study participants repeatedly pointing to the value of this reflection, not only for students but also for their parents.

Long before Taylor (1992) coined the concept of ‘misrecognition’, anti-colonial writer Franz Fanon (1967) spoke of the psychosocial repercussions of colonialism, and the ‘white gaze’ on colonized peoples. In his seminal text *Black Skin, White Masks* he

explained how in contexts of domination, colonialism is maintained by ‘not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also human attitudes towards those conditions’ (Fanon, 1967: 62). Put differently, colonialism operates through both the objective (structural relations) and the subjective (the white gaze).

Coulthard (2007: 10) explains that,

With respect to the subjective dimension, [Black Skin, White Masks] painstakingly outlines the multiple ways in which those “attitudes” conducive to colonial rule are cultivated amongst the colonized through the unequal exchange of institutionalized and interpersonal patterns of recognition between the colonial society and the indigenous population. Fanon’s work reveals how, over time, colonized populations tend to internalize the derogatory images imposed on them by their colonial “masters.” As a result of this process, these images, along with the structural relations with which they are entwined, come to be recognized or endured as more or less natural.

According to Fanon (1967: 4) if one is to wage a war on colonialism, both the subjective and the objective must be attacked and therefore, addressed as such in the classroom and beyond.

The maps’ presentations of Indigenous peoples as ‘acted upon’ or ‘supporting actors’ stood in stark contrast to the presentation of white male politicians as shapers and builders of the nation. Indeed, the more coercive agendas of these state actors were conspicuously ignored. For example, both John A. Macdonald and Pierre Trudeau respectively created policies (e.g. the Indian Act; the White Paper) that were aimed at the cultural genocide of Indigenous peoples yet no mention was made of them and instead, the portrayals conferred on Macdonald a ‘father of the nation’ status while Trudeau was cast as the architect behind multiculturalism.

Leonardo (2009: 88) has written at length about the strategic presence and absence of whites from national memory, arguing:

...[T]here is no paucity of representation of whites as its creator. From civil society, to science, to art, whites represent the...best that a culture has produced. In other words, white

imprint is everywhere. However, when it concerns domination, whites suddenly disappear, as if history were purely a positive sense of contribution. Their previous omnipresence becomes a position of nowhere, a certain politics of undetectability.

Just as the presentation of the Indigenous content enacted a ‘misrecognition’ on Indigenous peoples, so too did the one-sided presentation of white actors work to misrepresent them uniquely as the builders and shapers of Canada, with no account of their less salubrious programs. While racism cannot and should not be restricted to individual agency, many of the white actors included on the maps were the de facto architects behind structures and systems that worked to further subjugate certain groups. As I will continue to discuss further down, such omissions give rise to what Bonilla-Silva (2003) has termed ‘a racism without racists’, where racism is seen to be only experienced by the victims.

Participants also demonstrated a very limited knowledge of other racialized actors in Canadian history, the few exceptions being the presentation of victims (e.g. the Chinese Head Tax, Japanese Internment). Black actors were missing on all but two maps, despite the fact that, as Carr (2008: 7) notes, ‘Blacks have formed an important part of the Canadian identity from the outset of the European founding of Canada’. Indeed, their presence dates back as far as the earliest explorers, with Mathieu de Costa, a Black man from the Caribbean, accompanying Samuel de Champlain and serving as an interpreter with the Micmac in 1634. Yet, Carr (2008: 7) continues, because ‘we don’t want black people to have been part of our foundation/founding story, we erase the presence of actors like Mathieu de Costa’.

The omission of Viola Desmond, who refused to leave a whites-only section in a movie theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia in 1946—an act that contributed to eventual desegregation in Canada in 1954 and predated Rosa Parks’ own act of defiance by nearly ten years—is particularly telling. While Parks is celebrated and well-known across America, Desmond’s absence on teacher candidates’ maps indicates the very different, indeed peripheral, place that is afforded to Black leaders in Canadian history.

The timeline activity shed further light on participants' limited counter knowledge: Most events that either evoked state racism/coercion or minority resilience were marked as 'never heard of' or only 'have heard of'. The activity revealed as well how ill-prepared participants were to teach 'official' Canadian history. Only four events (the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada Declares War on Nazi Germany, Victory at Vimy Ridge and the Great Depression)—all key components of the country's master narrative—were selected by a majority of participants as 'know in detail'.

The knowledge gaps that I observed across the different sections of the questionnaire were confirmed in the interviews. In explaining their maps and admittedly low levels of confidence as well as their knowledge of the events on the timeline, many of the participants were quite candid about their lack of expertise. As Participant #84 explained matter-of-factly: 'Unfortunately, when it comes to Canadian history, it's just not really my forte'. As we have seen, the fact that they had only taken the bare minimum of Canadian history courses required to apply to teacher education programs was an often-cited reason.

It should be noted that the limited subject-matter knowledge that many of my participants displayed is not unique to my research. A number of other studies and ample anecdotal evidence point to the lack of historical expertise among history teacher candidates. Lévesque and Zanazanian's (2015) pan-Canadian study found that few of their participants had extensive knowledge of Canadian history, a majority of them indicating that they had taken fewer than four Canadian history courses in university. Den Heyer and Abbott (2011) also observed the limited expertise of their teacher candidates, while Fragnoli (2005) described her history teacher candidates as nervous about their scant content knowledge.

Scholars have long pointed out how ill-prepared white teacher candidates are to teach Indigenous history. Kanu's (2005, 2011) research exploring teachers' views on infusing the curriculum with Indigenous content found that non-Indigenous teachers felt ill-prepared, stating a lack of knowledge and confidence teaching Indigenous history. Nardozi *et al.* (2014) similarly found teacher candidates lacked the knowledge of Indigenous histories and worldviews to be able to teach culturally relevant and responsive pedagogies.

While the exclusion of certain histories from one's teaching due to a lack of knowledge as opposed to a deliberate decision may appear to some as less flagrant a 'foul', the outcomes remain the same. Indeed, as Goldberg (1993) argues, racism is less about intentions and more about effects. In both cases the histories that are excluded are relegated to the periphery of 'the story of Canada', while those teachers include are seen as central. In turn, this serves to designate certain groups as 'core' to the story of Canada, making them according to Mackey (2002) 'Canadian-Canadians' which, as Schick (2014) argues, is code for 'white Canadians'. The groups whose histories are not included are reminded that their membership in the Canadian community is probationary at best.

Some scholars, however, reject the 'defence through ignorance', arguing that it can falsely serve to absolve teachers of their responsibility. It is critical to distinguish between what teachers do not know and what they 'refuse to know' (Dion, 2009: 56). While many teachers' own history education was filled with silences (Levstik, 2000), allowing these silences in their own knowledge to persist is a choice they make. Indeed, some research has shown how the 'lack of knowledge' argument can be exploited by teachers as an excuse to justify their unwillingness to teach certain histories. As Dion's (2007) work with teachers and teacher candidates highlights, many use a 'lack of knowledge' to reject any responsibility to teach Indigenous perspectives. Through the adoption of what she terms the 'Perfect Stranger' identity, they defend their position by the fact that they know nothing about Indigenous people and have no relationship with them. Trouillot (1995: xix) warns against such claims of innocence, arguing that 'naivety is often an excuse for those who exercise power'.

### **6.3 Racism not seen as constitutive of Canadian history or present**

The second theme identified by my analysis of the study findings was that racism, by and large, was not seen as constitutive of Canadian history. This was initially observed when studying participants' maps, where the word 'racism' only appeared on one out of the 46 maps. In places where there was some acknowledgement of racism, it was cloaked in euphemisms (e.g. 'moments in which Canada acted poorly', 'mistreatment', 'mistakes') that served to both minimize its impact and temporalize its effects.

The rejection of the significance of racism to Canada's history became further apparent during the analysis of participants' timeline selections of the most important events for students to learn, where events that evoked state racism were all but excluded from the top ten. The various justifications that participants provided to justify their exclusions of certain events— from being 'too specific', to being 'less relevant when it comes to the big picture', to 'they didn't affect enough people's lives in Canada', to 'one-offs'— indicated that most participants did not consider racism as part of the fabric of Canadian society.

Levstik's (2000) teachers and teacher candidates employed similar rationalizations to justify their exclusion of racist histories from their teaching, many explaining that they did not support the overall story of America.

While it became clear that many participants saw racist and racialized histories as inconsequential to the overall story of Canada, the fact that a number expressed disbelief at the very existence of certain histories described on the timeline suggested that, for some, racism was not just unimportant, but in fact antithetical to that story. As Participant #61 recounted his horror reading about the M.S. St. Louis, a ship carrying refugees during the Second World War that was rejected by Canadian port authorities, 'that's not the Canada I know'. According to Lund (2006: 215), shock at the existence of racism in Canada 'reveal[s] the strength of a national desire to think of Canada as a welcoming country that stands for the accepting of differences'.

In the few instances where participants conceded a place for racism in Canadian history, (just like the Ontario Canadian History textbooks that Montgomery [2008] observed had started acknowledging racisms—albeit inadequately), it was relegated to the past, its negative effects sealed off. As Participant #83 explained:

Things like racism, and primarily, as a history teacher you need to teach your students that it was the viewpoint of people hundreds of years ago or decades ago and it doesn't reflect Canadian society today.

Cutrara (2009: 97-98) cautions that, 'emphasizing the "pastness of the past" negates a discussion about the legacy of racism in nation building and the long-term effects it

has on students inside and outside the classroom'. Miles (2018) echoes Cutrara's concerns with what he terms 'temporality'—the tendency of people to discuss racism as a thing of the past—noting that it 'works to deny or silence both broader historical narratives and ongoing injustices'. Montgomery (2008: 90) takes this further, arguing that beyond silencing ongoing injustices, containing racism to the past allows for a self-congratulatory narrative of 'we are better than our former selves' to emerge.

While Participant #83's statement conveyed this 'temporality', in attributing racism to the 'viewpoint of people' she also cast racism as an individual attitudinal issue, denying its deep embeddedness in the architecture of settler-colonial societies.

What was further striking in the way that racism was referred to by many participants was that on the whole, racism was not regarded as a system that while marginalizing certain groups, works to benefits others. Thus, I noted a 'convenient absence' of certain actors from certain storylines. Indeed, in most instances where racism was actually acknowledged—albeit euphemistically—there was no mention of the 'doer'.

Expressions such as 'Treatment of racial/ethnic minorities'; 'Treatment of Chinese immigrants'; 'Treatment of Indigenous peoples'; and statements like 'Indigenous peoples weren't treated overly nicely' not only serve to minimize the brutality experienced by these groups at the hands of successive governments, but also designate these groups as victims with no agency. We must ask, 'treatment by whom?'

While addressing racism is often done through the language of reparations for those who have suffered from it, according to the late novelist Toni Morrison (1993: 11), we can only truly address racism if we target both those who experience it, and 'those who perpetuate it'. Only focussing on those who are on the receiving end of racism promotes the myth that white domination is the result of 'meritocracy and not violence' (Schick and St. Denis, 2005: 303). It allows for the fact that many continue to benefit from it being sidestepped.

Notably, whereas teacher candidates left the perpetrators and in turn beneficiaries of racism unnamed (evoking what Bonilla-Silva (2003) has called 'a racism without racists'), they credited the same individuals—namely state actors—with resolution or



redress of this racism. Indeed, it was ‘the creation of multiculturalism by P.E. Trudeau’ that was praised by many for having ‘changed the way people viewed minorities’.

The narrative that Trudeau *created* multiculturalism through his compassionate extension of rights to groups that had previously been denied them overlooks the fact that multiculturalism was a reality long before he was willing to recognize it. Indeed, the extension of rights to previously excluded groups was not the result of the benevolence of the state; rather, it was brought about by the political struggles of marginalized groups (Thobani, 2007: 78). According to Ng (1995, cited in Chatterjee, Mucina and Tam, 2012: 128) multiculturalism was a way to ‘manage the reality that Canada could no longer be the imagined white nation’.

Assigning the redress of racism to the state thus ‘reinforces the innocence of whiteness’ (Leonardo, 2004: 138). As Montgomery (2008: 92-93) notes, crediting state apparatuses with ‘championing human rights and racial equality...serves to tie the idea of anti-racism to the state’, which in turn implies a death of racism. Taken one step further, it precludes the need for anti-racism.

## **6.4 Depoliticized view of history education and history teachers**

The third theme that was identified across the research was that most participants held a depoliticized view of history education and their role as history teachers. This was most obviously illustrated through participants’ justifications of their selection of the most important events on the timelines, where they attributed their strong knowledge of certain events to the fact that they had been taught in school and their weaker knowledge of others to the fact that they had not been taught in school. Put simply, if they knew the event, it must be worth knowing. In contrast, if they did not know it, it was likely unimportant.

As Participant #19 reasoned:

Back to the whole idea of not learning about it in a good breadth or having a good breadth of knowledge. Um, these topics or subjects, some of them I didn’t even know what they were. They were never taught. So, that’s probably why I felt

they were least important. That's kind of egotistical now that I think about it and say it out loud. But I guess that's alright, it's the truth. So, I guess, like, I don't know what the Yonge Street Uprising is. So, if I don't know about it, do my students have to know about it? That's kind of my rationale there. It's very egotistic [sic], but yeah.

The blind assumption that what one learned is important and consequently what one did not learn is unimportant is dangerous. It assumes a neutral history curriculum, and indeed, a neutral history teacher, overlooking the fact that the history students learn is determined by the priorities of a number of stakeholders—provincial and territorial systems, curriculum makers, administrators, teachers. Participant #19, and indeed the majority of participants, appeared unaware that 'history is about the past, but it is also about what one group decides is significant about the past for us all to learn in public school' (den Heyer, 2014: 183).

The view of the curriculum as neutral hinges on an 'apolitical and non-ideological assumption about the nature and substance of knowledge' (Salinas and Blevins, 2013: 8). As CRT scholars have shown, however, knowledge is neither neutral nor ahistorical. Quite the opposite, what counts as knowledge 'worth knowing' (Razack et al., 2010: 10) is that which serves to maintain the power and privilege of the dominant group (Love, 2004: 229).

The presumptive universality and neutrality of dominant knowledge is what enables the master narrative of Canadian history to be seen not as 'a story' but owing to its long-unquestioned dominance, 'the story'. The literature reviewed in the second and third chapters of this dissertation showed the consequences of believing in one story, Levstik (2000) warning how this leaves both students and teachers open to myth and manipulation, while (Shemilt, 2000: 100) cautions that it works to 'reinforce simple truths and even simpler hatreds'.

A depoliticized view of history education was further illustrated by the participants' views on the purpose of history education. Only five of the 46 participants listed a purpose that was social justice oriented, while seven connected the purpose to teaching students how to think critically. The majority instead demonstrated a depoliticized

understanding of teaching, seeing the purpose of history education as either ‘to help students understand the present’ or ‘to show both sides’.

As the previous findings chapter showed, ‘helping students understand the present’ came up across all sections of the questionnaire. Many participants stipulated that the content of their maps allowed students to understand the present, as well as justifying their selection of the top ten most important events on the timeline by the fact that they ‘helped students understand the present’. The ambiguity of the statement (i.e. what ‘present’?) revealed an apolitical view. Only Participant #91, echoing critical scholars (see, for example Levstik, 2000; Dei, 2001; St. Denis and Schick, 2005; Pon, Gosine and Philips, 2011) who argue that one can only understand and make sense of current inequalities if one looks to the history of colonialism, violence and white supremacy, suggested how history could help comprehend present-day inequalities.

The second most cited purpose of history education (‘to show both sides’), besides being the top rationale for the selection of the ten most important timeline events, also communicated an apolitical ‘additive approach’ (Banks, 1988). Further evidence of participants embracing this approach was found in the challenges they foresaw, ‘being inclusive of all histories’ suggesting a preoccupation with how to include more content; and in the reasons for becoming a history teacher, where ‘to teach multiple perspectives’ was the second most cited reason, further indicating a commitment to adding more content.

Adding more content, especially of racist and racialized histories, may initially appear as a step in the right direction. However, when unaccompanied by an ‘[interrogation] of the educational framework within which the interventions are being introduced’ it amounts to little more than ‘superficial attempts to address the needs of Black [and other marginalized] students’ (Howard, 2014: 513). Furthermore, including ‘the bad’ alongside ‘the good’ presents racism as a few bad missteps (the ‘negatives’), as opposed to a concerted, sophisticated and ongoing project (Goldberg, 2002).

Stanley (2006: 40) points out the limitations of adding more narratives, arguing that while they may ‘create spaces that allow alternative representations, they are unlikely to be of sufficient weight to counter the normalizing of grand narrative’. Writing about

the Museum of Civilization's (now Museum of History) permanent exhibits that provide a 'walkthrough of Canadian history', he explains how 'grafting a Chinese-or an African-Canadian chapter onto the overall grand narrative does not fundamentally alter its terms' (Stanley, 2006: 40).

The way participants spoke of these other histories illustrated that though they thought them important to add, they remained tangential to the 'real story' of Canada. As Participant #20 explained during the interview in talking about different narratives of Canadian history, 'You'll learn more about history if you learn through the narrative of the English perspective'. Another participant (#72), while explaining that he would happily teach other narratives, added the caveat, 'but you still want to teach them the facts'. Thus, while there was a concession that there are multiple narratives, the master narrative was still regarded as the closest thing to the truth.

Simply adding more content does little to dismantle a hegemonic structure. The participants' maps' seemingly innocent linear layout suggests a Eurocentric view of time and reality, where history is presented as an orderly progression with a clear beginning and end. Yet, as we have seen, such a concept is incompatible with Indigenous views and understandings of time and reality (Marker, 2011).

According to Indigenous scholar Michael Marker (2011: 100), 'History, from an indigenous point of view...is not a linear progression of people and ideas in time, but rather a spiralling of events and themes that appear and reappear within circles of seasons and that are identified in oral traditions'. Decolonizing curriculum for Indigenous students and schools means more than simply adding Indigenous content; teachers, he argues, must embrace Indigenous approaches to history that are rooted in circular understandings of time.

In summary, adding more content into the existing narrative structures as opposed to dismantling those very structures that serve as the foundation for white knowledge being regarded as 'truth' does very little but further the 'feel-good happiness' that is demanded of multiculturalism (Ahmed, 2007), while preventing a radical restructuring of schooling (Miles, 2019: 254).

Participants' answers to my question of whether history teaching is political confirmed a depoliticized view of history education. As indicated in the previous chapter, not insignificantly, the question was misinterpreted by many participants. While I initially took this as a sign that my question was unclear and reformulated it, nearly half of the interview participants still did not interpret the question correctly. Instead, they provided answers that suggested very apolitical understandings.

A depoliticized view of their own role became evident during the interviews. In discussing the purpose, challenges and reasons for teaching history, many participants indicated an aversion to sharing their own perspectives at the risk of being biased. Instead, they were looking for objectivity: From 'providing an unbiased opinion', to 'presenting an objective perspective', to 'painting a depiction of history from an objective view', many appeared to assume the role of the 'technician teacher' (Villegas and Lucas, 2002a) whose job is to impart knowledge.

The depoliticized approach that characterized the majority of the participants can be at least partly understood when one considers the demands placed on them. The pressures that new teachers face have been widely documented (see, for example Beaton, 2014; Mason, 2016). Beginning teachers are encouraged to adopt a prescribed role 'which entails suppressing the personal voice in favour of an objective and distanced voice' (Cooper and Olsen, 1996: 87). Although the pressures they face extend across racial lines, as Wilkins and Lall (2011) observe, 'the added dimension of race may well exacerbate the desire to remain below the parapet [...]'. Howard (2014: 514) confirms this, noting that speaking out for many Black educators amounts to gambling with one's career.

Nevertheless, as Okolie (2005: 247) writes, 'The reality is that knowledge production and dissemination are value-laden and political [...] Choosing to be neutral in an inequitable society is a political position in support of the dominant'. Hopson (2013: 50) extends Okolie's (2005) argument to education, stating that teachers cannot lay claim to a neutral position: inaction supports the dominant group.

Teachers' inaction, far from affording them neutrality as many of my participants appeared to believe, makes them colluders in a knowledge system that continues to

render certain bodies invisible. As Giroux (2019) observes, ‘the notion that education is neutral is one way of people who have dominant power making it invisible’.

## 6.5 (De)personalizing history

The final theme—what I refer to broadly as ‘depersonalizing history’—is in its shared desire of a neutral vantage point closely connected to and indeed overlapping with the depoliticizing discussed above. This depersonalization was initially identified through the analysis of participants’ rationales for their maps, where only a few pointed out a personal connection to the content they had included. It was corroborated by the even smaller number of participants who identified a personal connection to the events they had selected on their timelines or in their response to the short answer questions.

However, when asked during the interviews to describe their identities and to then consider how these might influence their answers and views of Canadian history, depersonalizing became, more accurately, ‘deracializing’. Importantly, there were different gradations—a) the outright denial of a racial identity; b) the conceding of a racial identity but denial of its influence; c) the acceptance of a racial identity while pointing to the influence of other identities.

As the findings chapter reported, the white participants engaged in all three. While two did not speak of any racial identity, three conceded a white racial identity yet rejected its influence; and five acknowledged their white racial identity while citing other aspects of their identity as influencers on their historical identifications. Only one participant articulated her racial identity and its influence.

The ability to deny one’s racial identity emerges out of a view of whiteness as the absence of colour, which as Puwar (2004) notes enables one to take up an unmarked normative position. She explains that invisibility here becomes a position of power.

Similarly, although the acknowledgement of a white racial identity may at first appear less problematic than the claim to have no racial identity, or as Dyer (2000) puts it to be ‘just a person’, the refusal to acknowledge its influence furthers a view of whiteness as ‘raceless’. Effectively, what it says is ‘I am white, but it doesn’t matter’. Both allow whites to lay claim to the position of ‘neutral observer’.

Leonardo (2009) has argued convincingly that white people can no longer be reasonably assumed to be unaware of race structuring processes. Schick (2014: 98) agrees, stating that whites ‘use their knowledge in the participation of race relations in ways that confirm and make use of a structuring system of privilege’. Starting with the assumption that white people are aware of race structuring processes has two benefits: first, it renders white people accountable for their decisions, and second, it makes them ‘full participants in race relations’ (Leonardo, 2009: 108)—no longer can their inaction be excused as the product of naivety.

While acknowledging that different aspects of an individual’s identity are more salient at times than others (e.g. Participant #75’s sexual orientation may indeed have felt more important to him than his whiteness and maleness) the intersectional lens, however, impels us to recognize that his sexual orientation cannot be separated from his whiteness and maleness. Quite the opposite, his experience of subordination as a result of his sexual orientation is mediated by his dominant identity as a white male. Although in agreement with Hopson (2013: 145) that ‘we cannot expect educators to make [their race] central to their identities’, their race is ever there and influences and inflects their other identities.

This was perhaps most obvious in relation to their ethnic identities: my white participants’ ‘pigmentary passport of privilege’ (Johal, 2003: 273) enabled them to dip in and out of their ethnic identities. Participant #44, for example, easily abandoned a hyphenated identity drawn from her family’s history (‘I used to describe myself as German-Canadian’) in favour of a singular one (‘Now I just feel Canadian’). Others, who had previously not identified with their parents’ cultural background, such as Participant #84 (‘Before I was just Canadian’), now took on the hyphen (‘But now I feel Polish-Canadian’). White participants’ whiteness allowed them to claim full, unquestioned membership to Canada, while at the same time gave them the confidence to embrace their other ethnic identity with ease.

In contrast, my racialized participants for the most part referred to themselves in our interviews as hyphenated-Canadians (e.g. ‘Lebanese-Canadian’, ‘Indo-Canadian’, ‘West-Indian Canadian’). While not discounting the very likely possibility that they strongly identified with their other ethnic identity, all made it clear during the

interview that they felt ‘more Canadian than \_\_\_\_\_’, suggesting in turn that perhaps this embracing of a hyphenated identity was what was expected of them. Either way, their descriptions of their ethnic identities pre-empted the question that racialized Canadians cannot seem to escape: ‘But where are you really from?’

Similarly, while the white participants were able to avoid a racial identity, the fact that the racialized participants were all acutely aware of their racial identities was further indication of the hypervisibility that racialized people experience.

At the same time, only five of the nine racialized interview participants spoke to the influence of race on their historical identifications, the other four pointing to other aspects of their identities (e.g. social class, age, ethnicity). While similar to the white participants, these other identities might have been more prominent in influencing participants’ historical identifications; however, a review of the literature on racialized teachers suggests something else might be at play. Research on racialized teachers has shown that they are often accused of ‘having an agenda’, or of being ‘too emotional’, and ‘too personal’ (see, for example Smith and Lander, 2012). Quite the opposite from white teachers, whose whiteness enables them to claim the position of neutral arbiter, racialized teachers are often dismissed as being biased and angry. Referring to an experience she had with a teacher candidate, Dlamini (2002: 64) writes, ‘Just this past year, a student asked, “are you sure you are not saying this because you are angry at white people?” implying, of course, that I teach what I teach because I am an angry Black educator’. Consequently, it is possible that these racialized teacher candidates, in their dismissal of any influence of their racial identities were trying to avoid such indictments, especially when considering my position as a white researcher.

Another potential contributing factor to explaining why nearly half of the racialized and indeed, most of the white participants, struggled to explain how their identities shaped their understandings of Canadian history is that identity is not something that is normally explored in history methods courses. In fact, the existing research that documents the ways teacher candidates conceptualize their racial identities for the most part has been situated in what is variously termed the ‘social justice’, ‘school and society’, or ‘multicultural education’ foundations course.



While there has been a push over the past decade to bring a social justice perspective to teacher education programs, the implementation has largely been in the form of a stand-alone social justice course. Notwithstanding some of the important contributions this course has made, the delivery of social justice as one course as opposed to weaving it across the subject courses effectively communicates that social justice is separate and tangential to them. Thus, issues explored in the social justice course, from white privilege and diversity in the more liberal multicultural renderings, to identity, power and difference in the more radical ones, remain confined to those spaces. This disconnect is further evidenced by the plethora of studies that have found that teacher candidates want more ‘practical ways for inserting social justice into the classroom’. While I reject the notion that social justice is ‘a bag of tricks’, the anxiety many teacher candidates express is understandable when it is taught separately from the subject material. Examinations in the social justice course of teacher candidates’ social positioning in relation to power help to expose them to the idea that we are all socially located beings; however, not exploring social positioning in relation to their subject material (e.g. history) leads these individuals to adopt a false sense of neutrality. Many participants indicated that this was the first time they had ever been asked to think about their identity in relation to Canadian history.

The only subject courses that seem to have successfully incorporated these questions into their syllabus, as evidenced by a growing body of research and ample anecdotal evidence, are Indigenous ones. Their emphasis on relationships and the insistence that Indigenous history is everyone’s history has long engaged teacher candidates in acknowledging their relationship to Indigenous peoples. Participant #57 referred to this in our interview, noting ‘This is the first time I’ve ever been asked how my identity influences the way I see and interact with Canadian history. The only other place I did that was in my Indigenous history course this year’.

## **6.6 Chapter Summary**

In discussing the four main themes that were identified across the findings of Stage 1 of the research, this chapter aimed to answer the research questions regarding participants’ understandings of Canadian history and orientations to Canadian history education; and it addressed the influence of their identities.

The first theme described how a majority of participants lacked the knowledge to be able to teach a history that challenges colonial understandings of Indigenous histories, furthering misrecognition. Their knowledge of official history, while slightly stronger, was also fraught with silences, as demonstrated through one-dimensional depictions of state actors as the builders and shapers of Canada. Knowledge of racialized histories appeared all but missing as evidenced by participants' maps and lack of knowledge of the events on the timeline that spoke to racialized peoples' resilience, denying their long-standing presence in and contributions to Canada.

The second theme revealed a denial of the integral role of racism in Canada communicated in various ways that depicted a 'restricted' racism either by relegating it to the past or by talking of occasional 'missteps'. Racism was seen as a matter of attitude, only affecting victims, and belonging to a few mistakes of the past that Canada had overcome.

The third main theme identified was a depoliticized approach to history education, underscoring a view of knowledge as neutral and objective. This translated into depoliticized understandings among teacher candidates of their own roles as teachers, shown through their commitment to teaching an 'add-on' history. As was discussed at length, this approach, while perhaps driven by good intentions, serves to allow the master narrative and the very framework of schooling itself to go unchecked.

The fourth and final theme exposed the different gradations of denial surrounding the influence of participants' racial identities, presenting a number of possible reasons such as race evasive strategies, protective strategies, or the fact that the topic of identity tends not to be explored in history methods courses. While conceding that other identities may be at times more salient, the discussion showed how participants' racial identities inflected these other identities.

These themes paint a fairly discouraging picture, when returning to the major question of this study, 'How are teacher candidates positioned to take up a history for "unlearning racism"?' Nevertheless, as the next two chapters will highlight, what we have just explored is not the only story of my study that needs telling. Indeed, as the findings presented in Chapter 5 showed, there were some important exceptions. These

exceptions are the focus of the next chapter. When woven together, they present a very different story: one of hope.

## Chapter 7 Findings 2: The counterstory

### 7.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters presented what I would call ‘The story’ of my research, introducing in Chapter 5 the findings, and further examining them in Chapter 6 with a discussion of the main themes. Through the narratives of three of the teacher candidates, the following two chapters will present the counterstory.

As I explained in the Methodology chapter, this chapter was not originally intended: the second findings chapter was going to be dedicated to discussing the findings of Stage 2 of my study. The reason for the change of course was two-fold: First, as I analyzed the Stage 1 findings and started to discern individual themes, it became clear that three participants stood apart from the others across the board. While I initially thought to add a section at the end of the first findings chapter, titled ‘Outliers’, as I read through their data upon return to my studies after my two years of leave, I felt that they warranted more attention than an addendum to the overall findings would provide. It also became clear that the format of the findings chapter would not do justice to their stories—stories that challenged the meritocracy, so-called objectivity, colour-blindness as well as race neutrality and equal opportunity that the educational system lays claim to (Solorzano and Yosso, 2001: 472). As I considered solutions to my dilemma, I returned to the tenets of critical race theory, remembering the power of counterstorytelling: these three participants were the counterstory of my research, one that risked not being told if I did not veer off the path I had initially plotted out.

Solorzano and Yosso (2002: 26) explain that counterstorytelling, long used as a tool of critical race theory, serves to ‘[tell] the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told including people of color, women, gay, and the poor’. Hylton (2010: 342) adds, ‘Far from essentializing experiences and reducing the diversity of ethnic groups, CRT approaches to storytelling and counter-storytelling allow anti-racists to more fully understand complex lives and histories’.

The reader will notice that this chapter differs significantly from the first findings chapter in its layout and the muted presence of the researcher. Whereas in the first findings chapter I told the story of the findings, in this chapter, in the spirit of CRT, the three participants Robin, Liu Wei and Ana will tell their own stories.

You have already met these three history teacher candidates as Participant #57—Robin, Participant #85—Liu Wei, and Participant #91—Ana. The stories you will read not only shed light on three individuals who are at once committed and well-equipped to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’, but they also highlight the different forms of discrimination experienced by minority teachers, which in turn constrain their ability to do so.

Although this chapter privileges the voice of the research participant over the researcher, the researcher’s imprint on the data remains. Stories are mediated communicated events, and my own identity and political commitments had some influence on the data—both in terms of the questions I posed, what participants were willing to tell me, and what I selected to then highlight. This is unavoidable according to Fernandez (2002: 49) who reminds us that stories are always ‘constructed; there is no pure, complete story waiting out there to be recorded’.

The three narratives are organized slightly differently, as the conversations I had with Robin, Liu Wei and Ana went in different directions depending on their unique experiences. However, all three narratives touch on identity and issues of representation, their views on the silences in Canadian history, the purpose and challenges of being a history teacher from a marginalized background, the tensions between what they hoped to do and what they were able to do in their practica, and the enabling and indeed, disabling, role of other actors (e.g. parents, mentor teachers, teacher educators, colleagues) in bringing about a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

## 7.2 Robin

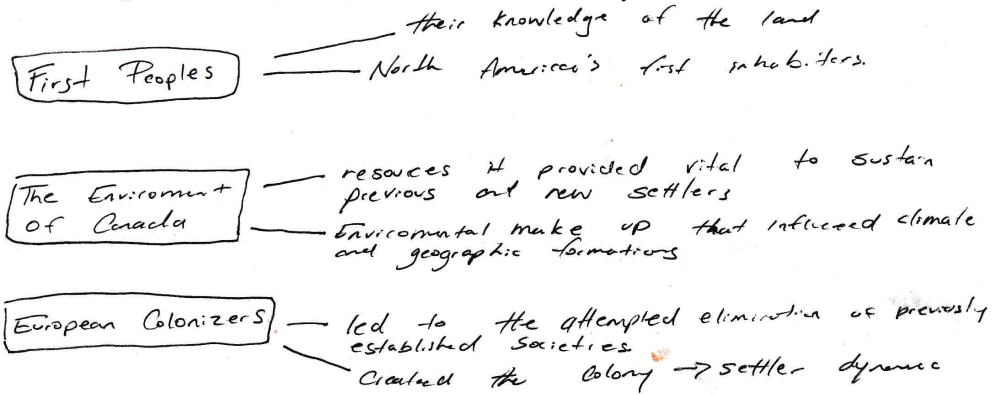


Survey # 57

### Survey: Ontario teacher candidates' understandings of and orientations to Canadian history

#### A. MAPPING ACTIVITY (15 minutes)

In the space below, please draw a diagram (using words or images or both) of what you consider to be the **most significant** events, themes, and actors in Canadian history.



#### a. Why did I choose these events, themes, and actors?

In the course I've taken so far and independent research I've done I've found these to be recurring themes throughout Canadian history. Some I don't think are focused on often enough (mainly the First Nations people of Canada) which has led to such uneducated ignorance both in government and throughout the country.

#### b. Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel **most** confident teaching:

1. The Colonized history of Canada.
2. \_\_\_\_\_

#### c. Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel **least** confident teaching:

1. First Peoples or First Nations people of Canada
2. \_\_\_\_\_

1/4

### 'On an outer edge'

Robin was a 22-year old queer, trans male who grew up in a large urban centre with two working parents. His two teachables were History and Music. While his father's side goes back many generations in Canada, his mother had immigrated to Canada from India when she was 12. In the questionnaire, Robin indicated that he was mixed-race, however, he added the caveat that he was 'white passing for the most part which has given me more privileges than those who aren't'.

When asked during the interview how he would describe himself, he emphasized three aspects of his identity:

I see myself as trans, I see myself as queer, and I see myself as mixed-race I would say. So, I think that's probably the biggest three identifiers I would resonate with.

When I asked him whether he felt his identity had influenced his answers in the questionnaire and more broadly his views of Canadian history, he explained how the silences surrounding his own identity spurred in him a commitment to question what else had been silenced:

Absolutely, I mean, in coming out as queer and trans, that was a whole other issue of it's not taught. I was, I guess 20, when I started questioning it, or 19 when I started questioning it, even though I knew when I was four years old, honestly, but, there were just no words for it until I was older. And then when that happened it just opened this floodgate of questioning: well what else have I not been taught? And realizing the injustices that happened to LGBTQ communities as well as, it's such an interesting and unfortunate parallel between the LBGTQ community and other marginalized, racialized groups of people, who have gone through their own oppressions, which are not comparable but relatable.

And then only recently kind of understanding my identity as someone who is mixed-race. That was always something that was very internalized, even for me, nothing that my parents did or anything like that...something that I think my mom has internalized as well. I always used to hate that I was Indian, and you know, even though, thankfully, in the winter you can't really tell, I'm pretty white passing, I believe. Even if I am more tanned in the summer, I think it just comes off as tanned.

And I think that that contributes to a lot of privileges in terms of, people treat you a lot differently when they can mark that you are from Canada or not, even though half of my family is Canadian.

I saw how people treated...there was another kid in my class in elementary school who was Indian, and people made fun of him. And I was so...unfortunately, I was, well I didn't do anything to stop it, but not that I could have known, but it was related to my internal shame of that.

I think that more recently I've been able to voice more and realize that that's something I'm entitled to feel, and that people do feel that, and like it's a weird feeling of... I recently spoke to someone actually. I went to this incredible camp for LGBTQ youth kids and I met someone who was trans and mixed-race and we had this incredible connection/moment, where we were like 'I feel that too. It's like you're on...being Trans and being mixed-race, you're kind of on this outer edge a lot of the time, I don't know if that makes sense. But you're not quite part of the binary.'

While it was immediately evident that Robin's identity had influenced his orientation to Canadian history, it also became clear that learning about Canadian colonial history had influenced his understanding of his own identity and his own family's relationship to a colonial history. This had, in turn, engendered a sense of empathy for Indigenous peoples in Canada. Explaining how he had only been introduced to the word 'decolonizing' in the past two or three years, he described how this had enabled him to better understand his own experience of having been raised by an Indian mother, yet not having felt any connection to his Indian heritage:

Robin: Understanding the word decolonizing in terms of even my own family. My mom is from India and she lived under British rule basically, she was taught by British nuns. And in my opinion—she doesn't even understand it—but was ripped of her culture. I don't know anything about... I know so little about my own culture which bugs me so much. You know, same European people but different parts of the world, but I can relate to that feeling of 'I don't know what traditions I had just because my family didn't necessarily hold onto that culture...'

I: Or is it maybe that they weren't able to hold onto it?



Robin: Or weren't able, yeah, absolutely. Which I think is more appropriate than didn't want to. It wasn't necessarily an easy choice; it was just kind of like this is what we need to do to fit in. To survive.

Robin was sharply attuned to the fact that certain aspects of his identity (e.g. gender, race, sexual orientation, class) had put him on this 'outer edge'. He was also keenly aware of how certain aspects of his identity placed him in the centre, referring to how his transition from female to male had brought with it access to certain privileges:

I'm gaining male privilege now, which is something that you have to, I'm going to actively combat, and be aware of, you know? Like, a lot of the time I'm thankful that I was socialized as a female because I have an idea of what it's like to feel, to be seen as that in society and understand that as a woman, when you are talking to people, you are so often not seen as smart or as valid, simply because you're a woman. It's awful that I know, but I guess good that I know that truth, but awful that it exists.

#### Recognition, language and rights

Although as indicated in the previous chapters a majority of the study participants had included Indigenous content on their maps, most engaged in what Taylor (1992) has referred to as 'misrecognition': Indigenous people were portrayed as victims and found themselves as supporting actors in a story that was not their own. Robin's map and its accompanying explanation, in contrast, showed a recognition of Indigenous peoples as actors and agents of their own story. As he explained in the interview:

The First Nations people, they were here hundreds of thousands of years before anyone else came here and they created such vivid, diverse cultures. I was reading an article for my [Aboriginal history] course recently and it was talking about how even though they have gone through this oppression and you know, disenfranchisement and everything, they have survived. We're at a point now where we need to rebuild and reconnect our relationship with Indigenous peoples, and this history is still relevant and continuing through to today.

Robin was also one of the only participants in the questionnaire to use the word 'colonizers'; reflecting on his choice, he explained:

I think the word ‘colonizer’ is important just because, um, we study a colonized history, we study history from the perspective of the colonizers. You don’t learn in depth about or from First Nations people, you learn about First Nations people from the eyes of the colonizers, you learn ‘Oh we met them, and traded with them and they helped us in these battles and then they kind of disappeared and we stopped paying attention to them.’ I prefer the language of colonizers, just because it recognizes that it wasn’t a good, you know great old time of explorers or even settlers. The term ‘explorers’ sounds great, sounds fun. The term ‘settlers’ sounds harmless.

Robin’s timeline selections further signaled a critical approach to Canadian history, with events that either related to rights, immigration, or Indigenous issues chosen as the most important ones for students to learn. In the written explanation of his selections he addressed the gaps that cloud the official history that is taught in schools:

I believe our history curriculum takes a bit too much time focussing on the World Wars and Canada’s participation in military plights. I graduated high school knowing next to nothing about the TRUE effects colonization had on Indigenous populations, one of Canada’s darkest parts is completely excluded, making our historical perspective through the eyes of the colonizers. I really think that needs to change.

In the interview Robin went into detail regarding a few of his choices. However, it was the reasoning behind his selection of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Bill of Rights, that backed up his critical approach. While most of the other participants who had selected these two events justified their inclusion by arguing that they showed students that Canada was a world leader in terms of human rights, for Robin, rather than inducing a sense of pride, they could serve a much more pragmatic purpose: they could help empower students by providing them with the knowledge of their rights. As he explained:

So, I selected right off the bat the Canadian Charter and the Bill of Rights. I just think everyone should know what their rights are in a country. You know every country outlines it differently and certain things like LGBT people knowing what their rights are, what their, like, places like the States where you can still be fired for being part of the LGBT community, or you can be denied living, being able to live somewhere just because of that. I think that definitely made me want to take

more note of what my exact rights are that I can whip out if anyone says anything that is so, that could be so damaging to someone's day to day living. So that I thought was really important. Because you generally talk about the fact that it happened, and stuff like that...They'll talk about who signed the Bill of rights, Charter of Rights, who did it, where it was done, stuff like why it's great, kind of thing, but not what they are.

I would just want students to be aware of what their rights are, and the kind of country they're living in and how these can affect them. And how they're allowed to feel not okay with them or you know to have kids dissect what they think, you know, I only started questioning our government system within the past 2-3 years right, and I really wish it was something I had looked at before.

### Curriculum as a space for questioning

Using the history classroom as a space for questioning things was a recurring theme with Robin. He repeatedly discussed his own recent 'political awakening', and how he hoped to spur a similar reaction in his own students:

So, like I said, over the past couple of years I've started realizing you know I don't like this about our country, or like our health care system for example, hoops people have to jump through to get basic you know life-saving or life-continuing healthcare. Specifically, with like trans people in so many provinces you know, getting things, lifesaving surgeries, that will help them continue on in life, are so hard to get, so hard to research, so hard to talk about.

So, say name changes: you have to have proof and letters and that affected me personally that I started to be like I don't like this. So, I think that kids should always, I'm not saying I will breed rebellious kids, or anything like that, but it's just kind of like you know, I would want them to analyze and understand that the government is not it. It is not what makes up Canada, it's people that make up Canada, right? It's your voices and just empowering kids to vote, or take action, stuff like that...it's somehow getting them to realize that they have the right to analyze and not be okay with aspects of their government or their culture, their history, because they're the ones that are next.

## Decolonizing the history curriculum

For Robin, getting students to challenge the status quo included having them challenge a history curriculum that privileges the Eurocentric perspective. He felt that this was the most difficult task that lay before him, initially attributing the scope of his endeavour to a lack of available resources for teachers to use. However, at the end of the year he amended his earlier statement, saying that he had realized it was not so much a lack of resources (having himself been exposed to a plethora of alternative perspectives/resources that year) but rather a narrow-minded understanding in academia of what is considered a ‘credible’ source. Oral histories and community histories, despite making inroads, he remarked, were still dismissed by many teachers as ‘unacademic hearsay’.

‘Stigma is a huge challenge’, he added. ‘There are a lot of teachers who are still against or ignore teaching Indigenous histories, which I find mind-boggling’. When I asked him to explain if he had encountered this stigma, he explained, ‘Yeah, so I was referring to the fact that I expressed interest in Aboriginal history and they [associate teachers] sluffed it off as humorous, or laughable. And it’s like, what? So, stigma is a huge issue’.

The task that lay ahead, according to Robin, involved not only challenging the colonized version of the curriculum by including more Indigenous content; he also specified that this content should not be *about* but critically, *from* the perspective of Indigenous peoples. Whereas many of the participants in the study had spoken about the importance of including more Indigenous content, he was one of a few to also call for a shift in perspective.

## Visibility

When I asked Robin in the first interview whether as a student he had felt represented in the Canadian history curriculum, his response was unequivocal: ‘Nope. Not at all. Never. Representation...that’s something that has never been part of what I’ve experienced in the curriculum’. He explained that the only representation he had experienced was on the internet, where he had been able to connect with other trans people. Not wanting his students to meet a similar state, he explained that he was committed to bringing that representation to his classrooms:

It's definitely something that I want to reach out to and you know I'm starting my practicum tomorrow so I'm constantly trying to figure out, I want to be someone who can be visible to kids as trans, as mixed-race. How to approach it, I don't know yet. But I think I can start with myself, with letting them know.

I didn't know coming out as trans what a trans adult looked like but going to this camp it was all adult volunteers and they were all queer or trans or whatever spectrum, and to see trans adults who were older, and had families and like you were like, 'Oh my god you're alive, you survived, you're living a successful life, you're normal.'

So, to give that to a kid would be huge. Even just the word to a kid would be huge, the word of, words like 'decolonizing', or 'Trans', or...just even giving that to a kid where they're like, 'Woah, what is that?' And to, when I first learnt about that kind of stuff I would stay up til 3 am everyday researching it, so that's how I would start I would say. By being visible.

Robin was aware of the risks inherent in being visible, especially being a visible trans teacher, adding:

I definitely think it's worrisome in terms of you hear that backlash of the sex ed curriculum and everything like that and it's like, some of the things that are being taught in that is who I am, and it's like...being erased from that...you feel an uncertainty of, 'am I safe to share my personal experience with kids?' when you hear of these parents who are blinded by ignorance and lack of education themselves? So, it's definitely a big journey or goal or thing but it would be something that would be very important to bring into teaching. I'm interested to see how I will do that.

### Invisibility

When we met at the end of the year, I asked Robin to tell me a bit about his experience in the program. He explained that his history methods course had provided him with lots of resources—including professional development opportunities—as well as exposed him to different perspectives and ways to teach them. The course instructor, he explained, had brought in a number of guest speakers from different communities, had fostered debate amongst the teacher candidates, and had created space for them to share some of their concerns. 'This class,' he wrote, 'has also helped me acknowledge

other marginalized groups within Canada that I think are incredibly important to teach (LGBTQ+ histories, women activism histories, Black/People of Colour histories)’. As a consequence, he had added to his reflections on the purpose of Canadian history education, ‘to have an increased focus on marginalized groups within Canada’.

At the same time, Robin attributed his heightened confidence in teaching Indigenous history to the ‘Aboriginal People in Canada’ course he had taken that year. It was the first time, he explained, that he had taken a history course where Indigenous history was not skimmed over, and where students had been called to reflect on their own relationship with colonialism and Indigenous peoples.

He recounted how in their first class the professor had had them acknowledge their relationship with colonialism in a journal. He had written about his mother’s experience of British colonialism in India and how he felt this had ripped him of his culture. This had set the tone for a year that had been spent learning more about Canada’s colonial history and his own family’s history with colonialism.

When I asked him whether he had had the opportunity to develop his confidence teaching Indigenous history during his practicum, however, his answer was negative:

No. Not at all. The only time, and of course I was only there once a week, but because of that the AT would usually let me know what they had learned that week or the class before. And I knew generally where he was in the units, and I can’t remember a time when he was doing a lesson on Aboriginal people. I know once there was a seminar where students talked about the issues that happened within Aboriginal Canadian communities, but I think that as much as peer teaching is important, it’s also a subject that needs to be handled by the teacher. As well as the students, but it should be solidified, like ‘Now that we’ve had this presentation, I’m going to give you more on this’.

As Robin talked about his practicum, it became clear that his associate teacher had not modelled any attempt to bring in more Indigenous content. Quite the opposite, he recalled what he felt were undertones of dismissal:

One time I had my Aboriginal history textbook with me in class and he [the AT] asked, ‘Whose book is that?’ and I said,

‘Oh it’s mine,’ and he said ‘Oh, I’m sorry’. And I was like, ‘What?’ This is a class I’m excited to take, I’ve chosen to take this. So...no, it was not really a space...

I also asked Robin whether he had been able to follow through on the commitment he had made in the first interview to ‘be a visible trans and mixed-race teacher to give students representation within adults they know’. In his response he spoke specifically to his identity as a trans teacher:

It hasn’t worked. I haven’t found a space to say it. And even now, even though I know it’s illogical, I feel like now if I said it, I would feel like I had been lying the whole time. And half of me feels like I’m lying to myself because I’m not being true to how I wanted to present. Not that I’m going to walk around and be like, ‘You know I’m...’, ‘Just in case you didn’t know...’ ‘Remember, I’m teaching this lesson as a trans-person.’ That’s not how you do it, obviously. But to be a visual representation, because there’s not. I only know five—I can count on a hand—adult trans people, none of which are in the education community. Even in that recent panel the Education department put on on LBGTQ teachers, they couldn’t get any trans teachers on the panel. And someone in the audience did express concern about that and asked, ‘Why aren’t there any trans teachers on this panel?’ And one of the organizers said, ‘We did ask trans teachers to come, but the stigma. They would be outing themselves, and they are fearful of outing themselves.’ And not to say that trans teachers have to be visible, they don’t have to be. But I would like to be.

Robin felt that the stigma of being a trans teacher was furthered by the reticence of educational institutions, especially ones that serve children, to address anything remotely related to sexuality:

The education system is...in the way that teachers are seen, is incredibly asexual, it’s incredibly monogamous based. So even if you’re in a relationship, it’s not as acceptable to talk about it as when you’re married. If you’re married, you can talk about your partner. So that’s not even grazing gender identity, sexuality. It’s even just, there’s barely a space to even talk about it. I’m not saying to go into detail with your students about sexuality, but there should be a space for you to be visible without it being considered perverted. There’s that stigma or stereotype that sexuality equals perversion. So, I think that, anyways, that’s a challenge in wanting to be a

visible trans teacher, how do you approach that? Which is something I want to study in my Master's.

I asked Robin whether his associate teacher had played a role in reinforcing this stigma and after a long pause, he explained:

Yeah, it never, I never knew how to approach it because I thought. Originally, I thought it would come up because my name was originally different on my police record check, it's my old name. So, I was worried that my teacher would come to me on the first day of practicum and think I was a Miss instead of a Mister, but he didn't, and he's never led on that he knows. And he's even said jokes where I'm like there's no way that he knows. So, it becomes this thing where now it's too late, I can't now because I feel like I've been lying that whole time. And it's internalized cause it's not that, it's just that I haven't had the space to safely do it, especially after some of the things the teacher said. But that was just a confirmation that the stigma that is in teachers, within teachers and within schools is very much alive.

Reviewing Robin's experience, we are reminded that some bodies are still considered as outsiders in the teaching profession and have few options: either 'blend in' or leave. Yet Robin's account of a recent meeting with a teacher candidate at the same school gives me some hope. The teacher candidate was gay and had recounted to Robin a very positive experience with supportive associate teachers who had linked him into the Gay Straight Students Alliance right at the beginning of his placement.

Perhaps this encounter had sparked a sense of hope in Robin as well, for despite not having felt safe to be who he was, Robin had in fact added being visible to his list of reasons for wanting to become a teacher. As he wrote in his end of year reflections to my questionnaire, 'I still have the same reasons for being a teacher but beyond what I've already said, I also want to be a visible trans teacher to give students representation within adults they know'.



# 7.3 Liu Wei

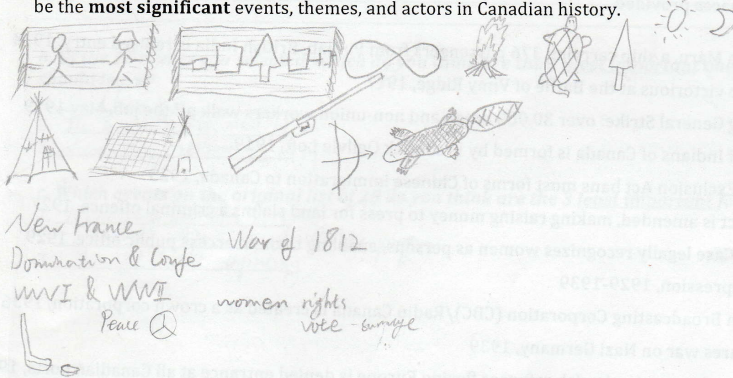
Survey # 35



## Survey: Ontario teacher candidates' understandings of and orientations to Canadian history

### A. MAPPING ACTIVITY (15 minutes)

In the space below, please draw a diagram (using words or images or both) of what you consider to be the **most significant** events, themes, and actors in Canadian history.



a. Why did I choose these events, themes, and actors?

Big part of the Canadian History is the history of Indigenous people  
 that's misinterpreted in purpose  
 changed by Ontario's Curriculum

b. Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel **most** confident teaching:

1. Native Studies
2. \_\_\_\_\_

c. Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel **least** confident teaching:

1. "Canadian" Studies — pop culture
2. \_\_\_\_\_

'He's one of us and he did it'

Liu Wei was a 23-year old Chinese-born Canadian who had immigrated to Canada when he was 15 and had just become a Canadian citizen a few months before our first interview. A double major in History and Native Studies, he described himself as middle-class, albeit the first generation in his family to attend university. Asked in the interview to talk about his identity, he explained:

I hold a very strong cultural sense of being Chinese. I still address myself as Chinese. Because I, in terms of culture I would say, I speak and I write Chinese languages. I say languages because we have 56 nations in China, it's like the Indigenous nations here in Canada. I speak 10 nations' languages. That was my specialty, like in China it was the history, culture, language. I came to the wrong country, I guess! And in terms of that, I know one of my responsibilities is to bring in, to integrate my knowledge, I don't want to lose it. And I'm proud of it. A lot of students here, like the CBCs [Canadian-Born Chinese] we call them, they don't know their heritage, their history.

He was quick to distinguish between his experience as a Chinese immigrant and that of Canadian-born Chinese, explaining that his encounters with racism as an immigrant and a non-native English speaker had instilled in him a sense of responsibility toward his fellow newcomer, immigrant and ESL students. Thus, he felt that he could be a mentor:

The difference between me and [Canadian-born Chinese] is that I've been through ESL, I've been through the language barrier, the cultural barrier, discrimination. I'm the victim of racism every day. So, I understand newcomers, the new immigrants, the language learner. I know their lack of confidence, I know their low self-esteem, I know how to deal with their problems and they can look up to me and say, 'He's one of us and he did it.'

I asked him whether he thought his identity influenced his answers in the questionnaire as well as more broadly his approach to and understanding of Canadian history and his response, similar to Robin's, evoked Bascia's (1996) concept of 'empathy through common experience':

I would say I feel connected to the Indigenous people of Canada because I feel the same, like they're oppressed, not expressed, not listened to, nobody want to talk to them and hear their story, they've been left out, relocated, and it's sort of... I'm not saying what my people have experienced is as bad, but I can feel them, I have this feeling where I can say 'I've been through similar exclusion, not as bad as that, or as deep' but I have an empathy and connection with them and I say, 'Yes, we should help each other'.

However, as evidenced by the content and presentation of his map and his timeline selections, where he centred Indigenous history similar to Robin's casting Indigenous peoples as agents of history, his commitment went beyond empathy. As it became clear, the history classroom according to Liu Wei was a space for action and above all else, reconciliation.

### Deconstructing what is 'truth'

Reconciliation, for Liu Wei, was in part about unearthing 'the real history' of Canada.

Asked what he understood by this concept, he responded:

Liu Wei: I wanted to learn the culture of this land with the study of history, and then I realized, wait a minute, it's not mentioning Indigenous. When you define the word Indigenous, Indigenous to this land, land what we now call Canada, it's the land of the First Nations, Métis and Inuit. We are all immigrants who came later. So that's why I say this is the real history of Canada, I would say, or at least a big chunk, part of Canada. And it's been buried, altered, fixed, I don't want to say murdered, but it's fixed, right? So, it's kind of like, I feel a strong responsibility to bringing truth for reconciliation, to expose those things.

I: And when you took Canadian history in Grade 10, were you aware that there were gaps, that it wasn't covering Indigenous history? Or was it when you showed up at university that you started to realize it was buried like you said?

Liu Wei: Indigenous, yes, I realized back in high school the curriculum only covered, well I'll start with Grade 10 history. It started with WW1 and then WW2, and then nothing. So, the very first time I get access to Indigenous groups, was in Grade 11 Religion course in high school where they talked about different religions. So, they talked about the rivers around Canada, all the different nations, but it was only very short.

Then they moved on to New Zealand, Australian Aborigines, and it's like we have those people here. They have been living here long enough and they developed, let's say the Haudenosaunee, that's a Confederacy, they developed a Confederacy thousands of years ago with their advanced teachings, cultures, music, art, paintings and stuff, and we just leave it alone and that's not reasonable. That's something we should teach our students.

I: And is that sort of what inspired you?

Liu Wei: Yeah, that's when I started looking into those things and asking where are those people? They're around us but the school curriculum, it always uses past tense, they're extinct, they're no longer here, it teaches it more like archaeology. And another thing is that I took the Canadian Citizenship Test<sup>21</sup>.

I: When did you take it?

Liu Wei: Early this year. And they have this booklet you have to read, you have to memorize, and they will question you and test you about it. And in the booklet, a very small paragraph, something short about the history of Native people. And it's all past tense.

I: And were there questions about that?

Liu Wei: They have 20 multiple choice you have to answer correctly, I think. I passed the test, there is different questions, but, not a lot on Indigenous people, more on the founding fathers, the 'important' people, the 'important' battles we won, about what it is to be a *Canadian* [his emphasis], Canadian of more the Western idea.

And that's one of the things, very interestingly I tell this story to a lot of people. After the test, they will mark it right away and if you pass the test you have to do an interview with an interviewer and she will ask you questions. I was pretty nervous about that because what if she asked me, 'What do you think about the Canadian Pacific Railway?' for example.

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<sup>21</sup> The Canadian Citizenship test is a test that all landed immigrants must take in order to gain full citizenship. The test includes questions on the history, culture and politics of Canada. Pashby, Ingram and Joshee (2014: 7) note that the Citizenship test and its accompanying handbook were developed as part of a neoconservative push that many civil right organizations have argued serve to 'favour a view of Canadian history that privileges the contributions of the great men of Canadian history at the expense of those of women and minorities'.

The normal, or ‘official answer’ is, ‘It’s the symbol of connection, the unity, the strong tie connecting the west to east’. But my answer would be, ‘You realize I come from Chinese background? You want me to talk about the workers? The Chinese workers who were killed?’ What if the question is like, ‘What do you think about Sir John A. Macdonald?’ Then my answer would be, ‘You realize I study Native studies and there’s a lot of things he did and he’s a very racist man in terms of white Canada?’ So, I was pretty nervous about that.

Fortunately, they didn’t ask any questions like that, but that should also make you think about how we immigrants come to Canada with no knowledge of what’s the culture of Canada at all and they give you this booklet, with very official answers and most of them... I’m a student, that’s why I had the opportunity to educate myself before I got access to the book, but a lot of other people, maybe elder people...who don’t have any resources, and this is from the government of Canada, immigration agency, this is the *truth* [his emphasis], they have to memorize it to pass it. You have to agree with it, to believe every single word that comes from the booklet to pass the test to become a Canadian, and so that will be their idea of Canada, and that’s also something I want to challenge and to address.

Liu Wei’s ‘real history of Canada’, as we can see above, runs counter to the master narrative he encountered in multiple sites and settings. Challenging the status quo—both inside the classroom as well as outside—would be his responsibility *vis-à-vis* his students and fellow immigrants.

#### ‘Human resources’

Like Robin, Liu Wei was not only committed to the teaching, but also demonstrated strong knowledge of Indigenous history. He attributed this to his other major, ‘Native Studies’, as well as to the access to resources—specifically human ones—he had had during his undergraduate studies and continued to have in his teacher education program:

I think it’s a lot to do with the professors here. I have access to a lot of Elders, knowledge holders. This is different from other schools. I don’t think they will have the tipi right inside their campus. We have in this land the Mississauga people, and on my first year they actually brought in an Elder that can talk to

us, sit inside the tipi in a group, did a smudging<sup>22</sup> and talk about a story.

And we also have the witnesses and survivors of the residential schools, which is often not told. Elders come in, I think every month there will be one and talk about these themes, that's the resources this university provides. They give you a different perspective; it's something you can't learn from reading a book, or reading a journal article, but actually sitting there and looking in the eyes of this person telling their story. And those are the knowledge and the first and primary resources you're getting. I feel like, getting personal, like if you actually feel their pain, their anger, and sometimes their depression, their fear, and you actually feel, develop this sympathy towards them and you want to do something about it. And you have these living people, and just like your grandma and grandpa they have suffered a lot and what can we do as an undergraduate student, when we graduate from university what can we do about it? That gives you the interest into looking into the events and asking what happened and creates a very personal, deep connection.

He similarly attributed his knowledge of multiple perspectives of Canadian history to 'human resources', in this case his classmates in the program, highlighting why diversity in the make-up of teacher education programs is so important. As he explained:

Liu Wei: Like in the seminar group with a community of people from different cultures, different worlds, like we have people from South America, we have a Métis, me, different people bring their ideas into it and we're really looking at issues through critical thinking and evidence, looking even into a painting, what do you see, what do I see?

I: So learning through the different perspectives your colleagues are bringing?

Liu Wei: Yeah, these guys are like, 'But look at this,' and I'm like, 'Oh neat, I've never thought of that'.

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<sup>22</sup> Smudging is a purification rite practiced by many Indigenous peoples that involves the burning of sacred medicines (sage, sweetgrass, cedar and tobacco). Smudges are often led by an elder. Although not specifically banned by the Indian Act as other Indigenous traditions such as the potlach and sun dance were, it was broadly outlawed. However, it remains practiced to this day.

Aware of the impact that ‘human resources’ had had on his learning as a student, Liu Wei planned to integrate them into his teaching. As he explained, he had recently invited his Métis colleague to give a presentation to his class on Métis culture, and in turn had offered himself to his colleagues as a guest-speaker who had gone through the immigration process and had had to learn English.

### Recognition

While Robin had found himself excluded from the curriculum (‘representation...that’s something that has never been part of what I’ve experienced in the curriculum’), Liu Wei’s experience had been mixed.

He remembered noticing as a student the lack of recognition of the contribution Chinese workers had made in building the Canadian Pacific Railroad; yet at the same time, he had also experienced what it felt like to be represented. It appears that it was this experience that inspired in him a commitment to build a culturally responsive classroom:

I learned, well, I would say it’s because I was in ESL, my high school have a history teacher who offers ESL class so that gave me opportunity to take on the course. Otherwise I would have never had the courage to take on, wow it’s a history course, it’s a difficult course. But in that class my teacher had one chapter on the genocide, the Nanjing massacre. I was like, ‘Right on buddy, this is my stuff and a lot of people don’t know that’. So, I felt like, ‘Okay, I have a teacher that acknowledge me, so I feel more interested to learning history, because I’m acknowledged, I’ve been recognized.’ So, I think if he can do that, I might as well, and I could introduce more of other people and other cultures in the classroom. And if you want to relate it to Canada there’s a lot of stories to tell.

Liu Wei was careful to add, however, that representation was not an easy task and had to be approached sensitively. This began by getting to know one’s students. While many of the other participants in the study readily acknowledged the influence students’ identities have on their orientations to Canadian history, Liu Wei was one of the few to emphasize the time and effort one had to spend on getting to know them. As he explained, the way a teacher implements representation is critical to ensuring that students feel ‘seen’ and acknowledged in the classroom; it would be equally

important to ensure, however, they were not seen as representative of all people from their background (McIntosh, 1990).

### Change, remember, reconciliation

Like Robin, Liu Wei looked above and beyond representation and recognition, seeing the history classroom as a space for change and his role as an agent thereof. To quote the reasons he provided for becoming a history teacher: 'Change, Remember, Reconciliation'. In our interview he elaborated on each one:

First thing is I want to make a change. Because I think there are a lot of problems going on here. Like I said back in high school, and even university here, we don't have a lot of, we only have one course offered in Asian history. And I'm surprised we actually even offer it. But I think that's something we have to do in terms of high school teaching. To teach our different kids, that, especially I'm really into the Native studies, the...what's the word for it, stereotypes. That is something we want to change. To address that is a teacher's duty, to challenge those stereotypes.

And also, to remember. Of course, to remember what we did. Not just to forget about it, or cover it, we have to remember it.

And reconciliation, it's going back to Native Studies. That's what we do after we remember and after we acknowledge what we did, what's the next step? Reconciliation. Action. It's very important.

### Confronting a lack of knowledge

At the end of the year when I met up with Liu Wei for a second time and asked him to tell me about his experience over the past few months, he first pointed to the lack of knowledge that he had witnessed among his Grade 7-8 students:

So, I realized that at least half of the students have zero knowledge regarding native studies, they still use 'Indian', like I'm asking questions such as on the topic of reserves, like, 'Do you guys know what a reserve is?' And they will be like, 'Yeah yeah yeah, last year I was in Cuba, our reserve it was a very nice hotel,' and I'm like 'No, that's a resort.' So, they have no idea what it is and sometimes it makes me a little bit sad because they have the perfect government answer to questions such as 'Why are many Indigenous peoples on reserves?'



Students will say something like ‘I think they did something bad and so the government put them there’. I ask them questions like, ‘By putting them on reserves, how did this let government take their land?’ and they’re like ‘Oh that never happened, the Canadian government would never do that’. They have very deep sort of practiced understandings of those things.

I asked Liu Wei whether he had encountered the same ignorance and misconceptions amongst the Grade 10 students he had taught, to which he responded:

They’re more open, but they seem to care less. They’re like ‘Why are we learning this? Like why we have to learn this culture?’ ‘What’s the purpose? It’s not really connected to our modern society or to us’.

He added that this lack of knowledge was not limited to the students he had engaged with during the year. Many of the teachers he had met through his practicum, although well-intentioned, were no better equipped to properly root existing inequalities in their historic causes:

Even the teachers. When I suggest topics like these, they’re like, ‘Oh yeah, we do talk about these things’. We talk about those issues but most of them are contemporary. It’s good, but they will bring up a case study on like water, so boiled water advisory, they will bring up issues like that, but in terms of asking why would that happen? The answer is found in our colonial history and everything, but they have no idea. Like, they bring up the issues, like equality, equity, like they talk about how there are missing and murdered Aboriginal women. It’s good to bring this up, however, their ability only extends this far, after explaining the issue, after explaining what happens, they sort of just close up and don’t explain how these are all rooted in history. They don’t go deep into what caused these things. So, teachers, they have the awareness, they think it’s important to introduce these issues starting young, and I’m glad they’re doing it. However, half of the job isn’t really being done.

Liu Wei was concerned that without grounding contemporary issues in Canada’s colonial history, they could be seen as exceptions, or blips—as many of his colleagues had described racist events—in an otherwise clean and relatively straightforward story of progress and development, when in fact missing and murdered Indigenous women

and girls were just one of the many symptoms of a long-standing racist, colonial national project.

'This is not China. Let me tell you how we do things here in Canada.'

As Liu Wei set out to counter ignorance and misconceptions, however, he came up against more hurdles in the form of his associate teachers (ATs). Although all teacher candidates in his program were expected to complete two placements in two different schools (one at the high school level and one at intermediate level), Liu Wei had in fact been in three schools as his second placement had been terminated two weeks in:

I: Do you feel comfortable about talking about why it got terminated?

Liu Wei: Yeah yeah, that's why I'm here right now. Basically, the AT is racist, just discriminated against me. Everyday. Even the comments. So, when you asked in the reflective questions how does my identity affect me becoming a history teacher it's like oh yeah, definitely.

I: Can you explain a bit more about what happened?

Liu Wei: I'll give you some examples, of like every day what happened. So, when I ask a question, let's say 'Can we, or I'm thinking of doing this, do you think I should introduce it this way?'

I: Was this for a history class?

Liu Wei: For math. So, I asked her if I should introduce my formula or let them create their own. She's like, 'Okay, okay, this is not China. Let me tell you how we do things here in Canada. We do this'. Everytime I asked questions, she's like 'Okay, I know you're from a different culture, but here, we do things differently. Like, this, this, this'.

I: How did you feel and react?

Liu Wei: I don't even know. I had to remain positive, I'd say okay, I'd keep listening. I didn't want to cause anything...at least to her, to her face. So, it was like everything I did was like that. She would start sentences by mentioning my culture, my nationality. She'd say like while I was explaining my

method or a graph, she'd say 'Can you speed up a little bit when you're explaining the process?' I'm like, 'Sure'. Even though I'm trying to explain to them clearly, so I want to slow down. The next period is like, 'I just want you to speed up a bit... Is that because you still think in Chinese and you have to translate into English? Is that why you have this delay and you speak a little bit slower than we expect you to? Like is that just the transition is delayed?' I didn't even know what to say. I was like, 'Okay, I will try my best to speed up a bit'.

And she was like 'So when you came to Canada, you were in ESL right? You don't speak the language before, right?' She was maybe trying to be concerned, but she was just way too ignorant. 'So, I don't understand, when you first came over you didn't speak English at all? I just think you're not taking my instructions clearly. Do you understand?' That's actually what she did, not continuously, but at one point she actually said in terms of, so she was explaining the instructions and to see if I was following, she was like 'Do you understand what I'm saying right now? Do you understand the things that come out of my mouth?' I said 'Yes, absolutely'. I'm a history major, I just wrote a 50-page paper on it. I received no resources, no help from her. Not constructive corrections or advice, just racist comments. Just no, again, so that's why I brought it up. And [the placement coordinator] said, 'This is a hostile environment, I'm sorry about that.'

When I brought it up to the education office, I narrowed it down to three issues: on being Chinese, on IEP [Individualized Education Plans] students, on the one native kid in the classroom. So, in my introduction on the first day, I said Native Studies is my major, I'm learning Anishinaabe, and this kid's eyes lit up and he was like 'Wow!' So, we started talking. It was a work period, so we weren't really doing anything, and he said, 'Oh Mr. LW, can we do something, are you gonna talk more about Indigenous people?' And I was like, 'Of course, I'm gonna try and integrate those things into history, I will integrate those learnings into all the subjects.'

The AT overheard, came to us and shut the kid down right away, like, 'No! We're done with Native studies; we've learned it all. We're not going back.' She shut the kid right down and then looked at me, like giving me the hint, don't do it. She's just shut the kid down in front of the whole class. And he was so excited, he was telling me 'I'm Native on my father's side, I'm a bear clan'. And I was asking him questions like 'Do you know what nation you're from?' and he was like,

'Not sure' so I said, 'No problem I will help you find out.' And it got shut down.

And then another girl who had a Japanese background, like half Japanese, I said to her, 'You know I speak Japanese too.' And she was so excited. But she was afraid to talk to me after that incident. The AT is like you don't talk to them...and it's like, you want me to teach them, but don't talk to them, don't relate to them, don't make connections...Okay. And the AT claimed she had already talked about Native Studies, but she did one demonstration in history class on the War of 1812, she finished the war in 10 minutes. I was like, okay, 1812, she's gonna do a demonstration for history, nice, I'll continue on it next class, I've got my notes...and then she finished it in 10 minutes.

I: Okay, so you brought it up with the School of Education, what happened next? Did they move you right away?

Liu Wei: It took a while. Like the second week on Thursday I started telling my friends I'm not going back, there's no way. I don't feel supported at all, and every day, everything I do is wrong. She's just mean; I don't want to go back. So, everybody was like, 'Go back Friday and then on the weekend we'll figure something out'. So, I went on Friday and it was the worst day ever. I was teaching a class, so the first ten minutes I was just teaching the students and the AT is looking at me, I'm doing math and for ten minutes gives me this face. And I'm like you're not helping, this is very distracting. And I don't know, if I write something wrong, just mention it so that we can correct it and move on, don't give me this unbelievable face expression. And later, she stood up, took her coffee mug and left the classroom. And came back 5 minutes before the bell. And after she came back, she didn't even say anything to me. She just took care of the kids, 'Okay, recess time, put your work on the table, collect this, okay, off to lunch, to recess'. And she just ignored me.

So, I asked if I could talk to her and asked her, 'What's the matter? Like for one you can't really leave the room, you're not supposed to do that, you have to be with me all the time and give me feedback. I assume you had something urgent to do, please tell me what's going on, clearly there's something'. And she's like 'Do you have any of the comment sheets?' Like after class we always give out a comment sheet and she says she's going to take a look at it, and she's like, 'You do your own assessment. You tell me what went wrong'. And she took

off for lunch. And just like that, it was Friday, at that point I was...so I brought a lot of issues to the office, I kept a journal sort of thing.

I-: To document everything?

Liu Wei: Oh definitely. And they were like, 'Okay this is definitely something that we have to...this is a mistake we made, we should not have ever placed you with her'.

I: Will she get future teacher candidates?

Liu Wei-Yeah, I don't know, with that, because there's the incident, I don't think she will. I hope not.

'It's interesting, but don't get too deep or too dark or depressing about an issue'

Liu Wei was happy to report that his other two placements (his first in a Grade 10 class and the second, the replacement of the previous Grade 7-8 which he was currently completing) had differed significantly. Specifically with regards to Indigenous history, both associate teachers in his first and third practica were willing to let him take the lead. However, this came with certain restrictions. Speaking of his first associate teacher:

He let me do all the things, he knows like, the teacher was like, 'Oh yeah, we've got this guy who majored in First Nations, Métis and Inuit, let him do his job,' so they were actually pretty open to letting me do things. They didn't really...the only thing for Grade 10 was that, I think that Grade 10, they are ready to take the issues like the racist side of Canadian history, talking about the RCMP and how they murdered, out west, other things, what Sir John A. Macdonald did, but the teacher told me try to avoid the negative side...I'd show him what I was going to teach before class and he'd say, 'It's interesting, but don't get too deep or too dark or depressing about an issue'.

I asked Liu Wei how in practice one could avoid 'the negative side', to which he responded:

So, when a student asks what happened? Like, I would have to be really broad and saying something like the government was trying to negotiate, tried to get the land. It's very hard, it's like,

I tried to avoid that, and instead say if you want to research that question and then you can talk to me individually. My teacher would not allow me to go into detail in the *negative* [his emphasis] side.

Despite having faced varying levels of pushback—from the subtler to the more overt—from his first two ATs, it was clear that this had not worked to neutralize or soften Liu Wei's unabashed commitment to teaching for reconciliation and unearthing the darker side of Canadian history that is so often sidestepped.

Quite the opposite, it appeared that the obstacles he encountered had instead galvanized his sense of purpose. Explaining the language inquiry project that his third AT had given him the lead on, and which he was currently teaching, it was clear that he had not shied away from teaching critical issues:

For the language inquiry I introduced equity and equality as concepts. The first big subject was poverty, I introduced Oshawa poverty versus reservation poverty. So, think about first world poverty versus a third world condition just twenty minutes away. The second one will be gender, so we will talk about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

And the third one will be a mental health one and I'm going to talk about suicide on reserves. But these things are very deep. If you trace back the reasons, they ask me why, why are people on reserves? So, I have to go back to residential schools, I have to go back...so it's difficult to teach. It's very challenging to comprehend such a big amount of knowledge in such a short period of time, but that's what I'm trying to do.

Liu Wei saw the broadness of the curriculum as a safety net that allowed him to teach things that had previously not been part of it. However, he added that at the end of the day it came down to the teacher to guarantee the success of such an endeavour, and many teachers were not willing to take on this risk. Speaking of his current AT, he remarked:


He won't get into any trouble if he doesn't mention anything about Natives, however, he might get into trouble if he mentions something that parents don't want their kid to know. They [teachers] don't want to cause a problem. Even though it's totally legal, and you're allowed to do that based on the

curriculum, why would you want to bother, to deal with the principal, to deal with parents, if you don't have that passion? It's like 'I might as well talk about something else'.

I asked him, 'Would you chose to not teach that given the possible consequences?' His response was emphatic:

No, definitely not. I'm doing everything even though it's very controversial. I'm talking about the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Canada's one of the four countries that denied it. I put that on the board and was like, '144 countries voted, there's four countries who voted against it. Let's take a guess who'.

## 7.4 Ana



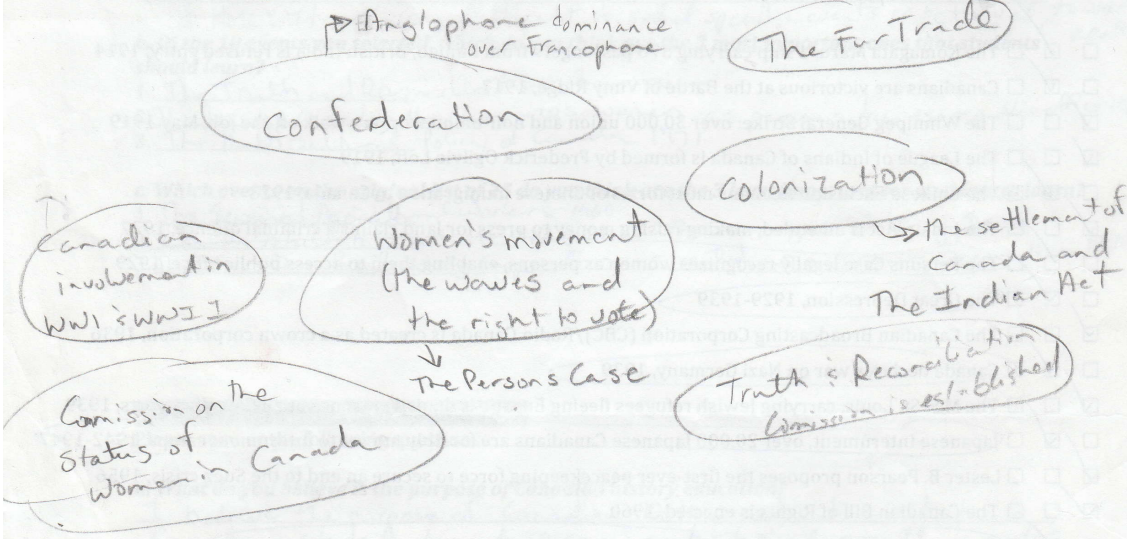
THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

Survey # 91

**Survey: Ontario teacher candidates' understandings of and orientations to Canadian history**

**A. MAPPING ACTIVITY (15 minutes)**

In the space below, please draw a diagram (using words or images or both) of what you consider to be the **most significant** events, themes, and actors in Canadian history.



**a. Why did I choose these events, themes, and actors?**

I choose these events and themes because I believe they reflect the progression of sexism and racism in Canada. In teaching history, I believe it is essential for students to explore Canadian history in terms of social justice issues because part of citizenship teaching involves learning about becoming a productive citizen and that involves caring about

**b. Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel most confident teaching:**

1. Colonization → The Indian Act
2. Commission on the Status of Women in Canada

the rights of all Canadians.

**c. Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel least confident teaching:**

1. Confederation
2. The Fur Trade

1/4



## Shades of Identities

Ana was a 37-year old, biracial woman of Irish and Puerto Rican heritage, a single-mother to six children, training to become a French and History teacher. She had grown up in a low-to-middle class family (on an upwards trajectory) but explained that as an adult she was now in the low-socio-economic class as both a student and a single parent.

Describing her racial identity in the demographic section of the questionnaire, similar to Robin she wrote, ‘Although I consider myself biracial, I have not experienced racial prejudice in the ways visibly biracial people have because I look more white [*sic*] (sometimes people assume Greek or Italian)’. In the interview, I asked her to elaborate:

Okay, yeah, well I see myself as a bi-racial person because of the fact that my parents are from, well my mom is Irish, and my dad is Puerto Rican, so I’ve always identified that way. But I also, and I think I put that in there, I also because in terms of, if you think of race as in even skin colour and what people see and their perception of your race, um, between myself and my brothers we’ve all had a very different experience because we have varying colourings. And then my oldest brother, he has an African father, so he’s got a different father, so he looks black, and yet, he’s bi-racial as well.

So just in discussing with them, I know that my experience is very different than two of my brothers’ because they are noticeably darker and then I also have one brother who looks very Irish as well. And in discussing with friends growing up too, just the visibility, being a visible minority, really changes your experiences. So, I know for me even though I identify that way, I haven’t experienced what that’s like. Whereas, I know that one of my brothers in particular has experienced some really nasty things in terms of race. Because he can be a bit ambiguous and I know that’s made some things, his perception of himself, in some ways it’s really made it difficult for him to navigate certain situations.

And so, yeah, I just think, I always think of it in terms of that, it’s like we’re kind of all mixed in our family but we’ve all experienced really different things even starting from when we were little kids.

I asked her whether there were any other aspects that she would also identify as or with to which she responded:

Yeah, I would certainly identify as a mother because I've been doing that for a long time and that's kind of the bulk of what I do in terms of as a person and daily experiences. And again, it's just something that I feel strongly about, as a responsibility that I'm teaching my kids to be good people...hopefully! And then again and also too as a woman. That's a strong thing for me, just because ever since I was little being a woman was a good thing and you have strength to do that. And just in terms of understanding that those things play a part in my everyday life, and yet not letting the negative aspects, in terms of the way you can get treated, define who you are.

Ana's description of her identity underlined on the one hand the fluidity of identities (e.g. social class, race, motherhood) while on the other, with respect to her bi-racial identity, highlighting the tension between individuals' view of themselves and how they are viewed by others.

Without doubt Ana's questionnaire answers were intimately linked to various aspects of her identity, and she brought this up many times in the interview even before I asked her the question directly. When she explained her map—which as we see above contained primarily Indigenous and women-related content—she attributed the emphasis on women's history to her own experience as a woman:

In terms of women, and women's events in Canadian history, I just think being a woman myself and being raised by a very strong mother, very strong independent woman I've always gravitated towards those histories. Because I love history and... I can identify with some of the things and see the patterns of things that have happened in history, in Canadian history and I always can relate it back to the present and some of the systematic things that are in place. Like structurally and the institutions that are continuing to cause it to be a difficult situation for women. Especially single women with children. So, I can really, from my own experience, see these barriers that are there that really in this day and age, they shouldn't be there anymore. But people still have blinders, like people still really close their eyes. So, in terms of working with students, just getting them to start thinking about these things and talk about them and realize that it's a huge portion of the

population. These are their sisters, their mothers, themselves, so this is important, equality is important.

When I finally asked her directly ‘How do you think your identity has influenced your answers and your understanding and orientations to Canadian history more broadly?, it was almost a moot point; undeniably—to both of us—her identity had a strong influence on her questionnaire answers as well as on her views of Canadian history in general. As she explained:

So certainly, it’s obvious that it’s really affected what I would choose to focus on. And not to downgrade anything else, certainly there are lots of great things and negative things as well that are worth exploring, but I think again, to me it ties into that social justice part. That’s a big part of just getting kids informed and letting them think critically about these things and different viewpoints and then taking one event and being like, ‘Well, this demographic of people experienced it this way. Let’s look at a piece of writing from that person. But then let’s look at this other demographic and they’re writing about the same thing, but it doesn’t even sound like the same thing because they’re coming from very different places.’ I really like thinking about things that way myself so want to get kids to do that too.

‘I didn’t even know what colonization was’.

Whereas Ana’s commitment to and knowledge of women’s history was deeply rooted in her lived experience, she explained that her knowledge of Indigenous history was much more recent and owed to the Indigenous courses she had taken in university, which ‘opened my eyes’:

I took quite a few Indigenous courses over the past couple of years and just learned a lot that I didn’t know. I didn’t even know what colonization was. I’d never really, I mean in terms of it as an actual thing. I understood that places were colonized, but not how it happened and that it was very systematic. So that opened my eyes, to hear all the things people were experiencing that I didn’t know about. I had heard of residential schools, but I didn’t really know the long-term effects that were going on. I knew that there were things happening within the communities, like a lot of the communities are below the poverty level, like way below, and have boil water alerts and all those things but I hadn’t tied it all into history. In terms of that, my university courses really

opened my eyes. It's something I'm starting to feel really passionate just sharing with other people, because I know so many people my age who don't even know. And you know, we've just come out of the school system not that long ago and quite a few friends that are teachers, who when we were in high school we didn't learn that. There was nothing. And that's the 90s.

To Ana, it was clearly a responsibility to share with her friends—some of whom now teachers themselves—what she had discovered in specialized university courses about Indigenous history and never learned in school.

### Social justice: emotions, privilege and moving beyond the classroom

History, then served as a way to understand not just 'the present', as many other participants had written, but also and specifically to make sense of ongoing inequalities. As Ana wrote in explaining her map, 'I chose these events and themes because I believe they reflect the progression of sexism and racism in Canada'. Her timeline justification echoed this:

I have chosen these specific ten events because they reflect the diversity of issues within Canada that reach into the present day. Issues of racism and sexism which have occurred in Canada's history and continue into today.

When I asked her how she would teach these issues she was mindful of the work that needed to be done to create spaces for students to broach such sensitive topics. However, whereas many of her colleagues appeared reluctant to engage in this area, perhaps, fearing the emotions they might trigger, it was clear that for Ana this was not a deterrent:

It's an area where you're treading carefully because people are coming, students are coming from very different backgrounds. So, you kind of have to start with a discussion that's going to prepare kids for a discussion where some of the stuff is very sensitive and they may be really affected by it. And potentially even getting parents aware as well, that these conversations are going to be happening. And I think that, again, it's just, you're going to have to allow them to engage with the material and allow them to express their opinions and feel upset or feel angry or feel indignant about things and figure out how you can manage that within a classroom setting, which can be

challenging. So, allowing that really emotional stuff, and I guess coming to it as a process, so beginning slowly and breaking it down so that it's not too much.

Uniquely, alongside teaching her students about racism and sexism and their foundational roles, Ana made it clear that she was equally as committed to teaching privilege, explaining:

With social justice teaching, it's teaching students about privilege as well, like where are they positioned. Because that's something I never really understood before university, but now it's like, 'Oh that makes sense, you can't understand one without understanding the other'. It's like a lightbulb came on. So just helping students see that, reflective history, how has it moved forward, how has it not.

Ana appeared unequivocal in the interview as to her goal to not only mould critical history students, but critical citizens. Asking her to explain her selection of the timeline events—the majority of which challenging the narrative of progress and development—she explained:

Yeah, that's definitely about just getting them to think critically about everything. Not just history, everything. Like what you're being offered, what you're being fed on tv, in the newspaper, you've got to think about those biases that people come with and the lens they're looking through and you gotta think about ok, also yourself, in terms of 'How do I feel about this?' 'What do I think about this?' not 'This is what my teacher says'. Taking peoples thoughts and ideas into account when you're making your own thoughts and ideas.

#### Walking a fine line: a tricky balance

Ana's experience in her practicum differed significantly from both Robin's and Liu Wei's. Not only did it become apparent while reading her reflections at the end of the year that she had been able to enact much of what we had discussed in our first interview, it also appeared she had had a very supportive AT. As she wrote:

I feel like I was given a wonderful opportunity in that I was able to teach a lot of what I wrote as the purposes and aims of teaching history. Although small, I feel like I really did help the students think about the experiences of non-white Canadians from the past.

However, far from this being a *fait accompli*, she added later in her answer:

It was tricky not being able to do more of what I wanted (i.e. residential schools, Black experiences, women experiences in Canada).

During the interview I asked Ana to tell me a bit more about that tension. She responded:

Well I think you're kind of caught in between covering curriculum content, so curriculum coverage, you gotta get through all these steps, you gotta cover all these things. And I think because the teacher I worked with was older, that's traditionally how it's done, he was still following that.

But at the same time, he himself was incorporating some more things that aren't traditionally taught in the classroom within what he was teaching so he was doing his own outside research constantly, he does that every year: taking workshops to update his knowledge, and always wanting to incorporate more contemporary things where he could.

For me, it was the same kind of thing. I had to cover certain things, but within that he gave me license to do things. And again, I would try often times... not that I would try, it's that for me it would come back to 'Okay what might be an issue with this?' or 'How is this different from now? Is it different from now?' I would try to incorporate how the past lives on in the present. It didn't always happen, because sometimes it was just a matter of... I mean remembering everything I was supposed to be teaching in this lesson. But at other times, the students would certainly have some questions that would lead to that kind of discussion.

I asked whether she felt that for a teacher candidate there were more barriers that prevent teaching for social justice than if she was in her own classroom, where she'd be able to better negotiate the pressures. She responded:

I think you could to a degree, but even just from the little that I gathered is that you've got to walk a fine line and from what I'm learning, and between doing that and making sure that you're not raising flags within even the school community of other teachers, and feeling like you shouldn't be doing that, there's kind of a tricky balance there, and I saw it.

### Supportive AT—'I lucked out'

Ana's associate teacher, in addition to modelling ongoing learning and being open to having her teach a history for social justice, also supported her in the areas she was less knowledgeable in and was sharply attuned to how identity influences one's interactions with history.

Recollecting how uncomfortable she had initially felt in teaching certain topics (WWII, the War of 1812)—given it had been over twenty years since she had learned them in Grade 10—Ana explained:

My AT's guidance, that was what really helped me. Because he gave me resources to work with, and would say 'Okay, I'll jump in if I feel like something's missing that you need to have in there'. He was always respectful in the way that he did that. He was never like, 'Well I think you've got it wrong', he was very much like 'I just want to add something' and play it up with the students like 'Ms. A I have a question, I want to say something'.

So, it was a great, very much an encouraging way of teaching new teachers, because you didn't feel like because you don't know anything yet, or you don't know what they know...it was very encouraging, and very much giving you some foundational tools and helping you build on them. So that was huge. The stress level was much lower than it could have been.

Ana's experience stood in stark contrast to Robin's and Liu Wei's who both described a much less supportive environment, Liu Wei furthermore continuously being belittled and humiliated by his AT. The support Ana received went beyond resources and encouragement, but also included feedback, which she very much welcomed as a mature student who had been a stay-at-home mother for years. Describing her feelings when she stepped into the classroom for the first time she recounted an initial sense of alienation:

Ana- I felt out of my element. I haven't done a lot of public speaking in my life; I've spent a lot of time at home. So that kind of an atmosphere is totally different for me. Cause I've been a stay at home mom for years so that was a new world, so I was like this is really scary.

I- And so how did you navigate through that?

Ana- I spent a lot of time wondering ‘Did I do that right? Did I do that right?’ My AT gave me a lot of good feedback and was open to me and he would say ‘What do you think about what you did there? How do you feel about that? How do you think it went?’ and then I would say what I thought, and then he would say ‘Well I think this’ so he was great. Again, a lot of feedback from him.

In terms of identity, Ana’s experience had also differed significantly from Robin and Liu Wei’s, Robin not having felt safe in divulging part of his identity, while Liu Wei had experienced racism in the form of condescendence as a result of his. Asked how she thought her identity had influenced her interactions with her AT she described an open and reciprocal exchange:

Oh yeah, identity was a big thing because we had a lot of conversations either connected to history or teaching, and also just contemporary issues. So, talking about culture, and things like that. Even just talking about Irish Canadians because my mom’s Irish, and also talking about things like that kind of influence, how we see things, and then those multiple perspectives. And where he was coming from in his life and things that he had lived or experienced or where I came from and things that I had lived or experienced. So, it was kind of a neat way of seeing, it really influenced the way he taught, and it really influences the way I’m teaching, because I’m coming at it from who I am and I’m sharing that, and the students are sharing back to a certain degree, which is neat.

### Students’ lack of knowledge

Despite a very different experience with their associate teachers, similar to Liu Wei Ana observed significant knowledge gaps among her students. Not only did she find that ‘a lot of students were completely unaware of the experiences of those outside of their own culture’, but as she discovered, many lacked basic knowledge. As she recalled:

Some of them had trouble, when I taught first on Aboriginal contributions in WWI and the second day I taught African Canadians, they didn’t know the difference. ‘Didn’t we do this yesterday?’ one student asked me, ‘isn’t this the same thing?’ So actually, just pointing out, ‘Hang on guys, these are two



different groups of people'. Just like basic things, and how you've got to bring it back to that starting point, and again with women, just the shock that 'Oh, women didn't have the vote until this time? Oh. I didn't even know that. I didn't know that they couldn't do those jobs'. The fact that a 15-year old doesn't know that surprised me. I was surprised. So, I think just even the exposure to that, and that was one thing my AT pointed out, he said, 'You don't really realize until you're here, that a lot of them don't know anything about this. They're just not exposed to it'. Depending on the community they were brought up in, the atmosphere of the community...

It is important to note that both Ana and Liu Wei taught in predominantly white schools where there were only a few minority students and the students had fairly limited knowledge. However, the similarities in their experiences ended there, Liu Wei specifying that his students were not receptive to learning about other cultures, while Ana repeatedly spoke to the students' interest in learning more about different cultures' contributions to the nation-building project.

Robin who conversely had been in an urban setting, had not mentioned a lack of knowledge of other cultures on the part of his students. Both Liu Wei and Ana felt that the homogeneity of the communities in which they had been located played a role.

#### Emotions – 'Write how you feel'

In our first interview, Ana had mentioned how teaching racism, sexism or xenophobia meant creating a classroom where tough conversations and their resulting emotions could have a space. Interested to know whether she had been able to create such a place, I re-read her words to her and asked whether she had been able to make space for emotions. She did not hesitate for a moment before providing an example:

My AT had half a class set of Joseph Boyden's book *Three Day Road*<sup>23</sup>, so he had wanted to incorporate that into the class, so he asked me, 'How do you think maybe you could use this?' He actually wanted to be able to do much more with it, but was

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<sup>23</sup> *Three Day Road*, published in 2005, is the story of a Cree soldier returning from World War I as told through the voice of Niska, a Cree healer. It was heralded by many for how it carved out a corner in the story of the Great War to shed light on Indigenous experiences during the war both on the front and at home. Despite the author, Joseph Boyden, becoming the subject of controversy in 2016 following an investigation into his Indigenous ancestry (see <https://aptnnews.ca/2016/12/23/author-joseph-boydens-shape-shifting-indigenous-identity/>), the book is widely considered one of the great contributions of Indigenous literature to the Canadian literary scene.

having that struggle of wanting to use that, but not knowing where to find the time.

So, when I was teaching them the contributions of Indigenous peoples in the war, I read to them a section, a battle scene section from the book and that was one of the most powerful things for them. They were just engrossed, and they'd say, 'Why are you stopping?' every time I'd stop to explain something. They'd be like 'Stop stopping! Keep reading!' It was just incredible.

Then I had them write a personal reflection—and there was a lot of emotion in that. Because I said, 'Write how you feel' as opposed to 'Write what you think', and there was a lot of shock first of all at war, and the things men had to do on the front lines, but also, a lot of surprise and anger that they didn't know about these things, specifically that Aboriginal people had been part of that. And even just knowing that they were hitting all these barriers, the biggest thing that came out of that was they were saying 'I can't understand why they wanted to contribute to Canada, yet they weren't even considered citizens, and yet they still wanted to do this. But the government was treating them this way and people would treat them this way. So how does that work?' So, they were trying to understand that, and understand why is the government so against them? And we didn't get far enough to keep going with it before my placement ended, but it was some really neat thinking that was going on there.

While due to the limited time frame of the practicum Ana hadn't been able to see her initiative through, the simple act of tasking students with a piece of writing where they had to describe their feelings rather than their thoughts had signaled to them that there was a space for emotions in the history classroom; and that, consequently, we bring our personal selves to our interactions with history.

## **7.5 Chapter Summary**

Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's narratives portray three teacher candidates who are both prepared and committed to teaching a history for 'unlearning racism'. While their individual accounts revealed slightly different priorities—owing to different experiences—they all shared a deeply personal, relational and political view of history education. Further uniting them was an acute, lived awareness of the insidious ways

that racism and colonization, and other forms of discrimination and exclusion, have long structured and continue to structure Canada, both inside the classroom—through whose knowledge and voice counts—and outside.

This chapter presented the narratives of three teacher candidates with marginalized identities. However, as Dixon and Rousseau (2005: 13) remind us, shedding light on these stories is only the beginning; ‘Rather, the educational experiences revealed through those stories must then be subject to deeper analysis using the CRT lens’. The following chapter, thus, engages in a deeper discussion of what their stories, when examined through a CRT lens, tell us.

## Chapter 8 Discussion 2: The counterstory

### 8.1. Introduction

The previous chapter shed light on Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's understandings of Canadian history and on their respective orientations to history education, revealing intimately political and personal reasons for becoming history teachers.

This chapter discusses the main themes that were identified by examining the three study participants' narratives through a CRT lens. I will show how they stand in stark contrast to the themes I presented in the first discussion chapter, and whereas the first discussion chapter presented 'the story' of my findings, this chapter, by drawing on the three narratives, presents 'the counterstory'.

Section 8.2 will discuss the different knowledges that Robin, Liu Wei and Ana displayed, and how taken together, these knowledges positioned them to dislodge the master narrative. In Section 8.3 I will then turn to the ways the three of them conceptualized racism and other inequalities as systemic, ongoing, and as something that they felt a responsibility to challenge. This leads to Section 8.4, where I describe the politicized understandings they held of knowledge—as constructed, distorted in favour of the powerful—and an awareness of how the history classroom was complicit in this knowledge production. Section 8.5 considers the ways that all three embraced the influence of their identities on the ways and content they wanted to teach, as well as how their lived experiences had compelled them to ensure that all their students' identities are reflected in the classroom.

While Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's questionnaires and interviews show that all three are both prepared and willing to take up 'a history for unlearning racism', their experiences in their BEd programs, specifically in their practica, remind us that racism—and other identity-based discrimination—is very much ongoing in our education system, operating in both subtle and less subtle ways.

The final section of the chapter will thus zone in on how 'race' still matters in 21<sup>st</sup> century Canada, before turning to the concluding chapter where the implications this has for the enactment of a history for 'unlearning racism' will be discussed.

## 8.2 Diverse knowledges

As the previous chapter illustrated, in contrast to the majority of their colleagues, Robin, Liu Wei and Ana possessed the knowledge to be able to teach a history for ‘unlearning racism’. To discuss their knowledge, it is helpful to turn to Salinas and Blevins (2013) who identified three bodies of distinct yet overlapping knowledge—experiential knowledge, official knowledge, and counter knowledge—as pivotal in determining a teacher candidate’s understandings of critical historical inquiry and orientations to teaching history. More accurately then, Robin, Liu Wei and Ana possessed the *knowledges* permitting them to understand the complexities of Canadian history and the material realities of race and racism.

Experiential knowledge, according to Salinas and Blevins (2013: 14), is the composite of ‘teachers’ personal experiences outside of school, including their interactions with family, friends, neighbors and colleagues as well as their previous schooling experiences’. Robin, Liu Wei and Ana’s experiences both inside and outside the classroom had played an important role in shaping their understandings of both the promises and failings of the educational system.

For Robin, the experience of not having seen himself represented in the curriculum, coupled with the fact that he grew up without any knowledge of his Indian heritage had created awareness of the psychological damage such erasures can have on one’s sense of identity. At the same time, his experience at the trans youth summer camp, where he had met for the first time in his life a group of trans adults (‘who had succeeded, were alive, were normal’) and befriended another trans, mixed-race youth who had shared his feeling of being on ‘an outer edge’, had demonstrated to Robin the power of visibility. His Indigenous Studies course in university, where he first came across concepts like ‘decolonization’ had inspired a commitment to provide students with a vocabulary that could name the world and its injustices. Taken together, his contrasting experiences of erasure and affirmation positioned him to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

Liu Wei recalled how seeing himself reflected in his Grade 10 history classroom when his teacher taught an entire unit on the Nanjing Massacre had made him feel

acknowledged—it showed his history mattered. At the same time, he spoke to his recent experience of taking the Canadian Citizenship test: the history that new citizens were asked to learn froze Indigenous peoples in the past while dismissing the presence and contributions of racialized groups to Canada. Both encounters had inspired in him a commitment to ensuring that his students saw themselves reflected in the history they were taught in school, as well as to challenging the history that citizenship applicants are required to learn and may well take as the ‘truth’. Liu Wei felt that his regular encounters with racism had ignited his empathy for Indigenous peoples. The exposure he had had during his undergraduate degree in Indigenous Studies and in the teacher education program to survivors of residential schools and Elders had provided him with insights that he felt one cannot obtain from readings, and inspired in him a deeply personal commitment to reconciliation.

Ana’s experience of having been raised by a strong single mother in a household where ‘being a woman was seen as a good thing’ had resulted in her gravitating toward women’s histories. Encountering systemic barriers as a single mother of six children, however, reminded her that history was a series of patterns, and sexism no more confined to the past than racism. Indeed, her siblings’ very different experiences of racism based on their different ‘skin tones’ also served as an indication that racism was still ever present. For her, history was a tool to understand current-day inequalities. Such a view was confirmed by a series of Indigenous history courses that had opened her eyes to the systematic ways in which colonization operates, with long-term effects seen in the present-day realities faced by Indigenous communities (e.g. boil water alerts).

Ana, Robin and Liu Wei’s respective experiences both inside and outside the classroom appeared to have fostered a critical orientation to history education and to knowledge itself. In addition to this ‘experiential knowledge’, all three had sufficient ‘official knowledge’ that enabled them to identify the gaps and holes of the official history that is taught in schools and at other sites (e.g. Citizenship test). Although Ana indicated that she had a lower level of knowledge of official history owed in large part to the time that had elapsed since she had taken Grade 10 history (over 20 years), like

Robin and Liu Wei she was able to identify the gaps in official history and knew how it worked to render certain bodies invisible.

While a number of the participants in my study were aware of the limitations and traps of the master narrative, what differentiated Robin, Liu Wei and Ana was that they held a strong knowledge of alternative perspectives, what Salinas and Blevins (2013) have referred to as ‘counter knowledge’. Counter knowledge is perhaps the most critical knowledge in the pursuit of curricular change, for as Wertsch (2000, cited in Salinas and Blevins, 2013: 17) has argued, one can question official narratives and consider them to be wrong and incomplete, but not have the sufficient knowledge to replace them.

Robin, Liu Wei and Ana’s counter knowledge was manifest across the many components of the data. Their maps, both in terms of their layout, the non-linear representations of history challenging the official narrative of progress and expanding rights, and the content, which revolved largely around Indigenous (and in Ana’s case) women’s history were the first to suggest a strong counter knowledge. This was confirmed during the interviews, where they elaborated on their counter knowledges, demonstrating a deep and nuanced understanding of the histories they were centring. Also of note, the counterperspectives were not *about* the ‘other’, but *from* the ‘other’s’ perspective, a detail that Kumashiro (2000) argues is critical in anti-racist education.

While their maps suggested that their counter knowledge was limited primarily to Indigenous perspectives—and in Ana’s case also women’s perspectives—their timelines, where unlike most of their colleagues they indicated an intermediate to strong knowledge of the events that referred to state racism or minority resilience, suggested a more expansive counter knowledge. This impression was further reinforced during the interviews, where unlike their peers (who were mostly ignorant of the events on the timeline), they demonstrated nuanced and fairly complex knowledges.

Through their accounts, it appeared that even in their very limited time in classrooms all three had sought—to varying degrees of success—to centre this counter knowledge in their teaching. This could take place not only in the history classroom but in other

classes as well, as evidenced by Liu Wei's Language Inquiry project that sought to use water advisories, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and suicide on reserves to explore the concepts of equity and equality and situate them historically. The impact of centring these counter knowledges cannot be understated when one subscribes to Salinas, Blevins and Sullivan's (2012: 26) argument that, 'Students see content knowledge that is continuously or significantly emphasized by teachers as essential and content knowledge that is omitted or diminished by teachers as peripheral'.

Importantly, Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's knowledges enabled them not only to challenge or even dislodge the master narrative by countering it with alternative ones. As evidenced by their maps and our discussions they were also able to offer more complex depictions of history and its actors, specifically, in relation to Indigenous peoples. Whereas the majority of participants, though including Indigenous history, had confined it to colonization and residential schools, Robin, Liu Wei and Ana spoke to the complexity and strength of Indigenous peoples and cultures. They depicted them not just as survivors, but also as nation-builders with rich knowledges and sophisticated forms of government.

Introducing these positive portrayals to their classrooms, Ana, for example talked about Indigenous peoples' and African Canadians' respective contributions to the war effort. Liu Wei worked to challenge stereotypes of Indigenous peoples through emphasizing the richness of Indigenous systems of governance, knowledges, and cultures.

As argued in the first discussion chapter, the need for students to see positive representations of their cultures in the classroom derives from what Taylor (1992: 26) refers to as the 'vital human need' for recognition. Consequently, inclusion of students' cultures and histories is not a straightforward act of simply adding more content. Indeed, as the first findings chapter showed, more content can in fact be damaging, if it mirrors back to people 'a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves' (Taylor, 1992: 25).



### **8.3 Racism constitutive of Canadian history (and its present)**

Further differentiating Robin, Liu Wei and Ana from the majority of the other participants was their view of racism, far from a few blips in an otherwise clean story of progress and development, as a ‘long-standing national project’ (Schick, 2014: 97).

This was evident in the language that they used. Not only were words like ‘racism’ and ‘colonizers’ not replaced with euphemisms such as ‘mistreatment’ and ‘settlers’, but they were accentuated by adjectives like ‘structural’ and ‘systemic’ indicating a view of the enduring and foundational nature of racism as opposed to individualized acts of intolerance.

The reasoning of their selection of events on the timeline and the content of their maps further demonstrated how they saw racism at the core of Canadian history. Liu Wei, for example, argued that the Canadian Pacific Railway, portrayed in popular culture and official historic accounts as the symbol of unity across a nation, was built through the enactment of racist policies: Chinese workers, separated from their families who were not permitted to join them, worked the most dangerous sections and following its completion, were sent back to China.

Yet while all three participants were in tune with the effects of racism on racialized groups, they demonstrated varying degrees of awareness of the corresponding effects on dominant groups. Both Ana and Robin drew on their own experiences of being for the most part white passing, affording them certain privileges that visibly mixed-race people are denied; but Ana also spoke to how any teaching of racism and sexism has to be accompanied by teaching privilege, and getting students to think about how they are socially located in relation to racism and sexism. This, according to Delgado and Stefancic (1999) is critical, for, as they explain:

Discrimination is like a hydra, with white privilege constituting one head, and oppression of people of color the other. Lopping off the one head (discrimination), without dealing with the complex of favors, exceptions, privileges, and special treatments white people afford each other will leave current social arrangements pretty much as they are, with

whites on top and blacks, browns, and indigenous people at the bottom.

Finally, in addition to seeing racism as foundational to the creation of the Canadian nation state, having experienced racism in some way in their own lives, Robin, Liu Wei and Ana were all too aware of its tenacity and persistence: From Ana, who had seen two of her brothers—who ‘look Black’—meet with racism and its crippling effects; to Robin, who relived during the interview an experience of watching a primary school classmate be ridiculed for being brown and at that moment being grateful for the fact that he was ‘white passing’; to Liu Wei, who spoke about experiencing racism on a daily basis, describing in our second interview this experience with a racist AT—racism was all too present to pretend that it could be confined to history.

Robin, Liu Wei and Ana’s other identities had also opened them up to confronting the systemic barriers that are still in place not just for racialized people but other groups as well: women, trans people, and newcomers to Canada. Ana as a single mother had come up against an array of what she referred to as ‘systemic barriers’. Robin, as someone who had recently transitioned having come up against a plethora of hurdles both in the healthcare system and later on in university, was all too aware of the inequalities that many people continue to face. Liu Wei spoke at length about the racism he had experienced as a result of his lack of proficiency in English. All three remind us that the inequalities that persist in Canada are not only situated along racial lines. At the same time, Liu Wei’s experience highlights how skin colour is not the only marker through which people are racialized (Dei, 1999). In his case, his non-native speaker status further exacerbated his ‘outsiderness’, something he explained Canadian-born Chinese were not up against.

Research like that of Hirji et al. (2000: 260) has shown that minority teachers ‘have a personal stake in ensuring racial equality. They have been shaped and affected by their own experiences of racism and work to ensure that their students’ life chances are not hindered by racism’. Other research (Kanpol, 1992; McCall, 1995) has shown that experiences, direct or indirect, of discrimination more broadly (due to race, class, gender, immigration experiences) motivate teachers to disrupt such discrimination.

This is not to say that racialized or teachers from other marginalized identities are necessarily motivated to challenge the curriculum. Indeed, as Hopson (2013) argues, and my findings reaffirm, not all racialized teachers have politicized understandings about race. Even if they do, they risk losing more than white teachers so it might be a strategic decision not to be political. However, in the case of these three teacher candidates, there was a clear connection between their own experiences with racism and other forms of discrimination, and their sense of duty and commitment to teaching a history ‘for unlearning racism’ and more broadly one for social justice.

## **8.4 Politicized views of knowledge, history education and the role of the teacher**

The third theme identified through an analysis of Robin, Liu Wei and Ana’s narratives was a view of history education as a political endeavour. This view appeared rooted in a keen awareness of the constructed nature of knowledge; and it postulated that what counted as historical knowledge worth knowing was the one that served to uphold dominant perspectives at the expense of alternative ones. As Robin explained, ‘The history we learn in school is from the colonizer’s viewpoint’.

The intimate connection between history and state formation and its maintenance has been widely studied, Wertsch (2000: 46) noting that ‘states everywhere have the interest and the means to compel students to master an official account of the past (with the intention of appropriating it as well)’. He adds that mastery, however, is not always accompanied by appropriation. Research Wertsch (2000) undertook on Estonians at the time of the demise of the Soviet Union showed that although they had all ‘mastered’ the official, Soviet-sanctioned version of Estonia’s entrance into the Soviet Union in 1940, they did not believe it. As he observed, ‘Just because someone is exposed to a cultural tool—and just because the person has mastered it—does not mean that the individual has made it his or her own’ (Wertsch, 2000: 42).

Liu Wei’s encounter with the Canadian Citizenship test is another example of someone ‘mastering’ the state-sanctioned history but not ‘appropriating it’. However, as he reflected, he had been able to do this because he had been exposed to more critical understandings and other versions of Canadian history. Unequipped with any other

narratives, new immigrants—in particular older ones—he feared, risked appropriating this narrative, especially since it was the only version leading to full membership in Canada. As he stated in the interview, ‘That’s also something I want to challenge and to address’.

His commitment to challenging this narrative appears warranted when one considers Pashby, Ingram and Joshee’s (2014: 16) assessment of *Discover Canada: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship* (the official study guide for the Canadian Citizenship test), which was released by the then Conservative government in 2012<sup>24</sup>. According to the Pashby, Ingram and Joshee (2014: 16) the guide not only depicts Canadian history ‘as a long list of important men and military battles’, it also communicates a ‘neoconservative discourse of we/they (Joshee, 2009) by reinforcing hierarchical constructions related to race, culture, and gender’. (Pashby, Ingram and Joshee, 2014: 18)

A review of the guide further shows that although residential schools, the Chinese Head-tax, and Japanese Internment (referred to as ‘forced relocation’) are included—albeit briefly—they are represented alongside formal apologies from the Government, which in turn appears to suggest they were episodic lapses in judgement. The sentence that accompanies the Government’s apology to residential school students in 2008, ‘In today’s Canada, Aboriginal peoples enjoy renewed pride and confidence, and have made significant achievements in agriculture, the environment, business and the arts,’ dismisses the ongoing effects of settler colonialism; and works to portray residential schools as ‘an event in the past, one that is disconnected from our present society and current institutions’ (Miles, 2018: 302)—institutions that continue to disenfranchise Indigenous peoples. The new immigrant reading this text must conclude that Canada has ‘overcome’ and ‘made up’ for its mistakes of the past.

Ana, in her emphasis on teaching her students to ‘think critically about everything, not just history’, held the view that all knowledge was constructed, and hence the history classroom a space for deconstruction. She also challenged the notion of the neutral

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<sup>24</sup> Despite some indication that the 2012 version was put under review by the new Liberal government following the 2015 election, an updated version has yet to be released.

teacher, explaining that she wanted students to develop their own understandings and ideas rather than accepting what the teacher says as fact, thus indicating a view of the teacher as socially located and not merely the deliverer of ‘the truth’.

According to Robin, the Eurocentric understanding of knowledge that persists in most Western nations ensures the master narrative’s monopoly over Canadian history. Indeed, even though Stanley (2014: 13) notes that, ‘Today as never before we have resources that allow young people to directly engage with the meaning of others’, Robin felt that these resources are often not considered ‘credible’; oral histories and community histories often rejected as ‘unacademic’.

Both Indigenous and racialized scholars have long pointed to the dismissal of their scholarship by the mainstream. Racialized scholars, many of whom reject the neutrality professed by Western scholarship, note the denunciation that their acknowledgement of their imprint on their research comes with: it is often rejected as ‘illegitimate, biased, or overly subjective’ (Delgado Bernal and Villalpando, 2002: 171). Evans-Winters and Twyman Hoff (2011) describe how racialized educators often see their credibility and knowledges devalued and characterized as ‘bias’, proof that only certain histories as well as certain ‘bearers’ of history are considered credible.

In pointing out that teachers do not get into trouble for not teaching certain narratives (e.g. Indigenous), Liu Wei further exhibited an awareness of how some knowledges count more than others. Quite the opposite, he explained, teaching these ‘other’ narratives brings the risk of reproach and reprimand from parents, colleagues and administration.

Schick and St. Denis (Schick and St. Denis, 2003; Schick and St. Denis, 2005; St. Denis, 2011; Schick, 2014) have written at length about the resistance and resentment that surfaces among white settler parents in response to the inclusion of Indigenous histories in the classroom: from arguments of ‘there are other children here’ (i.e. Indigenous history should not be privileged), to removing their children from class when Indigenous content is included.

Drawing on the work of Leonardo (2009), Schick (2014) argues that these acts need to be understood as the performance of white racial knowledge. As Leonardo (2009, cited in Schick, 2014: 99) explains, whites are aware of processes of racialization and ‘know what is integral to the maintenance of white supremacy’. White parents’ resistance to the inclusion of other knowledges in the classroom serves to reassert schools as white spaces.

Both questionnaire data and our interviews confirmed that the view of knowledge as socially constructed translated to a politicized view of history education and, correspondingly, of the role of the history teacher for all three. Robin, Liu Wei and Ana all understood that as Trouillot (1995) has argued, history teaching is a ‘power-laden process’ and that teachers are implicated in this knowledge production by choosing to advance some, and silence other knowledges.

These three teacher candidates had different priorities yet were guided by a similarly strong sense of purpose: Robin saw the history classroom as a space to empower students by giving them a knowledge of their rights and teaching them critical language to be able to analyze and challenge the Government and Canadian history; Liu Wei saw it as a place for reconciliation and challenging stereotypes; and Ana considered it a place for preparing students to interrogate and challenge not only educational orthodoxies but also those presented to them by the media. Barton and Levstik (2004: 256) argue that teachers who have a strong sense of purpose are able to ‘resist the temptation of conformity’ that all teachers—especially new ones—face.

Indeed, whereas the majority of my other participants evoked what Villegas and Lucas (2002a) have termed the ‘technician’ teacher (whose role is to transmit information), Robin, Liu Wei and Ana undeniably saw themselves as agents of and for change. Even though they understood that inaction was easier, all three were steadfast in their commitment to change.

## **8.5 Bringing the self into history**

Intimately linked, and indeed, almost inseparable from their politicized view of history education was the very personal approach Robin, Liu Wei and Ana brought to their

teaching. What distinguished them from many of the other racialized participants was that in addition to being aware of their identities, they were able to articulate how their identities influenced their answers in the questionnaires; how they impacted their interactions with history more broadly; and, ultimately, how they led to their decision to become history teachers.

The invisibility of his identity in the curriculum motivated Robin to question what else was missing. As he learnt more about trans history on the internet, he developed an understanding and indeed an empathy of the common albeit distinct experiences of subordination that different groups in Canadian society have suffered and continue to encounter. His mother's experience with colonialism, and how she had been deprived of her history and her culture had further engendered in him a commitment to ensuring that Indigenous culture and history were centred in his classroom.

Not only did Robin want to bring attention to these long-marginalized identities in the history curriculum, he also saw his body as a vehicle for bringing this representation to the classroom. Affording visibility to trans and mixed-race identities—who often remain unrecognized in the classroom—was extremely important to him.

He was also committed to helping his students explore their own identities, both in terms of how they related to Canada's national identity and history ('I want to create an open dialogue with students about their Canadian identity'), as well as regarding other aspects such as their gender identity and sexuality: 'I think students should have the opportunity to be self-aware and be self-explorative in their gender identity, in their sexuality. Even if they are cisgender, even if they are straight, I think it's important to have that ability to explore'. History, he believed, was a diving board into these conversations.

Liu Wei's commitment to teaching Indigenous history also highlighted Bascia's (1996) 'empathy through common experience'. As he explained, his experience—though not of the same magnitude—of racism as a result of his identity as an immigrant made him want to challenge the racism that Indigenous peoples are met with. This could be done, in part, through uncovering histories that had been 'buried, erased' from the history curriculum. Importantly, though, he distinguished between the racism he

experienced as a newcomer and the one Indigenous peoples face, acknowledging his complicity in colonization: 'We need to remember what *we* did... After we acknowledge what we did, that's the next step: reconciliation'.

Liu Wei's use of the personal pronoun 'we' suggests an acute awareness of the ways that immigrants are implicated in the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Thobani (2007: 16-17) describes how migrants, while by no means 'authors of, or even equal partners in, the colonial project...have been party to the ongoing colonization of Aboriginal peoples'.

Liu Wei was also committed to bringing the histories of all his students into the classroom, noting the impact that the acknowledgement of his own history in his Grade 10 class had had on his interest in the subject, as well as upholding his identity. Such a task, he explained, required getting to know one's students. Recalling the introductory class in his second practicum, and the interactions he had with the one Indigenous student in the classroom as well as the Japanese student, he explained he had wanted to not only validate their identities but also support them in their identity development. This was coupled with a view of his role as that of a mentor, someone that ESL, immigrant students could look to as an example of success. Similar to Robin, he had not seen himself reflected in the teaching staff when he was a student. For both Robin and Liu Wei, it was clear that they understood the need for students to not only see themselves represented in the histories they learn, but also in the teachers who teach them.

By all appearances, Liu Wei considered historical understandings and orientations as intimately influenced by the various aspects of our identity. This impression was reinforced throughout the year as he encountered the diverse histories and experiences of his classmates and was exposed to their multiple perspectives on Canadian history. Seeking to extend a similar experience to the classrooms in which he now taught, he had asked his Métis colleague to deliver a guest lecture on Métis history. At the same time, he offered to speak to a classroom on his own experience with the Canadian immigration process as a student and becoming a teacher as a non-native English speaker.



Liu Wei appeared aware of the risk that his view of identity be interpreted as essentialist (e.g. only an Indigenous teacher should teach Indigenous histories), emphasizing that he could only speak to *his* experience of immigration, not that of all immigrants just as his Métis classmate could only speak to *his* history as a Métis, not that of all Métis.

Similarly, his suggestion later in the interview that one need to get to know one's students in order to teach their histories was also accompanied by the proviso that it was important that no student was subsequently cast as the representative of his culture/background, something as McIntosh (1990) has argued is often demanded of racialized people. Speaking to the interactions he had had with Elders and survivors of residential schools, it became clear that he saw individuals as the carriers of history, the live primary sources so to speak, who could tell their stories better than any textbook could. For Liu Wei, while rejecting an essentialist view of identities, he saw them as ever present in the classroom, deserving of representation in both the curriculum and the teachers who taught it. Different perspectives would enrich everyone's understanding of history.

Finally, Ana was perhaps the most attuned as to how her identity had shaped her answers and her decision to become a history teacher. She was one of the only participants in the study to describe her map's content and timeline selections as personally relevant. As shown in the previous chapter, she spoke with ease about her identity's influence over all aspects of her pedagogy and content knowledge.

For Ana, the deeply personal ways in which we learn and teach meant that emotions would inevitably come to the fore. Rather than shy away from this, she talked about the work that had to be done to prepare classrooms to support and engage in these emotions. Her commitment to engaging the affective side of students was illustrated by the assignment she developed for her Grade 10 history placement (as discussed earlier), where she asked the students to write a reflection piece on how they felt in response to an excerpt she had read to them from Joseph Boyden's *Three Day Road*. History education for Ana clearly went beyond the rational approach advanced by the historical thinking approach, which Cutrara (2009) has argued fails to acknowledge the emotive and subjective ways in which people engage with the curriculum.

Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's respective and intersecting racial, gender, and national identities had alerted them to the silences of the master narrative of Canadian history and the ways that hegemonic knowledge works to privilege some narratives and silence others. This had in turn compelled in them a sense of duty to challenge these silences as well as the supposed neutrality of the curriculum. Nevertheless, it was their identities that risked standing in the way of enacting this change.

This was made patently clear through their experiences during their practica, particularly when Robin and Liu Wei were reminded that even in 2015, not all identities are welcome in the teaching profession. Critical scholars have long studied how certain professional spaces have been historically reserved for certain bodies. Puwar (2004: 8) argues convincingly that:

some bodies are deemed as having the right to belong, while others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically and conceptually), circumscribed as being "out of place".

Liu Wei's experience exemplifies the 'burden of doubt' that, as Puwar (2004) explains, marked bodies encounter when entering spaces they have long been excluded from: their capabilities, and in turn their 'right to belong' are questioned. Indeed, as his associate teacher's repeated questioning of his skills and abilities suggests, despite his training in becoming a teacher, and his disciplinary background as a university history graduate, Liu Wei's 'Chineseness' worked to undermine his competencies. Liu Wei's experience also illustrates the 'super-surveillance' that marked bodies have to endure: any errors he made were picked up on by the associate teacher, and his engagements with the students strictly controlled. As Puwar (2004: 61) notes of this constant surveillance:

Not only do these bodies that are out of place have to work harder to convince people that they are capable, but they also almost have to be crystal-clear perfect in their job performances, as any imperfections are easily picked up and amplified.

Robin's decision to not disclose his trans or mixed-race identities is an indication that he was aware of the consequences that befall 'marked' bodies in the teaching profession. As he pointed out, he had not felt 'safe' in coming out. Importantly, choosing to not mark himself was not an option for Liu Wei, his visibly racialized identity and accent clear markers of 'outsider' status. In Robin's case, whose mixed-race and trans identity were far more ambiguous, the decision to not highlight them support the notion of identities as strategic. Assuming whiteness and maleness was a protective measure.

Puwar (2004: 58) explains how whiteness and maleness, in their denial of a race and a gender assume the unmarked normative position noting, 'Left unnamed and unseen, invisibility in this context is clearly a place of power'. Robin's case illustrates how invisibility is also a place of safety.

Both Liu Wei and Robin's experiences attest to Puwar's (2004: 8) thesis that 'social spaces are not blank and open for anybody to occupy', thus dislodging the argument that a larger percentage of minority teachers in the teaching profession is the solution. Without confronting and challenging the ways that allow certain (i.e. white) bodies to remain entrenched as 'true' members, minority bodies will continue to be subjected to the burden of doubt and constant surveillance. Those who can will be motivated to remain invisible.

Without parallel changes made to the culture of schools, specifically the administration and organizational conditions, minority teachers will continue to be limited in what they are able to do and hard-pressed to resist the pressure to adopt the hegemonic culture of whiteness (Puwar, 2004). Howard (2014: 512) highlights how critical educational administrators' support is for Black teachers who seek to make interventions in white-dominated schools. Without this support, he argues, Black teachers are forced to 'silence [their] critical-antiracist commitments and sense of responsibility to the Black community or continue them surreptitiously at great risk to [their] job and career advancement'.

Although Liu Wei's experience of racism did not appear to have pushed him toward adopting 'the hegemonic culture of whiteness'—quite the opposite—his story is likely

not representative of other racialized teacher candidates. Similarly, although Robin's experience did not appear to have dissuaded him from his goal of being a visible trans, mixed-race teacher, the fact that as he explained many of his LGBTQ friends would not even consider joining the teaching profession because of the stigma surrounding sexuality suggests he was also unique.

## **8.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter sought to centre the voices and experiences of three history teacher candidates. Section 8.2 described the three bodies of knowledge that Robin, Liu Wei and Ana possessed—knowledges that compelled and enabled them to challenge the master narrative and teach histories that served to 'recognize'. Section 8.3 spoke to the way they understood racism as not just foundational to the Canadian nation-state but still very much embedded within societal structures. There was also a keen awareness of the double-sidedness of racism, that the violence it brought to bear on certain bodies was accompanied by a set of benefits for others. Section 8.4 described a shared view of knowledge as socially constructed, its assumed neutrality serving to uphold dominant perspectives, and a corresponding commitment to challenging this neutrality as well as bringing to the fore other knowledges. The final section, Section 8.5 began with a discussion of Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's identities and how their politicized understandings of Canadian history and orientations to teaching history were inextricably linked to them. It concluded with a discussion on how these very same identities that had set them on a path of teaching a history for 'unlearning racism' were what limited their ability to do so. Considered within the reality of the racist education system that persists, they found that some bodies are not welcomed. The final chapter and my thesis's conclusion, to which I now turn, considers what this means for the realization of a history for 'unlearning racism'.

## Chapter 9 Conclusion

*Adopting and adapting CRT as a framework...means that we will have to expose racism...and propose radical solutions for addressing it. (Parker et al., 1999: 27)*

### 9.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand how to better prepare future history teachers to fulfill the emancipatory potential of a history education that acknowledges the classroom as a space to recognize and reflect the stories of all students; a space to address the distorted ways in which knowledge is produced; a space to examine the role of history in nation-building and to highlight the silences and omissions that have serviced it; a space that centres the role of race and racism as foundational to all settler-colonial societies; and finally, a space for both students and teachers to acknowledge the ways they are complicit in the ongoing colonization and racism of Canada. So, what can we do to ensure history teachers candidates will be well equipped and ready to teach a history for ‘unlearning racism’?

Through an innovative multi-pronged qualitative approach that made use of a number of research tools, I sought to understand how teacher candidates were currently positioned in relation to this goal. Three factors which have been shown to influence whether a teacher will confront or conform to the curriculum formed the basis of my exploration: their knowledges, their views on the purpose of history education, and their identities.

Following is a discussion of the two conclusions that can be drawn from the findings. I then present two sets of recommendations that pertain to each of the conclusions. These recommendations are followed by a discussion on the contributions and limitations of the study as well as some directions for future research. The final section offers some closing reflections on the dire need for change, situating the clarion call in the present context.

## 9.2 A tale of two conclusions

Two main conclusions are drawn from this study. The first, as it became clear in the first findings and discussion chapters, was that the majority of my study participants were not prepared nor inclined to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’. The second conclusion was that three of the participants, Robin, a 22-year old queer, trans, mixed-race male; Liu Wei, a 23-year old Chinese-born Canadian who had immigrated to Canada when he was 15; and Ana, a 37-year old mixed-race single mother of six, were at once ready and committed to take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’. However, without radical changes to the ways that current teacher education programs function, not only would they be limited in what they can do, but they would also remain exceptional cases.

The first conclusion was drawn from a number of factors: a) a knowledge among the history teacher candidates that was largely limited to the Eurocentric narrative; b) a depoliticized understanding of the purpose of history education and their role as history teachers; and c) the view that racism existed only as an exceptional occurrence in an otherwise clean story of progress and development. Finally, a majority of study participants appeared unable to see the intimate connection between the histories they were drawn to and their own identities, and to acknowledge how they are ‘complicit in the violence committed by westernised education systems, curricula and pedagogy’ (Martin and Pirbhai-Illich, 2016: 369).

It is important to note that whereas many other studies (Dion, 2009; Donald, 2009; den Heyer and Abbott, 2011; Scott, 2013; Nardozi *et al.*, 2014) have shown that white teachers, especially, tend to be unwilling to teach Indigenous histories, this was not entirely the case in my study: participants spoke of the need to teach Indigenous history, many of them including it on their maps. However, as I explain in the first discussion chapter, the ways through which they represented Indigenous history reflected what Grosfuguel (2011, cited in Martin and Pirbhai-Illich, 2016: 362) refers to as a colonial lens, ‘positioning others as objects to be studied, rather than as knowing subjects’.

Although they recognized that Indigenous history had not been taught in their own education, few questioned how this lacuna related to the settler-colonial project of Canada. Indigenous peoples were overwhelmingly represented as victims while their resilience and knowledges were absent from the maps.

The findings regarding their views on the purpose of history education showed that a majority of participants did not see the classroom as a political space nor their role as an agent of change. Instead, it appeared that many saw the classroom as a neutral space where they themselves served merely as ‘conduits of information’ (von Heyking, 2014: 91).

Finally, my discussion regarding identity showed the resistance, mostly on the part of the white participants, to acknowledging their racial identity and its influence on their historical identifications.

In contrast, as indicated in the second findings chapter and accompanying discussion chapter that focused on Robin, Liu Wei and Ana, there were a few participants who were well-equipped, committed, and ready to teach a history for ‘unlearning racism’. Not only did they possess a knowledge of official history that enabled them to identify the silences in the master narrative, they also held a knowledge of counter-narratives, which allowed them to move beyond doubting and toward replacing the master narrative. Combined with their experiential knowledge, they were not only attuned to the silences, but also the violent impact these silences have on students.

Critically, these three teacher candidates also understood both knowledge and history as constructed and how the master narrative, told from a Eurocentric perspective, serves to uphold Canada as a raceless society, built by white people rather than on the backs of Indigenous and racialized peoples. Both the language and historical narratives they chose spoke to their view of racism as intrinsic to the building—and maintenance—of Canada, rather than as a glitch in history. The role of the history classroom and their duty as teachers was to provide students with tools to challenge the status quo, work toward reconciliation, and empower counter-narratives.

Perhaps what distinguished them most from the other participants was that Robin, Liu Wei and Ana did not disavow the influence their various identities had had on their understandings and experiences as students and now as teachers of history. On the contrary, they partially attributed their commitment to dislodging the master narrative to the experiences they had had as a result of their identities.

Nevertheless, clearly their identities were also a handicap. Robin and Liu Wei's practicum experiences force us to admit that whiteness, heterosexuality, and a pre-eminence of native English speakers remain the standard and that teachers whose identities fall outside this 'acceptable norm' are regarded as 'space invaders' (Puwar, 2004). Just as Thobani (2007) has argued that racialized bodies' membership in the Canadian nation is contested (the role of the 'exalted subject' being reserved for white Canadians) this study shows that their membership to the teaching profession is equally tenuous.

### **9.3 Recommendations**

The conclusions I drew from my research highlight how the two groups of study participants were very differently positioned in relation to taking up a history for 'unlearning racism'. Consequently, I have developed two distinct sets of recommendations.

The first set, which addresses the majority of my participants and likely teacher candidates in Ontario, looks at ways to prepare them for taking up a history for 'unlearning racism'. The second set is directed toward teachers who are already positioned to take up a history for 'unlearning racism' (i.e. the Robins, the Liu Weis and the Anas), but who are disempowered from doing so under the status quo. Not only do I consider ways to support them, but I also briefly discuss steps that need to be taken in order to attract more such candidates to the profession.

As I set out to present the first set of recommendations, I am compelled to acknowledge that as many critical scholars have long noted, teacher education programs have for too long focused on how to get white teacher candidates (the majority of the first group) ready to teach racialized students; conversely, little time has been invested in



exploring how to support and recruit more racialized teachers (Sleeter, 2016). I believe the two need not be mutually exclusive, but rather, that they are mutually constitutive: The cultural shift that needs to occur in teacher education programs so that more racialized and other marginalized individuals are drawn to the profession is in part dependent on the successful unsettling of bodies who have laid a longstanding and uncontested claim to these spaces.

While most of the recommendations were developed through analysis of the findings and in response to their conclusions, I asked Robin, Liu Wei and Ana for their own recommendations on how to better support future teachers in taking up a history for ‘unlearning racism’ and more broadly, for social justice. Thus, I have integrated their recommendations into my own. Finally, my recommendations are also positioned alongside previous studies in a testament to both the importance of building on the work of others and to the regrettable fact that many of their recommendations have yet to be taken up.

### *9.3.1 Moving teacher candidates toward a history for ‘unlearning racism’*

#### Setting the bar higher

As highlighted in the first findings chapter, the majority of participants had limited knowledges—both official and especially counter—of Canadian history. The participant demographics table on page 101 indicates that, perhaps unsurprisingly, nearly half of the study participants had taken only one to two Canadian history courses, many noting it was not their interest nor their strength. This was likely facilitated by the fact that at the time I conducted my research (2015), fewer than half of Ontario teacher education programs had any requirement for Canadian history courses as part of the admissions process; for those that did, only one full-year or two semester Canadian history courses were required for admission to the Consecutive program and for completion of the Concurrent program. A few programs ‘recommended’ applicants complete a Canadian history course, while others made no mention of it at all.

Reviewing the admission requirements five years later, they remain largely unchanged. Many universities' admission requirements continue to specify one full credit in Canadian history, while it remains a recommendation or is missing entirely as a requirement for others. Only a few programs spell out the type of Canadian history course that is required: two indicate a preference for courses that cover British North America, New France and pre- and post-confederation eras (all evoking the master narrative), while one recommends a course in Aboriginal history.

Quite tellingly, only one program in Ontario suggests that applicants also come with a credit in history courses that focus on race, ethnicity, gender and class. While this may indicate a commitment on the part of the university to engage in these topics, it fails to link the concepts of race, ethnicity, gender and class to Canadian history. Stanley (2014: 8), in his assessment of the 2013 Ontario history curriculum, which found that the Holocaust was 'the only place in the curriculum that a history of racist exclusion is required to be taught', argues convincingly that while studying the Holocaust may provide 'students with transformative experiences that lead them to question prejudices and their consequences, it does not follow that they would be able to analyze actual racisms such as the treatment of so-called Status Indians by the Canadian state' (Stanley, 2014: 9). In a similar vein, applicants who have taken courses on the Civil Rights movement in the United States or the Rwandan genocide for example, though bringing with them important learnings, are not any better positioned to engage with these concepts as they relate to Canada; in fact, they may continue to see them as external to the storying of Canada.

While some teacher candidates may enter the program with more than the minimum required number of Canadian history courses—as indeed some of my participants did—the fact that many can become certified teachers with little to no post-secondary education in their subject area is disconcerting and shows that the bar has been set far too low.

In order to address the relatively limited knowledge that a majority of participants displayed, especially of counter-perspectives, as well as the widely-held view of racism as limited to a few exceptional events and actors, the first recommendation is that teacher education programs increase the number of required Canadian history

courses one must take in order to be admitted. Importantly, this is not a call for more Canadian history courses that reinforce the master narrative. Rather, applicants would be required to demonstrate that they had taken courses that centre alternative perspectives and that engage in concepts of race, gender, ethnicity and class, specifically in relation to Canadian history.

It is also highly recommended that individuals aspiring to be history teachers come to the Consecutive Program in the Bachelor of Education with a background in Indigenous history; or, in the case of Concurrent teacher candidates, that they be required to complete Indigenous history courses as part of their program. It seems to me indefensible that new teachers continue to graduate out of teacher education programs without in many cases any university-level knowledge of Indigenous history. When one considers the long-standing erasure of Indigenous histories from elementary and secondary classrooms, it is not surprising that many teacher candidates know little more than that this is something they should know and teach—as my participants' questionnaires illustrated. Levstik (2000) observed of her teacher candidates that they risk repeating the 'silences' of their own education in the classrooms they seek to teach in. Or, as the findings of my study indicate, they risk replacing the silences with 'misrecognition' in part owing to their very limited knowledge.

While two of the three history methods courses included in my study did contain units on *how to teach* Indigenous history, teacher education cannot be expected to *teach* Indigenous history. And it does not. Only a few Ontario Bachelor of Education programs have since the time of research and in response to the TRC's Calls to Action (2015) instituted a mandatory Indigenous studies course for all teacher candidates. The remainder list Indigenous courses as electives. This reflects the trend across the entire public education system in the province, where the Conservative government in 2018 reneged on the previous Liberal government's promise to make Indigenous education mandatory. Instead, the newly created K-12 courses were made electives, effectively demarcating their peripheral importance to the story of Canada.

Increasing the number and type of required Canadian history course prerequisites is an important first recommendation in that it affirms Salinas and Blevins' (2013: 19)

argument that teachers' knowledge and their knowledge gaps will strongly influence 'whether they will adhere to or contest the official curriculum as well as other inequitable schooling practices'. As Dei (2001: 149) writes, 'Knowledge is power, and power is knowledge'.

### Problematizing the neutral

In addition to limited knowledges, a majority of participants communicated a view of knowledge as neutral. In turn, many equated the master narrative with history, or at least the 'most representative/inclusive' narrative of Canadian history. In order to dislodge the master narrative from its claim over or as the closest thing to 'history', the second recommendation is that the History Methods course begin with an interrogation of how 'certain knowledges become privileged through the constant masquerading as universal knowledge' (Dei, 2001: 147). Including readings at the beginning of the course, such as Trouillot's (1995) *Silencing the Past* that delineates the various stages in the production of history would serve to provide teacher candidates with an understanding of 'the social and material practices in the production of knowledge' (St. Denis and Schick, 2003: 58). It would also serve to highlight ways that teachers are involved in this production, thus challenging the view that many had of their role as 'technician'. Teachers' choices in terms of what they include and in turn what they exclude serve to 'produce' certain knowledge as paramount and other knowledge as tangential and even insignificant. While in itself problematic, it is the impact that this ranking of knowledges has on students' self-worth, interest, and engagement that history teacher candidates need to be made aware of.

There exists a plethora of studies that document the effects that a lack of seeing oneself reflected in the histories taught in the classroom has on students (e.g. disengagement, silence, lowered sense of worth); however, they remain missing in large part from History Methods syllabi. Making these studies mandatory readings at the beginning of the History Methods course could serve as a catalyst for discussions that challenge 'hegemonic constructions of teaching as an apolitical activity' (Reid, McCallum and Dobbins: 1998: 252). This recommendation is echoed by Skerett (2011) who advocates for having teachers read a number of studies that highlight the reasons why certain students drop out. She argues that these readings 'can be instrumental in

helping teachers understand the importance of teaching in racially equitable and culturally responsive ways' (Skerett, 2011: 328).

Drawing on three case studies, Sleeter (2016: 1065) maintains that teachers who are successful at teaching minoritized students are those who see themselves 'professionally as curriculum-makers', which allows them 'to make their curriculum relevant to their students'. Moving teacher candidates toward a view of themselves as 'curriculum-makers' may not be easy, especially when one considers the literature that has long shown social studies teacher candidates to bring a 'readerly approach' to the curriculum (Segall and Gaudelli, 2007). Impressing upon teachers the consequences that this mechanical 'readerly' approach has on racialized students moves the discussion from a philosophical plea for equity, to one of material consequences for young people.

At the same time, as Dei (2001: 149) cautions, we need to avoid the risk that arguments for the inclusion of diverse perspectives and identities come to mean:

that only if racially and ethnically diverse bodies are present in the classroom should educators be morally, ethically and politically obligated to represent those subjects/identities in the curriculum and culture of the school. All schools, regardless of demographics, need to implement a racially and ethnically diverse knowledge system.

Jan Hare (2017), Senator Murray Sinclair (TRC, 2015) and other Indigenous scholars have argued that Indigenous histories are not just for Indigenous people. Dion (2009) stresses the need for white students to see how their histories are shared and braided with Indigenous histories in order to unsettle the 'Perfect Stranger' identity that many adopt. Consequently, teacher candidates must not only be made aware of the impact teaching racialized and Indigenous histories has on these students, but also, and specifically, on white students.

Teachers' choices matter and can either reinforce the silences or interrupt them. The history methods course needs to equip teacher candidates with an understanding of the ways that knowledge is constructed and distorted in favour of the dominant. They need to be made aware of the weight of their decisions on all students and be empowered to

see themselves as ‘curriculum-makers’. As Villegas and Lucas (2002: 54) argue, it is teachers who view themselves as agents of change who can resist the pressure to conform and interrupt schooling practices that maintain inequalities.

### Exploring the racial self in relation to history

The final recommendation that follows from my first conclusion is to extend the exploration of identity, and its relation to power and domination, beyond the mandatory social justice course in teacher education: it needs to be integrated into the History Methods course. My recommendation aligns with many critical scholars’ calls for an immersive approach to race issues and social justice in teacher education programs, wherein social justice is woven across the entire program as opposed to confined to one course. Opportunities must be created for teacher candidates to interrogate their identities and notions of power and domination in relation to the subjects they are going to teach, be it history, math or drama.

Such a move also appears imperative in light of the findings that show that even among those participants who were aware of their identities, many did not draw any connection to their historical identifications. At the same time, they were quick to speak to the diverse identities of their students and how these influence their understandings and approaches to history. Miles (2018: 303) emphasizes the importance of having teachers confront their identities:

Helping non-Indigenous teachers and students reflect on, and rethink, how their identities, both individual and collective, are connected to Canada’s history of colonialism is essential.

Schick and St. Denis (2003) describe a good example of an activity that they run in their integrative anti-racist course, and that in my opinion could be transposed to the History Methods course: The major assignment asks students to engage in reflective social and political self-analysis. As they explain, ‘Students are encouraged to comment on what their gender, sexuality, ability, class, and race afford them or cost them and how these identifications depend on the production of normative social practices and histories’ (Schick and St. Denis, 2003: 60).

As long as issues of race, ethnicity, class, ability, gender and sexual orientation are addressed outside the subject courses, teacher candidates will, as Bhopal and Rhamie (2013) found, at best acknowledge their identities but fail to make the connection to how they influence their understandings of and orientations to their subject matter.

Just as Gloria Ladson-Billings (2003) has argued for the social studies (which includes history) to serve as the curricular home for ‘unlearning racism’, the Social Studies or History Methods course should correspondingly serve as the preparatory home for teacher candidates to become equipped to lead such curricular change. The course is especially well-placed for an exploration of one’s identity when one considers that racial identity is ‘produced in a specific context of social, historical, and material practices of nation building’ (St. Denis and Schick, 2003: 59). As Levine-Rasky (2000: 279) has noted, for white teacher candidates, figuring out what white identity means is not sufficient. They need to understand the social and historical contexts in which it positions itself to become dominant. What better place to do this than in the History Methods course?

### *9.3.2 Attracting and supporting the Robins, Liu Weis and Anas*

Robin, Liu Wei and Ana represent the future for a history education for ‘unlearning racism’. Their narratives also make it clear that so long as there are no broader changes made to the culture of schools, the teaching profession and teacher education programs, they will be limited in what they can enact.

#### **Reorienting the focus**

As mentioned above, Sleeter (2016) argues that teacher education has spent most of its focus on helping whites ‘catch up’. While she does not dismiss the importance of educating racially aware white teacher candidates, acknowledging that much of her work has focused on this, she argues that attention should also be dedicated to ‘reconfiguring teacher education in a way that invites and supports a population of candidates that mirrors that demographics of children and youth in the schools’ (Sleeter, 2016: 1067). While Sleeter (2016) is referring primarily to racialized teachers, I extend this argument to teachers from other subordinated identities (e.g. transgendered, non-native English speakers, etc.), many of whom regard the classroom

as a space where marginalized identities are not welcomed. Indeed, as Robin pointed out, most of his friends who identify as trans or gay would never even consider entering the teaching profession, out of fear of being hypersexualized.

Hopson (2013) warns that it is naive to equate more minority teachers with more politicized teachers. This was confirmed by my own findings that showed many of the racial and ethnic minority teachers not espousing any sense of political imperative as teachers. Yet I believe that the intentional recruitment of a more diverse group of history teacher candidates, not only based on their identities but their views and understandings of history education, should become the main focus in an attempt to create a teaching force that is ready and prepared to teach a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

The benefits of more diverse history teachers cannot be overstated—students seeing themselves represented in the teaching body being just one example. A more diverse makeup of teacher education programs would also benefit the other teacher candidates, as evidenced by Liu Wei who attributed much of the knowledge he had gained over the year to the diverse perspectives brought by his colleagues. Diversity within a group of teacher candidates has been shown by other research (Daniel, 2009) to enable discussions on ‘difficult issues’ or, as Dei (2001: 149) has argued, to enhance everyone’s education, for ‘knowledge also enters schools through the presence of bodies’.

The question then is how do you get them to enrol? As other scholars have rightly pointed out, this is no easy feat, especially when the Robins, Liu Weis and Anas are those whose histories were sidelined during their own education which as Stanley (2006: 37) argues makes racialized students believe that ‘school is about and for racialized white people’. To convince these same students to become teachers in a system that silenced their histories and invalidated their sense of worth requires nothing less than an entire cultural shift.

While it is beyond the scope of this conclusion to discuss all the changes that would be required to effect such a shift, I will discuss two recommendations that emerged out of the findings and conclusions. While I do not claim that they provide a definitive



way forward, I offer them as suggestions that I believe would help in supporting and enabling these teacher candidates to teach a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

### Increasing the support outside the classroom

The first recommendation stems from my discussion with Robin, who recounted the lack of support he had received from the Department of Education during his transition. While he had been permitted to take a semester off, he received no support from the department with regards to basic issues such as a name change with the university administration.

Robin had felt alone and unsupported by his department—one that he explained professed to be one of *the* ‘social-justice’ departments in the province. As he explained, ‘They didn’t even know the steps. And I bet they didn’t try to find out after, just assuming that they won’t see someone like me for another couple years’.

He spoke convincingly of the need for teacher education programs to establish protocols for trans people navigating their degrees. Administrative staff must be educated and supported so that they can in turn assist teacher candidates who find themselves on what Robin had called the ‘outer edge’. Likewise, Liu Wei’s experience of being told to ‘go back for a few days’ to a practicum where he was subjected to ongoing racism also indicated an absence of proper support. In his case, the lack of support was grounded in a larger view of schools as neutral, colour blind spaces and a trivializing of Liu Wei’s very real experience with racism. Yet both Robin and Liu Wei’s experiences confirmed their ‘outsider’ status in the teaching profession. The experiences and interactions that teacher candidates have with administrative staff outside the classroom are arguably just as important as those they have inside the classroom. Consequently, if teacher education programs are to attract and retain a more diverse cohort of teacher candidates, they need to ensure that the administration is prepared and willing to respond to the diverse needs of these students and committed to advocating for their safety and well-being.

### Becoming more selective of associate teachers

The second recommendation emerges in response to Robin and Liu Wei’s encounters with their associate teachers, which were respectively characterized by mockery of

their interests; a need to hide part of one's identity; overt racism; and being discouraged from teaching anything 'too dark or depressing'. Their experiences echo those chronicled in other studies (Wilkins and Lall, 2011; Misco and Hamot, 2012) that have pointed to the racism racialized teacher candidates have experienced from their associate teachers.

While many scholars have made recommendations concerning teacher educators in the university classroom—Sleeter (2016: 1065) for example suggesting that Bachelor of Education programs only 'engage excellent teachers of minoritized students as teacher educators'—little attention has been paid to the selection of associate teachers. The argument that teacher education programs already struggle to attract teachers to mentor their teacher candidates seems to me a timid if not inauthentic excuse to not look for improvements. Worse, in fact entirely unacceptable is the suggestion by some that teacher candidates can learn valuable lessons ('how not to teach') even when placed with a 'bad' associate teacher. If teacher education programs are to 'walk the social justice talk' that they communicate in their program descriptions, they need to become more selective in their choices of associate teachers.

This is not only critical in ensuring that no teacher candidate experiences what Robin and Liu Wei did, which although fortunately did not appear to have dissuaded either from pursuing a career in teaching could very well have done so; but it also supports Cochran-Smith's (1991) argument that teacher candidates can only learn how to reform schooling practices if they work alongside an experienced educator who is him/herself working to reform the system.

In the short term, engaging only this kind of associate teacher—who sees their role as political, holds an expertise and passion for teaching these previously silenced topics, and who understands the interplay between their identity and their historical ascriptions—ensures that those teacher candidates who are knowledgeable, politicized and motivated to teach a history for 'unlearning racism' are not pushed to leave the profession. In the long term, a better selection process of associate teachers may draw in more diverse teacher candidates as it shows a real commitment on the part of the teacher education program to put words to deeds.

## **9.4 Contributions of the study**

This research makes important contributions to both research and practice. Based on my theoretical positioning in CRT, it was critical that these contributions be in line with the objectives of CRT research. According to Hylton (2012: 28), ‘The politics of CRT research posit that there must be some impact on (or challenge to) negative racialized relations’.

### *9.4.1 Contribution to research*

Most research on teacher candidates has explored teacher purpose and teacher knowledges separately, one school of thought arguing that it is not so much teacher knowledge but teacher purpose that determines whether they will confront or conform to the curriculum (Barton and Levstik, 2004). Another argues that it is teachers’ content knowledge (official, counter and experiential) that will determine whether they are able to challenge the master narrative that is privileged by the curriculum (Salinas and Blevins, 2013). By examining knowledge and purpose alongside one another, this study demonstrated how any discussion that seeks to move teacher candidates toward a more social justice/anti-racist practice needs to consider the two together, as studying only one provides an incomplete picture at best. Furthermore, in distinguishing between the different types of knowledge (official, counter and experiential), this research provides a more nuanced depiction of Ontario teacher candidates’ knowledge, something that most previous research on teacher knowledge has omitted.

This research also provides an original contribution to knowledge in its decision to explore the influence of teacher candidates’ identities on their understandings of and orientations to Canadian history. Despite a growing body of research that has explored students’ identities in relation to the history classroom, this remains underexplored in relation to history teacher candidates. However, as the findings made clear, any research that seeks to move teacher candidates toward a more social justice/anti-racist practice would be remiss not to consider the very different ways that teacher candidates are situated in relation to racism and the master narrative and how this influences their historical identifications. Robin, Liu Wei and Ana’s experiences further show how teacher candidates’ identities influence how they move through the space of teacher

education. This underscores the already significant body of research that challenges schools and teacher education programs as neutral spaces.

Studying all three aspects concurrently was challenging and was achieved by an innovative study design that combined and modified different research tools in creative ways. This enabled me to collect and analyze data that offered a holistic answer to the question of ‘How do we better prepare teacher candidates to teach a history for “unlearning racism”?’ In particular, while the mapping activity has been used by many other scholars to assess students’ views on historical significance and knowledge, my research contributes a new critical analytical tool enabling a CRT reading of maps that pushes past a less political content analysis. Attending to the silences—something other analyses have not done—is paramount when as Trouillot’s (1995: 27) words remind us, ‘any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences’.

It is hoped that my study will lead other researchers to further explore the interplay between knowledges, purposes and identities, as well as the relatively underexplored role of the associate teacher in supporting or undermining efforts toward a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

#### *9.4.2 Contribution to practice*

As an educator, it was equally important to me that this study make a pedagogical contribution, both for the teacher candidates who participated, as well as the teacher educators who graciously allowed me into their classrooms.

For the teacher educators, the contribution this study made was in the initial findings and analysis report that I provided to each of them at the end of the year. In the report I identified the main areas where I felt the teachers needed more support. This included histories not just about but *from* the perspective of marginalized groups in order to challenge the misrecognition that was found to characterize most of the participants’ understandings, especially relating to Indigenous peoples who were cast in the narrative of colonialism as victims; further exploration of their identities and how they informed their historical perspectives and understandings, as well as their complicity in ongoing racial formations; and a recognition of the political nature of knowledge and teaching.

I met with each of the teacher educators to discuss my initial findings. All of them were very open to the suggestions. The conversations that ensued were extremely engaging and revealed some of the tensions and challenges of teaching the History Methods course. The conversations were turned into action by three of the teacher educators. One of them indicated that she had just finished updating her syllabus for the following year and had decided to have the teacher candidates work in diverse groups when creating their lesson plans. This was in part in response to my finding that some of the teacher candidates had attributed their openness and knowledge of different perspectives to their colleagues.

Another teacher educator, in response to the finding that many of her teacher candidates engaged in a misrecognition of Indigenous peoples, was taking steps to ensure that her classroom emphasized the agency and resilience of Indigenous peoples in order to protect against ‘the danger in allowing colonization to be the only story of Indigenous lives’ (Alfred and Corntassel, 2005: 601).

Finally, the third teacher educator indicated that he was going to use an activity modelled on my questionnaire to start the course the following year and use it as an entry point for discussing with teacher candidates’ the influence of their identities on their views of Canadian history.

Regarding the teacher candidates themselves, I believe the pedagogical nature of my study pushed them to think critically about history education; its purpose (something that one participant pointed out isn’t even covered in the History Methods course, exclaiming ‘Why do we even teach history?’); the political nature of all knowledge; and their identities and how these influence their historical identifications. Robin, reflected at the end of our first interview: ‘What I think was so interesting about this survey and interview is that you know, we were asked to look at ourselves in terms of Canadian history and I don’t think often that, in our classes, that’s explored’. Thus, and in light of Sleeter’s (1993) argument that a teacher’s orientation toward and adoption of social justice practice is contingent on teachers interrogating their racial identities, I would argue that from a pedagogical perspective as well my study made a significant contribution.

Lastly, at the end of the year, I provided all teacher candidates with a list of alternative resources (see Appendix H) that could support them in teaching a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

## **9.5 Limitations of the study**

An important part of any research project involves acknowledging how it is bound by limitations. The first limitation of the present study is a lack of Indigenous participants. Only one Métis teacher candidate participated in the study, however, he did not volunteer to participate in an interview. While on the one hand this can in part be attributed to the persistent underrepresentation of Indigenous teacher candidates in Ontario (Holden and Kitchen, 2018), it is also possible that my position as a white researcher played a part. And though I have argued that Indigenous histories and perspectives should be at the heart of the history classroom, and sought to centre Indigenous authors throughout the thesis, I have not been able to gather Indigenous teacher candidates’ voices in this research project. Feminist writer Anna Livia (1996) states that the writer is not only accountable for what she creates, but also for what she leaves out. So too is the researcher accountable for what she leaves out, and this is something that I continue to ruminate over.

It is important to briefly turn to the sample size of the research, which is small for reasons laid out in the methodology chapter. Yet this study makes no claim to represent the understandings and orientations of all Ontario history teacher candidates. Rather, it represents a critical examination of a small group and offers some possibilities as to the ways they could progress toward a history for ‘unlearning racism’.

Some may say that not following my participants into their practica signals another shortcoming of my research. However, the maps, timelines, written answers and the interviews gave me a solid understanding of their knowledges and orientations, and in turn how they were positioned in relation to taking up a history for ‘unlearning racism’. Furthermore, given the already complex and multi-pronged methodological approach, adding in another tool for data collection would have resulted in an excess of data that in turn, would have gone beyond the scope of a doctoral dissertation. I would humbly

suggest instead that following study participants into the classroom presents a logical next step for future research.

What I believe constitutes the greatest limitation of this research, in line with the one cited above, is that my ambition to engage in a multi-pronged, multi-phased research project resulted in a body of data too large to channel into one thesis. Indeed, I have only been able to include a little more than half of the data this research project gathered. Notwithstanding that Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's narratives draw from both stages of the data collection, I have not allotted space to the second stage data.

As discussed in the methodology chapter section, 'Changing Directions', the decision to include the second stage data would have come at the expense of centring Robin, Liu Wei and Ana's experiences, which shed light on the duality of marginalized identities as they relate to teaching a history for 'unlearning racism'. In the end, my commitment to privileging their voices superseded the need to present the second stage data, which remains an area for exploration in future publications.

## **9.6 Implications for future work**

While I believe that my thesis offers a number of implications for future research—as stated above—I would like to argue in the strongest terms that immediate attention be paid to developing frameworks for the selection of associate teachers who are supportive of and models for a history for 'unlearning racism', and more broadly, ready and able to support diverse teacher candidates. Clearly, this is a time-sensitive imperative when one considers Liu Wei and Robin's respective experiences. As long as there are no significant changes made to the ways that teacher education programs select which associate teachers they partner with, teacher candidates with marginalized identities continue to risk being silenced (as was Liu Wei's experience) or will feel compelled to silence themselves (e.g. Robin).

My thesis also sets the stage for further research on the influence teacher candidates' identities have on how they relate to and engage with Canadian history. This inquiry might even be extended to teachers, and the result could not only help shape professional development, but also assist in the selection of associate teachers.

Another potential direction for future research would be to follow up with Ana, Liu Wei and Robin and ask about their experiences post-graduation. Are they working as teachers, and if so, what have their experiences been? Do they feel like they are able to be visible (as Robin had hoped) and take up a history for ‘unlearning racism’, or are they limited in what they can do as a result of the pressures to conform?

## 9.7 Final thoughts

Ken Montgomery (2005: 428) writes that ‘All nations, especially white settler colonies such as Canada, enable the reproduction of racism in the present through narrativizations of their past’.

Subscribing to the argument that the Canadian history classroom has long been one of the main purveyors of these narrativizations, I undertook this thesis with the goal of identifying what was needed to better prepare history teacher candidates to teach a history of Canada that, rather than reproducing racism, helps to unlearn it.

As I am readying to submit my work against the background of the global COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of protesters across Canada are marching to demand justice for Black lives. This is not just in solidarity with our neighbours to the south, and in response to the brutal killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police, but in response to the deaths of Regis Korchinski-Paquet, an Afro-Indigenous woman in Toronto, D’Andre Campbell, a young Black Brampton, Ontario man, and Eishia Hudson, a 16-year old Indigenous girl in Winnipeg, all of whom died recently at the hands of or in the presence of Canadian police, a sobering reminder that racism is still with us and going strong—in Canada. Social media feeds that are inundated with white acknowledgements of white privilege—a testament to what Ahmed (2004) has termed the ‘non-performativity of anti-racism’—signal that much education remains to be done. I sincerely believe that this journey starts in the history classroom.

Charles Pascal wrote in 2016, ‘If not now, when?’ In 2020, I cannot help but ask, ‘What are we waiting for?’



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# Appendix A: Questionnaire



Survey # \_\_\_\_

## Survey: Ontario teacher candidates' understandings of and orientations to Canadian history

### A. MAPPING ACTIVITY (15 minutes)

In the space below, please draw a diagram (using words or images or both) of what you consider to be the **most significant** events, themes, and actors in Canadian history.

a. *Why did I choose these events, themes, and actors?*

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b. *Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel most confident teaching:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

c. *Of the events, themes, and actors listed above, I feel least confident teaching:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

1/4

*Have heard of*  
*Intermediate comprehension*  
*Know in detail*

**B. TIMELINE TASK**

**Part 1:** Please indicate your knowledge of each of the events below by ticking the appropriate box. If you have never heard of one of the events, please leave all the boxes in that row blank.

**Part 2:** Please **circle the 10 events** that you believe are the most important for students to learn about in the Grade 10 Canadian History course. If you feel there are any important events missing, please add them at the bottom of the list in the spaces provided.

- The Komagata Maru, a ship carrying 376 passengers from Punjab, British India is refused entry, 1914
- Canadians are victorious at the Battle of Vimy Ridge, 1917
- The Winnipeg General Strike: over 30,000 union and non-union workers walk off the job, May 1919
- The League of Indians of Canada is formed by Frederick Ogilvie Loft, 1919
- The Chinese Exclusion Act bans most forms of Chinese immigration to Canada, 1923
- The Indian Act is amended, making raising money to press for land claims a criminal offence, 1927
- The Persons Case legally recognizes women as persons, enabling them to access public office, 1929
- The Great Depression, 1929-1939
- The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)/Radio Canada is created as a crown corporation, 1936
- Canada declares war on Nazi Germany, 1939
- The M.S. St. Louis, carrying Jewish refugees fleeing Europe is denied entrance at all Canadian ports, 1939
- Japanese Internment, over 20,000 Japanese Canadians are forcibly moved to internment camps, 1942-1947
- Lester B. Pearson proposes the first-ever peacekeeping force to secure an end to the Suez crisis, 1956
- The Canadian Bill of Rights is enacted, 1960
- The Quiet Revolution: dramatic cultural, political and social shift in Quebec, 1960-1970
- Africville residents are evicted and their homes are demolished, 1964-1970
- The Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program is created, 1966
- The Multiculturalism Policy of Canada is implemented, 1971
- The Canadian Charter of Rights & Freedoms comes into force, 1982
- The Oka Crisis: 78-day standoff between Mohawk protesters, police and the army in response to plans to build a golf course on Mohawk burial lands, 1990
- The Yonge Street Uprising occurs in response to the perceived racism of the Metro Toronto Police, 1992
- Canada refuses to join the United States in the war against Iraq, 2003
- Canada votes 'No' against the adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 2007
- The federal government closes 12 of the 16 Status of Women offices across the country, 2007
- The Truth & Reconciliation Commission documents the truth of survivors and families of residential schools and produces a report identifying 94 calls to action, 2008-2015
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



*a. Please describe your reasoning for your selection of the 10 events.*

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*b. Of the 10 events you selected, which do you think are the 3 most important ones that students should learn?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*c. Which events on the original list of 25 do you think are the 3 least important for students to learn?*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**C. PURPOSE OF HISTORY EDUCATION**

Please answer the following questions.

*a. What do you believe is the purpose of Canadian history education?*

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*b. What are some of the challenges of teaching Canadian history in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom?*

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*c. Please list three reasons why you want to be a history teacher:*

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**D. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Please answer the following questions by ticking off the appropriate box or filling in the blank space.

**Q1. What is your age?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2. What gender do you identify with?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3. Do you think of yourself as: (circle however many apply)**

- Lesbian, gay or homosexual
- Straight, or heterosexual
- Not listed above. Please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Not sure
- Prefer not to disclose

**Q4. Would you consider yourself to have a disability?**

- Yes
  - No
- If yes, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5. Did you grow up:**  In Ontario  
 Outside Ontario: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please specify the region:**

- Rural area
- Small population centre (1,000 to 29,999 people)
- Medium population centre (30,000 to 99,999 people)
- Large population centre (100,000 or larger)

**Q6. In your own words, how would you describe your ethnic identity?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q7. In your own words, how would you describe your racial identity?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q8. How would you describe your social class?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Q9. Are you the first generation in your family to attend university?**

- Yes
- No

**Q10. Please indicate all the degrees you have completed? Please specify the discipline. (e.g. Bachelor's degree- History & Political Science)**

- Bachelor's degree \_\_\_\_\_
- Master's degree \_\_\_\_\_
- Professional degree \_\_\_\_\_
- Doctoral degree \_\_\_\_\_

**Q11. How many Canadian history courses did you take in university?**

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- More than 10

**Please indicate your program (e.g. Consecutive or Concurrent), your stream (e.g. Junior/Intermediate or Intermediate/Senior), and your teachables:**

Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
Stream: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teachables: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!

4/4

## Appendix B: Description of events on timeline

The **Komagata Maru** was a ship carrying 376 Indian passengers seeking to immigrate to Canada that arrived on the west coast of the Dominion of Canada in 1914 but was refused docking. It represented one of many incidents in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century involving exclusionary laws in Canada designed to keep out Asian immigrants. See <http://komagatamarujourney.ca/incident>

The Canadian Corps seized **Vimy Ridge** in April 1917 from the Germans who had held it since 1914. Allied forces had previously attempted to capture it to no avail. According to Canadian historian Tim Cook (n.d), ‘Many historians and writers consider the Canadian victory at Vimy a defining moment for Canada, when the country emerged from under the shadow of Britain and felt capable of greatness’. See [http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/vimy/index\\_e.shtml](http://www.warmuseum.ca/cwm/exhibitions/vimy/index_e.shtml)

The **Winnipeg General Strike**, 15 May-26 June, 1919 marked one of the biggest labour actions Canada has ever seen. Strikers from both the public and private sector, representing the ethnic diversity of Winnipeg’s working class and including women and men took to the streets of Winnipeg to stand in solidarity with one another. It marked the culmination of decades of labour movement struggles. For a walking/driving tour of the strike, and to download a free copy of a graphic novel of the strike, see [mfl.ca/1919](http://mfl.ca/1919)

In 1919 the **League of Indians** was formed around the leadership of Mohawk First World War veteran Frederick Ogilvie Loft. The first pan-Indigenous organization sought to represent and fight for Indigenous rights. As Story (2015: 33) writes, ‘Although the league lost its influence by the mid-1920s, it provided the foundations for regional groups to rise up, and continue the struggle for Indigenous rights into the 1930s.’ See Story (2015) for a detailed account.

The **Chinese Exclusion Act** of 1923 banned Chinese immigration to Canada. Replacing the discriminatory head tax that had been imposed in 1885, the Act prohibited most Chinese from coming to Canada and instituted regulations that required all Canadian-born and naturalized Chinese persons in Canada to register with the authorities and obtain an identity certificate. Restrictions on Chinese immigration would continue long past the repeal of the Act in 1947. See [www.roadtojustice.ca/laws/chinese-exclusion-act](http://www.roadtojustice.ca/laws/chinese-exclusion-act) for an incisive account.

In 1927, in response to increased political organizing by First Nations, an **amendment to the Indian Act** (Section 141) was pushed through making it illegal to raise money to press for land claims without a special license granted by the Superintendent General. This effectively thwarted the pursuance of land claims by First Nations as the government now held control over their ability to do so. Nevertheless, some organizations like the Nisga’a Land Committee persisted and continued to fight for their rights. For more on the Indian Act and the amendments see [https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the\\_indian\\_act/](https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/the_indian_act/)

In 1929, after the Supreme Court of Canada refused to recognize women as persons as defined in the *British North America Act* of 1867, five Alberta women brought an appeal (the **Persons Case**) to the British Privy Council, Canada's highest court of appeal. The Privy Council declared women as 'persons' rendering them eligible for appointment to the Senate. The ruling, while marking a significant advance for some women, did not address racial inequalities that continued to persist as evidenced by the delayed enfranchisement of different groups of women over the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For a delineation of the five women who were at once champions of women's equality and proponents of the eugenics movement and racist policies toward Asians, see Sharpe and McMahon (2008).

Between 1929-1939, the **Great Depression**, a worldwide economic downturn took place. Canada's economy was ravaged, millions of Canadians lost their jobs and fell hungry and homeless. The burden was felt differently across the country as well as between classes. The view of government and the responsibility of the state toward its citizens changed after the Depression and led to the eventual creation of the social welfare state. See <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/great-depression>

In 1936, the **Canadian Broadcasting Corporation** (CBC) was created as a Crown Corporation to 'counter the growing influence of American radio on Canadian airwaves' (CBC, n.d.). The creation of the CBC was the result of a royal commission (Aird Commission) that recommended that all broadcasting in Canada be organized as a national public service and the efforts of the Canadian Radio League, which advocated for public ownership and operation such that it would retain its independence from commercial and private interests. See Raboy (2011) for a description of the emergence of the CBC.

The **M.S. St. Louis** was a ship carrying over 900 Jewish refugees trying to flee Nazi Germany. It was denied entry by Cuba, the United States and finally Canada on June 7, 1939, and forced to return to Europe, where '255 were killed during the war, the vast majority of them dying in concentration camps' (Tikkanen, 2019). Canada's refusal to allow entry to the passengers was illustrative of the anti-Semitic and harsh immigration policies of Canada in the 1930s. See Schwinghamer (n.d.) for detailed history.

Between 1942 and 1947, over 20,000 Japanese Canadians were removed from their homes on the West Coast of Canada and interned in camps in interior British Columbia and other provinces. Their confiscated properties were sold, their mail censored, and their movement regulated. Despite claims that their removal was for security reasons, Japan having just entered World War II, the removal was 'the culmination of the movement to eliminate Asians from the west coast begun decades earlier in British Columbia. For more on **Japanese Internment** see <http://www.japanesecanadianhistory.net/GuideExcerptsForSocialStudies11.pdf>

In 1956, Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the **Suez Canal** which had been built and controlled by the British and French. The British, French and Israelis attacked in order to retake the canal. Lester B. Pearson, Canada's secretary of state for external affairs and representative to the United Nations proposed the creation of an

international peace and police force in order to bring an end to the fighting and peace to the region. Pearson received the Nobel Peace Prize and went on to become Prime Minister in 1963. For more on the Suez Canal Crisis and Lester B. Pearson see [www.suezcrisis.ca/summary.html](http://www.suezcrisis.ca/summary.html)

The **Canadian Bill of Rights** was enacted in 1960 and presented the first federal law that defended individual freedoms and human rights. According to many, the bill represented a ‘dismal failure’ (Clément, 2008). While it enabled judges to veto legislation passed by Parliament if it was deemed to violate fundamental freedoms, ‘Of the thirty-five claims brought under the Bill of Rights between 1960 and 1982, only five were successful and just one resulted in striking down legislation’ (Clément, 2008). Nevertheless, it paved the way for an amendment to the constitution in 1982, known as the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which would be far more effective in challenging human rights violations. See Clément (2008) for more information.

**The Quiet Revolution** was a period in 1960s Quebec marked by a large-scale rejection of past values. Liberal and secular attitudes replaced conservatism and traditionalism, and marriage and birth rates saw a steady decline. It was also marked by social change, the development of government institutions and an increased role of the state in economic, social and cultural life. Nationalism was redefined, with greater demands for French in everyday life and respect for the autonomy of Quebec, as well as equal status in Confederation. This period also gave rise to the development of the separatist movement. See Bélanger (2000) for more detail.

In the 1960s, the African Nova Scotian community of **Africville** was destroyed in order to make way for industrial development. Its citizens were relocated, and their homes destroyed. This followed the long encroachment on Africville land by facilities and institutions (an infectious diseases hospital, a prison, a dump, an abattoir) no one else wanted. Nelson (2008: 5) explains that ‘the razing of Africville is a story of white domination, a story of the making of a slum, and of the operation of technologies of oppression and regulation over time’. For more on the history of Africville and the museum that was established to ensure the injustice is remembered see <https://africvillemuseum.org/the-story>

The **Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program (SAWP)** was created in 1966 in order to address the labour shortage in the Canadian agricultural sector. Jamaican workers were the first to arrive in Canada under the SAWP. Migrant labour has been a critical part of Canada’s agricultural sector since the 1960s. Social justice and migrant rights organizations maintain that the structure of the SAWP (e.g. lack of monitoring, no access to appeal, high turnover rate of workers) leaves migrant workers in a precarious situation and allows for abuse by employers. They also point to the fact that most workers are dispossessed, and disenfranchised workers from the Global South, leaving them no choice but to accept the low wages, poor working and living conditions and lack of legislative protections. For more, see [justicia4migrantworkers.org](http://justicia4migrantworkers.org)

**Multiculturalism** became official government policy in 1971. The policy sought to promote respect for cultural diversity and recognize the contributions of different ethnic groups to Canadian society. The policy was seen as politically motivated, as the Liberals were losing their stronghold over the province of Quebec and needed to grow

their base (Wayland, 1997). Critical scholars argue that the policy was the response to the political struggles of marginalized groups (Thobani, 2007) and the realization that it was a way to ‘manage the reality that Canada could no longer be the imagined white nation’ (Ng, 1995, cited in Chatterjee, Mucina and Tam, 2012: 128). See Thobani (2007) for a critical race perspective on multiculturalism.

The **Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms** came into force in 1982 as an amendment to Canada’s Constitution. It emerged following years of dispute between then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and the provinces over the patriation of the Constitution, which up until 1981 required Britain’s permission to change it. The contents of the Charter were widely debated, but finally in 1982, a series of protections were included in the Constitution that protected fundamental freedoms, legal rights, equality rights, and language rights. For more on the Charter, its application and limitations see <https://www.lawnow.org/significance-charter-canadian-legal-history/>

The **Oka Crisis** began in summer of 1990 in Kanehsatà:ke, a Mohawk community in Quebec. The confrontation was the result of proposals to expand a golf course and develop condominiums on land that included a sacred Mohawk burial ground (Lisk, 2020). After 78 days, the armed conflict came to an end and the expansion was cancelled. The standoff was both a moment of resilience and solidarity against systemic violence, and a moment of loss, anger and grief for the Mohawk people (Kanerahthena:wi Whyte, 2019). As a result of the standoff, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People was established that culminated in a report with 444 major recommendations relating to governance, land and resources, treaties, education and economic development (Lisk, 2020). For more on the Oka Crisis, see the landmark documentary *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* (1993).

In 1992, the **Yonge Street Uprising** took place in the city of Toronto in response to anti-Black racism and police brutality. The Black Action Defence Committee (BADC) took to the streets to demand justice for Raymond Lawrence, a young Black man who had been killed by an undercover cop and Michael Wade Lawson, a Black teenager, who had been killed by two officers who were acquitted of second-degree murder by an all-white jury earlier that year. The anti-racist legislation reforms that were passed by the NDP government in the following years, including the requirement for school boards to develop and implement anti-racism policies can largely be attributed to the uprising and the work of the BADC (Black, 2017). For more on the uprising, see provocative documentary *It Takes a Riot: Race, Rebellion, Reform* (2017).

In 2003, following the UN Security Council’s refusal to sanction the US-led invasion of Iraq, **Canada refused to join the Iraq war**. According to Parisella (2013), then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien’s refusal—backed by a majority of Canadians—marked a defining moment for Canada. Canada had been an ally of the US in previous military efforts and this marked a ‘rare expression of Canadian sovereignty.’ (Freeman, 2013). While many feared the decision would jeopardize U.S.-Canada relations, the fall-out was minimal (Freeman, 2013). Anti-war researchers have documented at length the significant contributions Canada made to the Iraq war (Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade), challenging the official narrative of non-participation. For more on Canada’s involvement, see Sanders (2011).

The **UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples** (UNDRIP) was adopted in 2007, with the aim of protecting collective rights of Indigenous peoples that may not be protected by other human rights charters. Canada, the United States, Australia and New Zealand (all countries with colonial histories) voted against it, arguing that ‘the level of autonomy recognized for Indigenous peoples in the UNDRIP was problematic and would undermine the sovereignty of their own states, particularly in the context of land dispute and natural resource extraction.’ (Hanson, n.d.) Although in response to growing lobbying efforts by Indigenous and human rights organizations Canada signed the UNDRIP in 2010, many critics argue that it was a ‘qualified recognition’ more about gaining public praise than actually committing to it. See Hanson (n.d.) for more.

In 2007, the **Conservative federal government closed 12 of the 16 Status of Women offices** across the country. Status of Women Canada has as its goal to advance women’s economic equality and human rights as well as end violence against women. The closure followed a series of decisions by the government including the cancellation of the national childcare program, a refusal to move forward on pay equity, and instituted a no-lobbying no-advocacy rule on any federally funded women’s organizations (History in our faces on occupied land, 2008). See [http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/acsw\\_coalition.pdf](http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/acsw_coalition.pdf).

The **Truth and Reconciliation Commission** was a commission established by the parties of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement in 2008. It was tasked with documenting the history and ongoing legacy of the residential school system on Indigenous peoples in Canada. The commission, which traveled across the country to give survivors and their families the opportunity to share their experiences of the schools, brought national attention to a history that had long been erased from national memory. The TRC came to an end in 2015 with the released of a report and 94 Calls to Action. See <http://trc.ca> for more. As of 2019, research demonstrates that only 9 Calls to Action have been completed (Howell and Mosby, 2019). Of note, neither of the two calls that pertain to education (#62 and #63) are on this list.

## Appendix C: Interview guide

### Questionnaires:

#### Mapping activity:

- Can you tell me a bit about how you mapped out what you consider to be the most significant events, actors and themes in Canadian history?
- Who and what kinds of history does your map centre?
- What is not on your map? Can you explain why?
- You indicated that you feel most confident teaching \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you think this is the case?
- You also indicated that you feel least confident teaching \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Why do you think this is the case? What are some ways that you think would help build your confidence in teaching these topics?

#### Timeline activity:

- Of the events that you indicated you know in detail, why do you think you have so much knowledge of them?
- What about the events that you indicated you had only heard of? What do you think is the reason for your limited knowledge of these events compared to the others?
- Did you add any events to the list that you thought were missing? If so, can you explain your additions?
- Tell me about the 10 events you selected as the most important for students to learn. Can you identify any theme or narrative that runs through the ones you selected?
- Can you explain why you didn't include the other events in your top 10?
- Are these events currently taught in the Grade 10 Canadian History class? Why do you think they are/are not?

#### Purpose of history education:

- You wrote that you see the purpose of history education as \_\_\_\_\_. Can you elaborate on this?
- Let's discuss the challenges of teaching Canadian history. You wrote that you see \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ as challenges. Can you elaborate a bit?
- Do you think as a history teacher you are faced with the same challenges that your history teachers were faced with when you were in school? Do you think all history teachers face the same challenges? Or different challenges?
- Can you tell me more about your motivations for becoming a history teacher?
- Is history education political?



## **Identity:**

- Can you describe to me in your own words your identity?
- How does your identity influence the responses you provided in the questionnaire, and what you think is significant in Canadian history?
- Do you think your students' identities influence their understandings of and orientations to Canadian history?
- Did you see yourself reflected in the history curriculum when you were a student?
- How do you think as a history teacher you can recognize and respect your students' diverse identities in the history classroom?

\*Additional questions and prompts will be asked according to what the participants wrote in their questionnaires and any other topics that emerge in the interview.

## Appendix D: Introduction letter to teacher educators



Christiana Fizet, PhD Candidate  
Moray House School of Education  
University of Edinburgh  
e: [cfizet@ed.ac.uk](mailto:cfizet@ed.ac.uk)  
t: 613-255-2545

Dear history teacher educator,

August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015

My name is Christiana Fizet. I am a PhD student in the Moray House School of Education at the University of Edinburgh and also a Visiting Research student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa for the 2015-2016 academic year. I am conducting research exploring Ontario history teacher candidates' understandings and orientations to the teaching of Canadian History and am writing to ask whether your class would be interested in participating in this study.

Despite a growth in research that has sought to map out students' cognitive frames of history following the understanding that, "good teaching depends to a large degree in paying attention to the narratives students already possess in any given subject area" (Sears, 2009: 2), little systematic research has been conducted on the pre-existing frameworks of Canadian History that teacher candidates enter the Bachelor of Education program with. At the same time, despite a smaller but growing body of research that explores how students' ethnic identities influence their views on historical significance and calls to extend this research to consider the impact of other markers such as gender and social class, no similar research has been undertaken on history teacher candidates' identities.

My doctoral research, thus, proposes to explore the understandings of Canadian History that Ontario history teacher candidates hold upon entering the Bachelor of Education, how they evolve over the course of the program, and how they are influenced by their identities. With your support, I hope to extend the existing body of knowledge on history education by providing insight into who history teacher candidates are and how they understand Canadian History. Some of the questions guiding the study are: Do history teacher candidates' narratives of Canadian History align with or break from the master narrative of Canada? Are they entering classrooms prepared and confident to challenge the silences of official history and to teach from multiple perspectives, or do they accept the curriculum unproblematically? How do they conceptualize their role as history teachers and the purpose of national history education? Finally, how do their identities influence what they deem to be significant in Canadian History?

The research will be undertaken in two stages, the first stage at the beginning of the academic year (September 2015) and the second at the end of the academic year (Spring 2016). I aim to conduct surveys with history teacher candidates at four different teacher education programs across Ontario followed by interviews with a sub-sample drawn from the survey participants.

I would be very grateful if you would allow me to visit your class at some point within the first three weeks of term in order that I could present the research initiative to the teacher candidates and have those keen to participate sign the attached consent form and complete the first survey. The survey would take no more than 40 minutes. Interviews would be conducted within one to two weeks of completing the initial survey with a select number of teacher candidates in accordance with their availability.

With your permission, I would return to your class at the end of the academic year and have the teacher candidates complete a slightly modified survey as well as conduct a second round of interviews with the original sub-sample. I would ask that again I be allowed 40 minutes of class time to have them complete the second survey followed by 10 minutes during which they will be provided with their initial survey (completed at the beginning of the year) and asked to reflect on the differences/similarities they observe in their responses. All scheduling would be coordinated in advance and be completely flexible to the logistical needs of the course.

I believe this research can benefit teacher candidates in that it will provide them with an opportunity to engage in a reflective process of their own knowledge and views of Canadian History and the connections to their identities. Such reflection can support prospective teachers in preparing for the important task of teaching new generations of Canadian students our shared and diverse history from a perspective that acknowledges the multiple ways of knowing and seeing the world. I also firmly believe that the findings from this research can serve to benefit teacher educators like yourself as it will not only identify the pre-existing understandings with which teacher candidates across Ontario enter the program, but also explore how these understandings are influenced by a variety of factors.

The survey has been piloted on a group of recently graduated history teacher candidates, and revised following the recommendations of a focus group. As someone with a great deal of expertise in history and experience working with teacher candidates, I believe you might also have some recommendations and have thus attached the survey for your review. On completion of the data collection next spring, I will provide you with a brief report (two A4 sides) of the key findings at which point I would be happy to return to discuss the report in person with you and to gain your insight on the findings.

If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisors, Dr. Rowena Arshad ([Rowena.arshad@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Rowena.arshad@ed.ac.uk)) and Dr. Akwugo Emejulu ([Akwugo.emejulu@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Akwugo.emejulu@ed.ac.uk)). I would be delighted to provide you with further details, as it is my hope I have peaked your interest enough so as to gain your support and that you allow me access to your class.

Yours sincerely,

Christiana Fizet

# Appendix E: Information sheet and consent form



Christiana Fizet, PhD Candidate  
Moray House School of Education  
University of Edinburgh  
e: [cfizet@ed.ac.uk](mailto:cfizet@ed.ac.uk)  
t: 613-255-2545

## Participant Information & Consent Form

### Invitation to participate

My name is Christiana Fizet and I am a PhD student in the Department of Education at the University of Edinburgh and a visiting research student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa for the 2015-2016 year. My research explores Ontario history teacher candidates' understandings and orientations to the teaching of Canadian history and I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

### Aims of the research

- To identify the pre-existing frameworks of Canadian history that Ontario history teacher candidates enter the Bachelor of Education program with
- To measure how teacher candidates' understandings and orientations to the teaching of Canadian history change over the course of the Bachelor of Education program
- To understand how teacher candidates' identities influence their views of historical significance

### Research plan and method

The research will occur in two stages. Teacher candidates at four different universities across Ontario will be asked to complete a survey in September 2015 and again in May 2016. Following each of the surveys, interviews will be conducted with a sub-sample of the survey participants. Surveys will take 40 minutes to complete and be conducted during class time. Interviews will be conducted according to teacher candidates' availability and will last approximately 30 minutes.

### What am I asking of you?

I would be very grateful if you would complete a survey, which will include activities and questions on what you believe are the most significant actors, events and themes in Canadian history, and what you see as the purpose of history education. In addition, you will be asked to fill out some demographic information. I will come back to your class in the spring (May 2016) to give you a second survey. Once you have completed that survey, I will return this initial one to you and will ask that you compare your responses in the two surveys and reflect on the differences and similarities in what you wrote.

I also invite you to participate in a follow-up interview in the coming weeks and one in May following the second survey. In the interview, you will be asked to elaborate on what you wrote in the surveys as well as some questions regarding your identity. If you are interested in being interviewed, you can opt-in at the bottom of the form by providing me with your email address and/or phone number and I will contact you to schedule a time that works for you. In the interview in the spring, I will bring the transcript from our first interview as well as both of your surveys and together we will look at the differences and similarities in your responses.

### How does this benefit you?

This research presents an opportunity for you to see how your understanding of Canadian history and orientation to history education evolve and shift over the course of the first year of the BEd program. This knowledge can support you in your early career as a history teacher and help you become more aware of the different understandings and orientations to Canadian history that your students bring with them to the classroom. In addition, all participants will be provided with a list of alternative history teaching

resources that I have developed over the past several years that can be used in Intermediate and Senior division Canadian History courses.

**Potential Risks**

The only known risks associated with this project are that you may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions and that the information you provide in confidence could be compromised if not properly protected. To minimize these risks participants can skip any questions they don't wish to answer. In addition, all surveys will be coded with a number, which will only be associated with your name on a master list that will be stored separately from the other data. As noted below, great care will be taken to ensure anonymity throughout the duration of the research, including publication.

**Confidentiality**

All information collected through this research will be kept confidentially: all hard copies will be stored in a locked filing cabinet and digital versions will be stored in encrypted folders. Only I will have access to the information you provide. Everything you communicate in the surveys, interviews and via any other communication we have will be kept in confidence from your colleagues, teacher educators and teacher mentors. All publications and presentations that emerge out of this research will ensure that your privacy is maintained.

**Use of results**

The findings of this research will serve as the basis for my PhD thesis as well as a number of presentations and publications. I will provide all participants as well as teacher educators with a summary of the findings (assuring complete anonymity) at the end of winter term with the hope that they can help improve existing curricula in teacher education programs.

***Please tick the boxes beside the statements you agree with and sign and date the bottom of the page. Please complete both copies I have provided you with and keep one for your own records. Once you have returned the other to me, I will provide you with a survey to complete.***

- I have read the above information and am willing to complete the two surveys (one today and the other in the spring of 2016).
- I am willing to participate in a follow-up interview should the researcher contact me. I can be reached via email: \_\_\_\_\_ or telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
- I understand the purpose of this research and that my responses to the surveys and/or interviews will be anonymised and used as part of the research as well as in future publications and presentations.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from this project at any time and have the right to refuse to answer any question.

Name (please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***This project has been approved by the Moray House School of Education Research Ethics Board at the University of Edinburgh. If you have any questions or concerns at any stage during the research, please contact Christiana Fizet (Principal Researcher) [cfizet@ed.ac.uk](mailto:cfizet@ed.ac.uk), Dr. Rowena Arshad (Supervisor) [Rowena.arshad@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Rowena.arshad@ed.ac.uk), or Shona Cunningham (Research Secretary at RKE Office) [shona.cunningham@ed.ac.uk](mailto:shona.cunningham@ed.ac.uk). Thank you.***

# Appendix F: Participant profiles

Participant Number	Age	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Disability	Hometown	Ethnic Identity	Racial Identity	Social class	First Gen Uni	Degrees	Can history courses	Program
1*	23	Male	Straight	No	Medium outside Ontario (Netherlands)	Dutch, albeit civically Canadian	Dutch	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	6-10 courses	Consecutive
2	24	Female	Straight	No	Ontario (undisclosed)	Canadian	White	middle-lower	No	Advanced diploma	1-2 courses	Concurrent
3	28	Female	Straight	Brain Injury	Large Ontario	White European background	White	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
13*	22	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	South Asian (Indian)		middle-class	No	Concurrent	1-2 courses	Concurrent
15*	26	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Canadian	white	middle-class	No	Advanced diploma	6-10 courses	Concurrent
17	22	Female	Straight	No	Medium Ontario	Scottish & German	Human race or white if you want a colour	middle-class	No	Bachelors	6-10 courses	Consecutive
19*	22	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Born Canadian with a West Indian heritage	Brown	upper middle-class	No	Bachelors	More than 10	Consecutive
20*	20	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Ethnically mixed (white and black), culturally Canadian	mixed (black and white)	middle-class	Yes	Concurrent	1-2 courses	Concurrent
23*	21	Male	Straight	No	Medium Ontario	Latino (South American)		middle-class	No	Concurrent	1-2 courses	Concurrent
29	20	Female	Straight	No	Medium Ontario & Large Ontario	African/Jamaican, so technically African descent	Black	middle-class	No	Concurrent	6-10 courses	Concurrent
31*	20	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Croatian + Polish	Caucasian	upper/middle-class	No	Concurrent	1-2 courses	Concurrent
32	23	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Serbian (born)/Canadian	white? Caucasian eastern european	upper/middle class	No	Concurrent	1-2 courses	Concurrent
34	28	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	My family is portuguese but we have moroccan ancestry, so I walk a fun line between black and white.	I'm Canadian to the core.	lower-middle class	Yes	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
35	26	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Polish	Polish	middle-class	No	Masters	1-2 courses	Consecutive
36	25	Male	Straight	No	Small Ontario	I describe myself as being Canadian with an ethnic background of Macedonian.	white/Slavic/mediterranean	middle-class	No	Bachelors	3-5 courses	Consecutive
39	23	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	child of Italian immigrants		middle-class	No	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
40	24	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	White, Portuguese, European	White	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	More than 10	Consecutive
42	22	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Canadian	Canadian-Italian	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
44*	30	Female	Straight	No	Large outside Ontario	Caucasian, European	German	middle-class	On one side	Masters	More than 10	Consecutive
49	22	Male	Straight	No	Medium Ontario	do not really identify specifically, but caucasian	I don't know	middle-class	Yes	Concurrent	3-5 courses	Concurrent
50	22	Female	Straight	No	Large outside Ontario	I am philipino mixed with Chinese and Spanish	Hard working, family oriented, religious, hospitable, etc.	middle-class	No	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
51	24	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Canadian, with strong Scottish lineage	white	well off, upper middle	No	Bachelors	3-5 courses	Consecutive
53	23	Male	Straight	Yes	Large Ontario	Canadian	white/European background	upper middle class	No	Bachelors	6-10 courses	Consecutive
57*	22	Trans male	Queer	No	Large Ontario	Mixed race, my father is Canadian and my mother is from India, she came to Canada when she was 12.	Mixed race but I am for the most part white passing, giving me more privilege than those who aren't.	medium, both my parents work	No	Concurrent	3-5 courses	Concurrent
58	19	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Scottish 4th Generation Canadian White/Caucasian I identify as a caucasian Canadian	white/Caucasian	middle-lower	Yes	Concurrent	3-5 courses	Concurrent
60	22	Female	Straight	No	Medium Ontario	Canadian Indian-Punjabi	Brown-South Asian-Indian	middle-class	Yes	Concurrent	3-5 courses	Concurrent
61*	22	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Lebanese-Canadian	Lebanese-Canadian	middle-class	No	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
64	21	Female	Straight	No	Rural Ontario	Canadian	white/Caucasian	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive

Interview participants are denoted by a \* beside the participant #

Participant Number	Age	Gender	Sexual Orientation	Disability	Hometown	Ethnic Identity	Racial Identity	Social class	First Gen Uni	Degrees	Can history courses	Program
65	27	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	I'm white, with British ancestry	white	upper middle class	Yes	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
66*	25	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	white Canadian	Canadian?	family is working class	Yes	Masters	More than 10	Consecutive
67*	24	Female	Straight	No	Small outside Ontario	Filipino	Asian	middle-class	No	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
68	27	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Polish-Canadian	white	middle-class	No	Bachelors	6-10 courses	Consecutive
70	40	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	European	Caucasian	middle	No	Bachelors	3-5 courses	Consecutive
72*	24	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	Canadian/French-Canadian; Caucasian; Originally from England + France	Canadian/French Canadian; Caucasian	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	3-5 courses	Consecutive
75*	23	Male	Gay	No	Small Ontario, Large Ontario	3/4 UK, 1/4 Lebanese	Caucasian	middle-class	No	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
76*	27	Male	Straight	No	Large Ontario	A dog, a mongrel. I'm the son of immigrants who themselves were immigrants. My ethnicity is vaguely European. I look North, but my grandfather is Italian. I'm a mix, and that's generous.	Race is a social construct. So, like, paper white. Snow white. Joe Biden trying to dance' white.	I come from upper-middle class and spent most of my adult life in poverty (like, poverty line poverty).	No	Masters	1-2 courses	Consecutive
80*	22	Male	Asexual	No	Medium Ontario	my ethnic identity would be Euro-American as my families comes from Scotland and Texas.	I would identify as white	Lower-middle class as a family, but on my own working class.	No	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
82	27	Female	Straight	No	Medium Ontario	I consider myself white from English and Scottish decent.	Caucasian	middle-class	Yes	Masters	1-2 courses	Consecutive
83*	22	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	I am a 2nd generation Canadian with roots in Malta and Romania.	Caucasian	upper middle class	No	Bachelors	3-5 courses	Consecutive
84*	22	Male	Bisexual	No	Rural Ontario	Caucasian, Canadian with respect and interest in Polish heritage.	Caucasian	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive
85*	23	Male	Straight	No	Large outside Ontario	Chinese	Asian	middle class?	Yes	Bachelors	3-5 courses	Consecutive
86	21	Female	Straight	Mental illness	Large Ontario	Canadian, European (Austrian/German/Dutch)	same	working class	Yes	Bachelors	3-5 courses	Consecutive
87	25	Male	Straight	No	Small Ontario	Metis	Metis	low-middle class	No	Bachelors	More than 10	Consecutive
88	23	Female	Prefer not to disclose	No	Medium Ontario	White Canadian born 2nd generation. Father immigrated from Scotland. Mother Canadian born her parents immigrants one Danish other Irish	white	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	6-10 courses	Consecutive
90	23	Female	Straight	No	Rural Ontario, Small Ontario	I am eastern European (Polish and Macedonian)	Caucasian	middle-class	Yes	Bachelors	6-10 courses	Consecutive
91*	37	Female	Straight	No	Large Ontario	I am a biracial woman whose heritage is both Irish and Puerto Rican	? I guess this depends on what you are asking. I would describe myself as biracial however I know I have not experienced racial prejudice in the ways visibly biracial people have because I look more white (sometimes people assume Greek or Italian).	I grew up in a low-to-middle class family (on an upwards trajectory). As an adult, I am now in the low-socio-economic class as both a student and single parent.	Yes	Bachelors	1-2 courses	Consecutive



# Appendix G: Alternative history teaching resources

## Alternative History Teaching Resources

Compiled by Christiana Fizet, PhD Candidate, University of Edinburgh

*\*While the list below is by no means complete, it aims to offer a variety of resources that can support you in bringing alternative perspectives and voices into the Intermediate/Senior Canadian History classroom.*

### Black History in Canada Education Guide

<http://www.blackhistorycanada.ca/education/LearningTools.pdf>

This resource explores Black Canadian history through collaborative activities and classroom discussions. Using Lawrence Hill's *The Book of Negroes*, it explores themes such as slavery, passage to Canada, the making and preservation of history, and engages students in issues of identity, equality, and justice.

### Under a Northern Star

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/northern-star/index-e.html>

Here, you can find seven collections housed at Library and Archives Canada that provide rich information on the diverse historical experiences of African Canadians. There are also Educational Resources, including lesson plans and handouts.

### Passages Canada-Lesson on Prejudice & Discrimination

<https://www.historicacanada.ca/sites/default/files/PDF/PrejudiceDiscriminationEN.pdf>

A lesson on prejudice and discrimination that asks "To what extent has our past informed and shaped our present?" Students are engaged in an exploration of Black Canadian historical and contemporary experiences of prejudice and discrimination. Activities task students with examining identity and its impact on our experiences, considering the prejudice and discrimination as well as privilege that certain identities bring.

### Garnet's Journey:

<http://garnetsjourney.com/>

A website that "tells the life story of Garnet Angecone in his own words. Garnet is an Aboriginal man who has survived a long journey—from the trap line, to residential school, to city life." You can access stories, as told by Garnet, in 30 short videos along with a 21-minute documentary, enabling you to bring a first hand account of a survivor of the Indian Residential school system into your classroom. The website comes with an Educational Resource Guide for teachers along with additional resources, including lesson plan ideas.

### First Nations veterans of WWII.

<http://www.nan.on.ca/article/honouring-our-veterans-473.asp>

"A short documentary featuring First Nations veterans of WWII filmed during the Nishnawbe Aski Nation's 2008 Keewaywin Chiefs Assembly in Chapleau, Ontario." This is a great resource to use to bring light to First Nations' contributions to Canada's war efforts.



**The KAIROS Blanket Exercise**

<http://www.kairoscanada.org/product/blanket-exercise-standard-edition>

The KAIROS Blanket Exercise is an interactive way to explore the nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous peoples in Canada, with an aim of working toward reconciliation through furthered understanding and respect. You can order the PDF version for free on the website. (There are a number of versions available, including one directed at ESL learners.)

**Métis Education Kit**

<http://www.metisnation.org/programs/education-training/education/m%C3%A9tis-education-kit/>

Excellent resource that includes a number of items you can use in your classroom, for example, a visual timeline of Métis history, flashcards, fiddle music.

**100 Years of Loss Curriculum**

<http://www.legacyofhope.ca/projects/100-years-of-loss-curriculum>

A resource created by the Legacy of Hope that supports teachers in teaching the history and legacy of residential schools in Canada. They have an Educational Kit that comes with a teacher's guide, lesson plans and extension activities. \*They have currently paused their circulation of the kit, which is normally available at no cost, but kits may become available again so it's worth it to check out the website.

**Where are the children?**

<http://wherearethechildren.ca/en>

This website (also created by the Legacy of Hope) was created to complement the traveling exhibition *Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of the Residential Schools* that explores the history and legacy of residential schools. In addition to accessing a number of Survivor stories, there is an interactive timeline and additional reading suggestions that you can use.

**Facing History and Ourselves-Stolen Lives: The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools**

<https://www.facinghistory.org/books-borrowing/stolen-lives-indigenous-peoples-canada-and-indian-residential-schools>

Facing History and Ourselves is an international educational and professional development organization "whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-Semitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry." This is their first Canadian resource (released in 2015) and can be downloaded for free if you sign up for their email list. The organization also runs online workshops for teachers to support them in using their resources.

**HerstoriesCafe**

<https://herstoriescafe.com/teachers/>

HerstoriesCafes are forums that take place across Toronto on women's history. The website provides information on upcoming cafes, as well as teacher resources where you can get summaries of past cafes along with additional reading and curriculum suggestions.

**Webinars for Teachers**

<http://canadashistory.ca/Education/Webinars/For-Teachers>

Great range of webinars for teachers, by teachers. From ways to teach social justice, decolonization, women's history, critical thinking, Idle No More, etc. you can get your hands on tried and tested ways to engage your students in various historical events.

**Welcome to Canada?**

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/bnaibrithcanada/pages/298/attachments/original/1445531466/wtc-student.pdf?1445531466>

A student resource guide that examines Canadian immigration policy and experiences from Confederation to the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The aim of the publication is to "counter all forms of racism that lead to prejudice and bigotry against minority groups" by "apply[ing] the lessons of the Holocaust to the challenges of today."

**Passages Canada- Invite a Speaker**

<http://passagestocanada.com/invite-a-speaker/>

A free service offered to schools and community groups where you can invite a speaker to talk about one or more themes (e.g. Asian Heritage, Black History/African Heritage, Refugee Experiences, Identity & Heritage, etc.). You can also access a rich collection of first-hand stories on the website that recount experiences of immigration, journeys to citizenship and cultural traditions and identities.

**Unheard Voices: Stories of LGBT History**

<http://www.glsen.org/sites/default/files/UV%20Lessons.pdf>

An oral history unit put together by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network. Although the organization is US-based and as a result the lessons centre on US events, the lesson ideas can be adapted to the Canadian context.

**The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives**

<http://clga.ca/>

Located in Toronto, the CLGA is the largest independent LGBTQ+ archives in the world. It holds an expansive collection of audio-visual material, photographs, historical records and other artifacts that can be great resources in the classroom.

**The Homeless Hub**

<http://homelesshub.ca/education/teachers/lesson-plans>

The Homeless Hub is an online research library and information centre where you can easily access research on homelessness in Canada. In addition, there are lots of lesson plans developed with curriculum expectations in mind that you can make use of. *Integrating Homelessness Into Civics Classes* (<http://homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/gpar1dl1.pdf>) is a particularly useful resource and can be used in the Grade 10 Civics class and the Grade 10 Canadian History class.