Indigenizing Social Work Education: Pedagogical Implications for Bachelor of Social Work Programs in Atlantic Canada

by

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Abstract

This study inquires into the perceived status of Indigenization within the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) curriculum within schools of social work in three of the four Atlantic Canadian universities (the fourth school offers instruction in French and I did not have the resources to accommodate translation and interpretation). There is a lack of literature that examines the status of Indigenization within universities in Atlantic Canada.

The primary aim of this research study was to examine how Indigenous BSW students and their mostly non-Indigenous instructors rate the degree of Indigenization within the BSW curricula in schools of social work in Atlantic Canadian universities. To achieve this, interviews were held with twelve Indigenous BSW students and eight of their instructors who teach in the BSW program. An Indigenous methodology, combined with thematic analysis, was used to gather and interpret the data.

This project was the first to investigate the degree to which BSW curriculum are Indigenized or not in Atlantic Canadian schools of social work. Four themes emerged from analysis of the data, namely: (a) unreasonable expectations consistently placed upon Indigenous students to be content experts on Indigeneity; (b) social work curricula is taught through a White lens; (c) student and faculty support for Indigenization; and (d) Indigenous spirituality. The key finding was that the curriculum is nowhere near where it needs to be in terms of Indigenization. My work demonstrates that more research needs to be done to determine how the curriculum is to be Indigenized.

While this work is geographically focused on the Atlantic provinces of Canada, this work has implications for Indigenous education globally.

General Summary

By speaking with Indigenous Bachelor or Social Work (BSW) students and their instructors, I devote explicit critical attention to BSW programs in Atlantic Canada. I wanted to find out how Indigenized these programs were. I discovered, sadly, that they we hardly Indigenized. This was in spite of all the hoopla made by university administrations about Indigenous people and Indigenization.

One of the problems I faced was the lack of literature on the Indigenization of social work programs and education. So, in this regard, my study is one step further to filling this glaring gap in the literature.

I wanted to hear about how Indigenous social work students and their mostly non-Indigenous instructors felt about Indigenization, the course content, the teaching methods, and all the various problems Indigenous students (or their teachers) faced. I listened to the stories of twelve Indigenous students from schools of social work: at Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador; at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick; and at Dalhousie university in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I also spoke with several social work instructors from these same schools, only one of which was Indigenous.

In the process of my work, I developed a distinctly Indigenous-centred approach for creating Indigenous Knowledge. This approach focused on what Indigenous students tend to do well: to tell stories about their lives, their history and their experiences in university. From these stories various common themes emerged that will be valuable to those who wish to promote Indigenization in social work programs.

This research study is the first of its kind to investigate the degree to which undergraduate social work education in Atlantic Canadian Schools of Social Work are being Indigenized. The key

finding from the research indicates that there's a lot more work to be done—in the schools themselves and also by Indigenous researchers. My hope is that progress will be made soon.

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Memorial, St. Thomas and Dalhousie schools of social work for welcoming me into their communities to do research, and for providing me with a place to stay while I was conducting my interviews in their cities and provinces.

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Dedication:

To the dead and many generations who have suffered and survived the gruesome residential schools, this is part of your stories

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Chapter One: Introduction

> The destiny of a people is intricately bound to the way its children are educated. Education is the transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next. It shapes the language and pathways of thinking, the contours of character and values, the social skills and creative potential of the individual. It determines the productive skill of a people. (Government of Canada, 1996a, p. 404)

This study is, in large part, a response to specific recommendations from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (TRC) relating to de/colonization, Indigenization, and educational institutions. The final six-volume report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c), called for sweeping changes to Canadian education systems. One such change involved bringing Indigenous worldviews into postsecondary institutions. In light of the fact that "the role of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history during much of the twentieth century remains invisible", in its concluding recommendations or *Calls to Action*, the TRC (2015a) therefore strongly insisted that all provincial and territorial governments across the country must:

> undertake a review of the curriculum materials in use in public schools to assess what, if anything, they teach about residential schools... develop age-appropriate educational materials about residential schools for use in public schools… *provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms* [emphasis added]… utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms, establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content

in education… [and] build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect (pp. 118-122).

Although a lot has been said about the urgent need to Indigenize post-secondary learning in Canadian universities, not much has been said about what the Indigenization of education will mean for students, faculty, and those that work specifically in Bachelor of Social Work programs. In this dissertation, and on the advice of my committee, I will focus on education programs in social work at three universities in Atlantic Canada: Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. Thomas University, and Dalhousie University. I will explore how Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students and social work instructors understand the Indigenization of social work education and how this understanding is reflected in current curriculum and pedagogical strategies in social work classrooms.

A Universities Canada report released the same year as the findings of the TRC (2015) noted that Indigenous Knowledges were separated from the regular business of university education. Universities Canada (2015) called for (a) strategies to address the under-representation of Indigenous students in university education and (b) support for Indigenous students at the various universities in Canada. Universities Canada (2015) came up with thirteen poignant initiatives to Indigenize Canadian universities, including:

1. Ensure institutional commitment at every level to develop opportunities for Indigenous students.
2. Be student centered: focus on learners, learning outcomes and learning abilities, and create opportunities that promote student success.
3. Recognize the importance of Indigenization of curricula through responsive academic programming, support programs, orientations and pedagogies.

4. Recognize the importance of Indigenous education leadership through representation at the governance level and within the faculty, professional and administrative staff.
5. Continue to build welcoming and respectful learning environments on campus through the implementation of academic programs, services, support mechanisms and spaces dedicated to Indigenous students.
6. Continue to develop resources, spaces, and approaches that promote dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students.
7. Continue to develop accessible learning environments off campus.
8. Recognize the value of promoting partnerships and local Indigenous communities and continue to maintain a collaborative and consultative process on the specific needs of Indigenous students.
9. Build on successful experiences and initiatives already in place at universities across the country to share and learn from promising practices, while recognizing the differences in jurisdictional and institutional mission.
10. Recognize the importance of sharing information within the institution, and beyond, to inform current and prospective Indigenous students of the array of services, programs and supports available to them on campus.
11. Recognize the importance of providing greater exposure and knowledge for non-Indigenous students on the realities, histories, cultures and beliefs of Indigenous people in Canada.
12. Recognize the importance of fostering intercultural engagement among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, faculty and staff.

13. Recognize the role of institutions in creating and enabling a supportive environment for a successful and high-quality K–12 experience for Aboriginal youth (Universities Canada, 2015, para. 6).

These thirteen initiatives adopted by the Association of Atlantic Universities are reproduced here verbatim because they are central to my argument and provide direction for my research questions.

Although the Association of Atlantic Universities should be commended for adopting these thirteen principles towards Indigenizing educational institutions in Atlantic Canada, *many steps still needed to be taken.* In Chapter Seven – *Discussion and Concluding Remarks* – I provide more information on what these steps must entail. Within the context of social work, the Canadian Association of Social Work Education's (CASWE) guiding principles for accreditation of social work program has called on institutions to incorporate Indigenous people's history, knowledge, culture, worldviews, values, and experience in their curricula and pedagogical practices. There is, however, an Indigenous saying that "*those who follow must learn to master the steps of those who lead*." The moral lesson here is that it is always prudent to draw from the knowledge and wisdom of one's elders so that one does not end up repeating the mistakes of the past. In thinking about the Indigenization of postsecondary education in Atlantic Canada, in other words, we can – and *should* – be guided by national and international examples.

In Australia, an expert panel was commissioned to identify ways in which the education system could be Indigenized. Often referred to as the *Behrendt Review,* in 2012 the panel produced a report entitled the *Review of Higher Education Access and Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People*. The Behrendt Review identified some student successes as

well as numerous education strategies that would respond to students' learning needs. The Behrendt Review also recommended efforts to be made to close the gap between the success rates of non-Indigenous and Indigenous students. The Behrendt Review drew further attention to the gap between Indigenous and Western systems of knowledge. It recommended that the best way to bridge these gaps is through a holistic approach that encompasses learning outcomes that are transferable to all students pursuing higher education.

Maggie Walters, a contributor to the *Behrendt Review* and a professor from the University of Tasmania, suggested that Indigenizing the academy from within should encompass Indigenous "scholarship, pedagogy, and the cultural and specific knowledges of Indigenous nations, as well as the shared epistemological tenets such as relationality that define and delineate Indigenous knowledges from the predominant western frame" (Walter & Aiken, 2019, p. 250). She further argues that there is a "continuing ontological gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous understandings of what Indigenous knowledges [are] and how they should/could be positioned within the academy (Walter & Aiken, 2019, p. 250). Walters further notes that achieving recognition and equal value for Indigenous forms of knowledge within higher education requires understanding and confronting firmly the entrenched barriers that make Indigenizing the university education a seemingly impossible task.

Although Australia's Indigenous history and experiences differ from that of Canada's, there are some lessons that can be drawn from the Australian experience relevant to Indigenization in Atlantic Canada's universities. In Canada, the TRC (2015) called for the recognition and integration of Indigenous students in postsecondary education; such a call could, however, be at risk of becoming what Walter and Aiken (2019, p. 258) called a "special arrangement," where recognition and integration becomes a colonial strategy of claiming to

Indigenize while leaving the academy rooted in colonial ontology and epistemology. In some situation, the absences of Indigenous voices and knowledges in certain spaces in the academy is normalized, justified, and sometimes rewarded (Spivak 1993). The deliberate effort to silence the voices of Indigenous people within the university is precisely why the academy needs to be Indigenized, as I explain further in Chapter Three, *Indigenizing Social work Education: A Review*.

My dissertation will focus not only on how the thirteen guiding principles of Indigenization (Universities Canada, 2015) are understood and implemented in Bachelor of Social Work programs across Atlantic Canada, but also the challenges and opportunities of Indigenization in Atlantic Canadian social work education more broadly. Having accredited Canadian BSW programs with Indigenized curricula is long overdue. The need for more effective, life-changing Indigenized teaching approaches is now. Social work schools that apply Indigenous approaches to teaching will benefit from the findings that have emerged from the critical analysis of my data, including the interviews with Indigenous students and their course instructors. My work will provide readers with the necessary tools and theoretical critiques to help train students and faculty to revolutionize their teaching and learning approaches. Furthermore, the recurrent themes I identify in the results of my investigation suggest that university administrators should take the guidance of course instructors on what Indigenous measures and content would be most appropriate or relevant to improve students' competencies in BSW classrooms. For future researchers interested in Indigeneity and Indigenization, this study will also serve as a rich, comprehensive and critical source of inspiration, particularly given the wealth of perspectives on decolonization and Indigeneity provided herein.

Taken together, the various arguments, critiques, and evidence that make up this dissertation represent a decidedly new approach to broadening social work, in theory, practice, and praxis, both within and beyond the BSW classroom. Overall, the findings of this study will benefit anyone (or any group) who is considering Indigenizing social work education curriculum. My work will directly benefit students and faculty in Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs in Atlantic Canadian universities and all who live on this *Nunangat* (our Homeland) and beyond.

Research Questions and Objectives of the Study

My research is focussed explicitly on Indigenization of social work education in Atlantic Canadian universities. More specifically, I am concerned with how undergraduate Indigenous BSW students and their (mostly) non-Indigenous professors understand the past, present and future of Indigenization in social work schools in the Atlantic Provinces. While my research is focused on the Atlantic Provinces, my conclusions and recommendations have crucial implications for the rest of Canada and for Indigenous people around the world.

My *research objectives* are two-fold:

a) To explore the discourse, experience, perception and understanding of issues regarding Indigenization within the context of social work education on the part of Indigenous BSW students and instructors in the Atlantic Provinces;
b) To identify the potential benefits and challenges of Indigenizing BSW social work education in Canada's Atlantic provinces.

My general research question is:

How do Indigenous BSW students and their instructors experience, understand and speak about the interdependent processes of ***Indigenization*** *and* ***decolonization*** *taking place within post-secondary educational institutions, in the discipline of* Social Work?

My more specific research questions are as follows:

a. *How do BSW students in Atlantic Canadian universities and their instructors understand and execute indigenization in social work education?*
b. *What are the experiences of Indigenous Social Work students in current BSW programs in Atlantic Canada's universities?*
c. *What do Indigenous BSW and instructors in Atlantic Canada consider to be the challenges and opportunities of Indigenizing social work education?*

Beginning with the implementation of the residential school system in the late 19th century, the Canadian state has not attempted to mask its agenda of sponsoring a purposeful campaign to assimilate Indigenous people into the dominant White, middle-class, Christian, heteronormative culture. This campaign of assimilation and enculturation was, in fact, an act of colonization in and of itself; it was a policy of control that, borrowing from Memmi (1965, p. 5), was "imported and imposed" on Indigenous people. Indigenous children were forcefully taken from their families and communities and moved to far-away residential schools where they were purposely isolated from their language and culture. These children had no choice but to adopt European culture and languages and follow their rules and abide by their prescribed ways of living (Armitage, 1995; Stonechild, 2006). This forceful attempt to assimilate Indigenous children into dominant White culture was not confined to Canada. Assimilation was an imperial program of the British Colonial Empire on a global scale (Bruyere, 2016, 2001; Haig-Brown, 1988; Rutman

et al., 2000); in New Zealand (Tait-Rolleston & Pehi-Barlow, 2001); in Australia (Thompson, 1994; Wilson, 1997); and in the United States (Konstantin, 2002).

Even more regrettably, social workers were directly complicit in widespread violence against Indigenous families, particularly during the first half of the 20th century. Providing the central rationale for my study, social workers continue to be involved in acts of assimilation and forced removal in present day. After 150 years of being implicated in these practices, therefore, social workers are still involved in assimilationist colonial policies and practice. A primary example of this can be seen in the mantra underlying the residential school project: *'to kill the Indian in the Child'*. Social workers embraced and actualized the Eurocentric thinking that Indigenous children were being "rescued" from their "unsafe" cultures (Armitage, 1995). Today, many social workers describe historical moments such as these as being the lowest points in the history of the profession in Canadian history (Blackstock, 2009). Many of the Indigenous BSW students I have taught at Memorial University over the past decade have expressed the fact that they also took issue with having to follow the Eurocentric teaching they were subjected to in most of their social work courses.

Despite this regretful history, Indigenous children continue to be placed into institutional care at a higher rate than any other social group. According to Gilbert et al. (2012), the placement of Indigenous children in out-of-home care in Manitoba is 10-times higher than in six developed countries. The link social workers have to colonialism was not just something that happened a long time ago. Social workers still participate in an ongoing project where Indigenous children continue to be "rescued" from their families. I could not help but ask myself, *what is it about Indigenous children and their families that Canadian social workers are not getting right*? There is a perception that many social workers who practice in Indigenous

communities still struggle to understand and appreciate Indigenous people's ways of life, resulting in ongoing mistrust, tension, and animosity regarding social workers on the part of Indigenous people (Armitage, 1995; Blackstock, 2009; Stonechild, 2006).

I do not wish to dismiss or to ignore the long and rich legacy of social work and its great service to humanity, and its pursuit of social justice in Canada. However, attention must be drawn to the reality that many social workers in the exercise of their professional duties, particularly those employed by child welfare agencies, continue to bring harm to Indigenous people (Armitage, 1995; Stonechild, 2006).

Similarly, many Indigenous people who had gone through social work education have expressed concerns that current social work education teaches little, if anything, concerning Indigenous culture and ways of life (Alsubaie, 2015; Margolis, et al. 2001). These matters are explored more fully in my review of the salient literature (Chapter Three), and in my thematic analysis (Chapter Five).

My investigation began with the assumption that any program that aspires to the Indigenization of social work education must strive to recognize that Indigenous communities have their own *active* Indigenous Knowledge. This knowledge, rooted in Indigenous cultures, would include local histories, collective memories, stories, identities, languages, respect for Elders, cosmologies and epistemologies. The pervasive presence of this knowledge and ability to adapt to different environments continually nourishes and informs further knowledge creation and application among Indigenous people. In my study, I believe the Indigenization of social work education needs to reinforce and strengthen the understanding of Indigenous cultures, languages, and ways of being among BSW students in Atlantic Canadian Universities. In doing so, they will more likely come up with working strategies that will ensure efficient models of

Indigenous social work practice in Indigenous communities across Canada. Moreover, the Indigenization of social work education must engage in ***decolonization*** **–** an intellectual politics of disengagement from the colonial legacy of schooling that promotes a new form of politics that envisions a system of education in which Indigenous traditions and philosophies are valued and acknowledged as not only *legitimate*, but critically important ways of knowing (Dei & Adjei, 2014).

Key Terms

The following definitions are presented to help clarify the central, recurrent terms I employ, as well as the meanings I attribute to them, throughout the dissertation.

Indigenous. I use the term *Indigenous* in keeping with how the term is understood by the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). In consideration of the "diversity of indigenous peoples," the United Nations has not adopted any one official definition of the term "Indigenous." The UNPFII has, however, developed "a modern understanding" of the term based on the following factors:

- Self-identification as Indigenous peoples at the individual level and accepted by the community as their member;
- Historical continuity with pre-colonial and/or pre-settler societies;
- Strong link to territories and surrounding natural resources;
- Distinct social, economic or political systems;
- Distinct language, culture and beliefs;
- Form non-dominant groups of society;

- Resolve to maintain and reproduce their ancestral environments and systems as distinctive peoples and communities. (United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, n.d., para. 3).

Indigenize. To bring something – in this case, for example, an academic program such as a social work – under the influence, control, and/or dominance of Indigenous people.

Indigenization. The process through which something – again, such as an academic program as in the case of social work – is indigenized. The University of Saskatchewan conceptualizes Indigenization as:

- A multi-staged institutional initiative that supports societal reconciliation
- An intentional, culturally sensitive and appropriate approach to adding Indigenous ideas, concepts, and practices into curricula, when and where it is appropriate
- A strategic set of changes to policies, procedures and practices that increase inclusion, break down barriers and realign institutional, college and school outcomes without harm to previously established goals
- An iterative developmental approach to understanding Canada's colonial history and the more contemporary issues impacting Indigenous people. Engaging in critical reflections from a professional and/or personal perspective about how to build safe and ethical spaces for Indigenous knowledges, worldviews, and practices
- An absolute necessity for the province of Saskatchewan where the Indigenous youth represent a substantial number of future University students; Indigenous school age children will represent 40% to 50% of the provincial population by 2040-50. (University of Saskatchewan, 2017, para. 8)

Indigenization is a claim to identity, history, politics, culture and being situated in place. It is about a socio-political consciousness of being as a knowing subject. It is also about an existence outside the purview of the colonial project and colonial subjectivity more generally.

Indigeneity. I use the term **Indigeneity** in virtually the same way Vivanco (2018) defined it:

> A socio-political concept that refers to the status of, and qualities associated with, being Indigenous. It is a relational term that differentiates Indigenous peoples from those of the dominant colonizing cultures, and valorizes their existence and political claims. Indeed, claims of Indigeneity are often employed to advance political, territorial, or cultural rights agendas.

Indigenous Knowledge. Following Dei, Hall and Rosenberg (2000), I understand Indigenous knowledge as a

> body of knowledge associated with long-term occupancy of a certain place. This knowledge refers to traditional norms and social values, as well as to mental constructs that guide, organize, and regulate the people's way of living and making sense of their world. It is the sum of the experience and knowledge of a given social group, and forms the basis of decision making in the face of challenges both familiar and unfamiliar. (Dei, Hall and Rosenberg, 2000, p. 6)

Indigenous cultures: Also derived from the work of Dei, Hall and Rosenberg (2000), Indigenous cultures are often informed by

> a world view based on the following: seeing the individual as part of nature; respecting and reviving the wisdom of Elders; giving consideration to the living, the dead, and future generations, sharing responsibility, wealth, and resources within the community; and embracing spiritual values, traditions and practices reflecting connections to a higher order, the culture, and to the earth. (p. 6)

Colonialism. The ongoing subjugation and displacement of certain groups or communities of people by a larger, wealthier, and better equipped population. Perceiving itself as being dominant – culturally, politically, economically, and otherwise – colonialism often entails practices of physical and/or cultural genocide on the part of the dominant group. In the context of this dissertation, colonialism specifically refers to the subjugation and displacement of Indigenous and beliefs, operate as the standard by which all other groups are compared. Whiteness and the normalization of white European identity throughout Canada's history have created a colonial culture whereby Indigenous people were commonly seen and portrayed as being culturally, intellectually, and physically inferior. (National Museum of African American History and Culture, n.d.)

Overview of Chapters

This study is organized into seven distinct chapters. Chapter One introduces the research area and topic, articulates my primary and secondary research questions, and explicates the key terms used throughout the dissertation. Detailing the background of the study, here I highlighting the work of the TRC, in tandem with the responses to the TRC's recommendations by Universities Canada – in particular the under-representation of (and need to support) Indigenous students in university.[1] I also explain the significance and rationale for my study in terms of what has to change in social work education in Atlantic Canadian universities.

[1]Much of the published literature cited in this dissertation stops the language in time, so to speak in regard to the terms Aboriginal and Indigenous. In this dissertation, all references to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people residing in Canada will usually be referred to as 'Indigenous' people unless the context suggests otherwise. For example, Indigenous Australians continue to use the words Aboriginal and/or Aborigines) in reference to themselves. There are also organizations in Canada, such as the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, that continue to use their original titles. When I cite information from such sources (either in text or in the reference list), however, I retain the original word use.

Chapter Two, ***Personal Location***, begins by calling attention to the public's sense of shock and horror resulting from the recent discovery of upwards of 1,800 unmarked graves on the grounds of former residential schools in Canada through the use of radar scans. This chapter then goes on to explain how and why I am uniquely and strategically situated to conduct this research given my background, experience, and identity as an Indigenous person who was placed in a residential school where I was indoctrinated into Western culture from a young age. I also have spent the vast majority of my life working directly with Indigenous people, dealing with issues of inter-generational trauma, mental health and substance use .

Chapter Three – ***Indigenizing Social Work Education: A Review*** – I provide a description of my theoretical approach rooted in the Anti-Colonial Discourse Framework (ACDF). The ACDF provides the theoretical foundation for this dissertation by engaging in a wholesale critique of the denigration, disparagement, and discarding of Indigenous traditions and cultures in the name of modernity and global capitalism. The framework involves centering the oral, visual, textual, political and material resistance of colonized groups and entails a shift away from the sole preoccupation with victimization. The ACDF reveals a shift in tradition towards a material and tangible culture that serves to empower and colonize marginalized groups (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). This chapter continues by providing an overview of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks employed by other scholars to situate Indigenous Knowledge in relation to BSW programs. I will examine this literature to see how it applies to programs and curricula at the three Atlantic Canadian schools of social work encompassed by this study. This is followed by an examination of: (1) the history of social work as an academic discipline and field of practice in Canada; (2) the impact of the *hidden curriculum* (Apple, 1971; Alsubaie, 2015; Margolis, et al., 2001); (3) the history of Indigenous-Settler relations in Canada, and; (4) a

summary of contemporary Indigenous politics in Canada, including the legacy of Canada's residential school system; the contemporary *Idle No More* (INM) movement; the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (NIMMIWG); and, perhaps most salient to the nature of this investigation, the process and outcomes of Canada's *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC).

These four fields of enquiry provide important historical and contemporary context for situating and appraising the opinions and attitudes of the interview participants whose voices appear in the following pages. To reiterate, these critical areas of enquiry provide invaluable insights into how my interview respondents (a) experience, understand and represent the Indigenization of social work in Atlantic Canada, (b) articulate their Indigenous identities, (c) take up issues of (de)colonialization, racism, Whiteness, spirituality and Indigenization, and (d) understand the various different types of challenges and barriers to Indigenization.

Introducing the method of thematic analysis employed in Chapter Six to analyze the data derived from my interviews with students and instructors, Chapter Four details the research design and specific methodologies adopted in this dissertation. Utilizing a "standard research design familiar to qualitative researchers" (Kovach, 2009, p. 44), this chapter additionally explains the unique and original Inuit-based methodological elements of this work. Just as whole Inuit communities and select male hunters prepare for the caribou hunt, for example, so do Inuit prepare to engage in research. Drawing on Kovach (2009), I provide an Inuit-specific model that entails several closely interrelated Inuit concepts: (1) *Ikajujuk Kinigajunit* (researcher preparation); (2) *IKajuttik Kinigajunnit* (research preparation); (3) *Maligatsaujunnit tautsetitsijik* (decolonizing and ethics); (4) *Katisuinit Kajimajatsanit* (gathering knowledge); (5) *Tukititsagatsnik iKajik* (making meaning); *and* (6) *Aittuinik Aittutausimajunnit* (a way of giving

back)[2]. My research framework involved conducting in-depth, semi-structured, tape recorded qualitative interviews with Indigenous students and their instructors about the Indigeneity (or lack thereof) within BSW programs in three Atlantic Canadian universities. The study included participant selection, the methods used for gathering knowledge (Kovach, 2009) interpretation, and *oppijuk* (one who believes, or trusts).

Chapter Five – *Research Participants* – consists of an extended demographic profile that provides details regarding each of my various interview respondents, as well as the process of transcribing the interviews, which I insisted upon completing myself. Here, by reviewing the transcripts, I provide the basis for the thematic analysis found in Chapter Six.

Entitled *Thematic Analysis*, Chapter Six includes the results of analyzing my interview data from BSW students and instructors according to a number of themes that emerged during the process of my iterative analytical framework.

By way of suturing or weaving together the various threads that together make up this dissertation, Chapter Seven – *Discussion and Concluding Remarks* – works to both synthesize and summarize my interview findings. In doing so, this process serves to depict the most prominent and recurrent themes regarding the process (and very substance, definition, and/or conceptual/theoretical underpinnings) of Indigenization in relation to BSW programs at Atlantic Canadian Universities. Drawing directly from the voices, perceptions, beliefs, and direct lived experiences of Indigenous BSW students and their instructors, these themes arguably have enormous implications for Indigenizing academic institutions across Canada more broadly, and, arguably, on a global scale.

[2]*Note*: due to often incommensurable cultural differences, all the above translations are rough and imperfect.

Chapter Two: Personal location

In June 2021, Canadians were shocked to hear that "Ground-penetrating radar located the remains of 215 First Nations children in a mass unmarked grave on the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School" in British Columbia (Coburn, 2021, p. 1). Not long after, "upwards of 1,800 of these unmarked graves" were detected on the various grounds of former residential schools in several provinces (Lee & Parkhill, 2022). At the time this dissertation was completed, various technologies and methods for mapping, scanning and excavating are being employed in ever greater numbers surrounding the grounds of many residential schools. Undoubtedly, the number of bodies believed to have been buried in such mass grave sites will continue to grow.

A tangible, concrete reminder of how intergenerational trauma can manifest, survivors of the residential school system must now deal with the emotional fallout from these discoveries, which now represent historical crime scenes. This horrific news surfaced during the late stages of analyzing and writing up my research findings, providing an eerie example of the enduring, dark legacy of atrocities committed in the name of colonialism. The discovery of so many unmarked graves supports my effort to determine why it was that the residential school system in Canada failed Indigenous children so profoundly. Recent revelations surrounding the death of children at Canadian residential schools had caused me to wonder if those who lost their lives in this way may, in fact, be better off than those of us who survived the experience? We are still living through the horror and trauma of the violence inherent in the residential school system that haunts Canada's colonial history. It is an emotional experience that I, along with so many others, have been – and are still going – through.

My interest in social work education arises from – and is driven by – my social location as an Indigenous male social worker who possesses a BSW, an MSW, and who is currently completing the final stages of a PhD in social work education. As a former residential school survivor, I therefore speak from a place of familiarity and a place of remembrance. I know from personal experience the role social workers played in getting me and other children into residential schools. Although the social work profession is broad and comprises everything from family/child welfare, to community development, to mental health and addictions, to education and the judicial system, this study primarily draws from examples of child welfare social work policy and practice given its historical and contemporary relationship with Indigenous communities. Anybody familiar with Indigenous communities will be familiar with the term '*child snatchers',* the colloquial term for social workers among Indigenous communities. In the discussion that follows, I situate my personal experience with the child welfare system, both in terms of my own lived experience as a child, and later, as a professional, registered social worker (RSW). Self-reflection on my personal experience serves to shape and inform my analysis.

I was born and raised in the remote settlement of Makkovik, Nunatsiavut, on the northeastern coast of Labrador, in what is now referred to as the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). My family were hunter-gatherers, so from a very early age my brothers and I were educated in how to hunt, fish, trap and forage for berries and many other natural food sources. My sisters were taught how to clean, tan and sew animal hides (or *kisik*), how to cook and clean without the availability of electricity or running water, as well as how to prepare wild game, such as de-feathering wild birds. Our community's collective understanding of time was based on its relation to nature and the rhythm of the seasons. From a young age, my siblings and I were taught to honour community, respect our ancestors, share and maintain

holistic and spiritual balance, respect all animals and their spirits, and to honour the all-important principle of *land as relationship*. We continue to live a lifestyle where interdependence and sharing among a wider family network are central values, where disruptive behaviour of any kind is frowned upon, and where people and *the land* (encompassing the water, trees and literally *everything* in the natural world, both animate and inanimate) are considered as one – inherently interconnected and inseparable. In this sense, Inuit culture does not consider the environment as something that is in any way external, and in fact, we view it as being an intimate extension and/or reflection of ourselves. In other words, Inuit culture and belief systems always honour the land, considering people's relationship to the land to be profoundly sacred.

In the mid-1800s, my great-great-grandfather, Torsten Kverna, was a Norweigan barrelmaker or 'cooper' at the the Kaipokok Bay Post of the Hudson's Bay Company. He found that the correct pronunciation of his Norwegian name (Kverna) was very difficult for speakers of Inuktitut. Since his father's surname was Anders, in keeping with common Scandinavian practice, he thus called himself Andersen: 'son of Anders'. His wife, Mary Thomas, was the daughter of Samuel Thomas, originally from Wales, who was married to Mary Broomfield of Rigolet—a women of mixed Inuk and European heritage. Mary and Torsten settled in a place called *Flounder's Bight*, which eventually became the settlement of Makkovik. Torsten went on to persuade the Moravian Mission – the oldest Protestant Church in Europe, founded in Germany – that Makkovik would be a wise choice for a new church headquarters. The Moravian's agreed, and a new church was constructed in Germany before it was dismantled, shipped across the Atlantic, and subsequently reconstructed in Makkovik.

All knowledge is political (Hill Collins, 1991). As such, we come to know what we know through our unique, idiosyncratic experiences of the world— this is what Black feminist theorists

have termed the *partiality of knowing* (hooks, 1981, 1984; Lorde, 1984; 1988). Similarly, Frantz Fanon (1967a) called the kind of understanding that arises from individual lived experience *embodied knowledge.* My personal lived experience – as both an Indigenous person and as a social worker with first-hand experience of the highly detrimental impacts of ill-informed social work policies and practices for both families and communities – thus illuminates both the personal and political dimensions of this work. I have a vested interest in this study because the topic borders on issues that have material, emotional, psychological and spiritual implications for my people, the Indigenous communities within Nunatsiavut, across Canada, and beyond.

My first experience of the formal Western educational system was via the descents of the original Moravian missionaries, who became my first formal teachers, possessed no formal training. The earliest formal schooling I received was thus offered in a converted building in Makkovik that was fashioned into a one-room schoolhouse. I recall from childhood that the instruction we received was rudimentary, at best, with a significant focus on Christian doctrine. I recognized in the early stages of my experience with missionary education that I was being stripped of my Indigenous culture and everything I had learned up to that point. I later learned to recognize this experience as the Moravians' patronizing, colonial tendencies. In the mid-1950s, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador built a devoted school in Makkovik that was staffed with trained teachers who were brought in to administer the same type of violent, racist, and patronizing, colonial-style curricula offered to students in St. John's and other areas of insular Newfoundland. If this wasn't bad enough, at age 13, in the mid-1960s, I was taken away from Makkovik by representatives of the *Grenfell Mission* and sent to a residential school situated in North West River, southern Labrador. As all 'Family Allowance' payments were withheld from noncompliant families, I had no choice but to leave my family and community in

late August, after I had completed grade eight. The residential school comprised eighty-two children separated into four groups, each with its own sleeping quarters. For male students, older boys were sent to one of the four large bedrooms, and younger boys to another, separated by a small washroom with no showers, and just one bathtub in between the two rooms. The facilities for female students were housed in an identical bedroom arrangement on the other side of a common area that separated the boys and girls. The rows of bunk-beds in each sleeping area closely resembled that of a typical army boot camp.

Residential school was a trying experience for me, as I bore witness to many abuses that are difficult to imagine and recount even today. I was traumatized by being separated from my family and community supports for over nine months at a time, and the circumstances were emotionally charged. Witnessing abuses and being subjected to harsh forms of punishment were psychologically challenging, not only for me, but also for many of the other students. The severing of ties to my extended family, community, and to the land effectively served to undermine my spiritual being. All the sacred values that I held dear as a child suddenly seemed irrelevant while attending residential school. Some's (1994) words about his colonial schooling experience resonate closely with my own feelings about the residential school:

> My life has been taken away from me because during the years I was there, this institution assumed that their goal was my goal … The result was of course the slow death of my identity and the understanding that I was in exile from everything I felt dear. (p. 97-98)

My reaction to the residential school experience was to make a conscious decision to pursue higher learning so that I could influence change and help my fellow residential school survivors to heal. I told myself that I had to endure this for the sake of my loved ones and that I had better

educate myself so that I gain the necessary skill and understanding to influence change. The residential school experience tried my soul, but it did not define me. While in my final year of high school, I decided that the best way I could help my people would be to become a lawyer. At the Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) in St. John's, the provincial capital, I focused on courses that would help prepare me for law school and ended up majoring in political science. I did, however, find Political Science to be somewhat a frustrating course of study. It was not that I found the coursework difficult, but more a matter of recognizing that, for me, political science was unfortunately not a stimulating program of study because I did not identify well with the subject matter. I hung in, however, and completed my BA, but by then, I had become completely disillusioned with the idea of becoming a lawyer. Instead, I decided to take some time to ponder and meditate on my career choices.

Since I was the first person from my region to obtain a university degree, it came as no surprise that immediately after I graduated, I was headhunted by the NL Government. I agreed, and there I was, fresh out of university, filled with energy and ideas, at my first job as a Regional Development Specialist for the Government of NL, where my role was to interpret local people's ideas about the kinds of rural and social developments they wanted to see in communities across Northern Labrador. I did this for almost a decade, although every time I brought forward any ideas that held importance for local Indigenous communities, I was told by the powers that be: "*there's no policy for that*." This continued until such a point that I began to felt paralyzed, as nothing I brought forward or proposed seemed to conform to existing NL policy. Finally, when I was told yet again that there was no policy for a particular initiative, I responded by asking to be given the responsibility to create policy. Their immediate and dismissive reaction was to assert

that Intergovernmental Affairs was the department responsible for policy development. It was at this point that I asked to be introduced to the policymakers in Intergovernmental Affairs.

Shortly thereafter, I was flown out to the capital city of St. John's, where I was taken to the seat of the NL provincial government at the *Confederation Buildings*, where Intergovernmental Affairs was housed. I was ushered into an office and there, sitting in a posh chair, wearing a three-piece suit, smoking a pipe and waiting to grow old, was man of European descent, who looked to be even younger than myself at the time. This was the man responsible for writing policies for the Indigenous communities of Labrador. When he finally admitted that he had not even actually visited any of these communities in person, I began to realize the glaring disconnect between so-called 'policy' and the lived reality of everyday life in Northern Labrador. Shortly after becoming so disillusioned with the NL government's inaction and apparent lack of concerns for Indigenous people, I requested a study leave, knowing full well that I would never return to such a working environment.

While working with the provincial government, I had frequently mingled with the government-employed social workers (most of whom were working in the capacity of 'child welfare'), who were sent to communities throughout Labrador as part of their caseload. While interacting with some of these social workers, I came to understand that these individuals, most of whom were fresh out of university themselves, were repeatedly running into difficulties with issues relating to child protection, welfare, family violence, and addictions with the Indigenous clients they were supposed to be serving. My contact with these social workers proved significant, as I would to go on to pursue a career as a professional social worker myself.

At this point I went back to MUN and, under the supervision of Dr. Jean Briggs, began working on a master's degree in anthropology. Dr. Briggs profoundly affected my development

as a budding Anthropologist, and yet I had little, if any, idea of what this area of study was preparing me for. It was during this time that I began to run short of funds, so I applied for and secured a job as a counsellor at Emmanuel House, a residential treatment program in St. John's explicitly intended for survivors childhood sexual abuse across NL. This program also covered myriad issues associated, including mental health and addiction. Within a very short period of time I realized that I had found my true calling, and I subsequently abandoned my master's degree program. The nature of my Master's thesis research on the *Social Aspects of Inuit Youth Suicide* was perhaps too close to my personal lived experience growing up in Northern Labrador, but at Emmanuel House, when I was placed in a role where I was actively helping others, I came alive. As opposed to acting in an exploitative/voyeuristic way by conducting research among my own community, in other words, I became much more interested in helping Inuit youth. By this point I had begun to understand the colonial underpinnings of anthropology, so I felt that turning my back on my studies was, in this sense, an act of anti-colonial defiance.

At Emmanuel House I worked side by side with social workers and learned from them as we helped residents to heal through a combination of one-on-one counselling and group work. Much like my own experience, during this time, I worked with many Indigenous youth who had been taken away from their parents during the 1960s and 1970s to be adopted by White families in far-away communities, who then returned to their original communities in Northern Labrador. These youth were obviously disillusioned about their place in White culture, and helping them retrieve and reconnect with their cultural roots was in some cases challenging as they struggled to transition back to their home communities in Nunatsiavut (the Inuit homeland), and the adjacent Nitassinen (the Innu homeland).

My supervisors at Emmanuel House were so impressed with my work ethic and enthusiasm for helping others that they considered waiving the formal credentials ordinarily required for being a registered social worker. I, however, didn't feel comfortable with this proposal, so I returned to MUN and completed the work required to obtain a BSW. Throughout my time in MUN's School of Social Work, I was acutely aware of the lack of Indigenous course content. After completing the BSW program in 2006, I returned to Labrador once again to work as a Mental Health and Addictions Officer with the *Health Labrador Corporation*, which was later renamed *Labrador-Grenfell Health*.

I stayed with *Health Labrador* for several years, yet soon became disenchanted with the services they offered, in large part, because they did not adequately reach remote communities. I also began to notice that the new prison complex in Central Labrador was filled with young Indigenous men who were often doing time for committing petty crimes while under the influence of alcohol. It troubled me further that they were *not* receiving the counselling or other support services they needed while under incarceration. Considering my interest in this area, I was given the choice to take this on in my new professional capacity. I had to make it my career to reach higher and find a better way of constructively engaging with this faction of the population. I thus chose to return to the university yet again, this time to complete my Master of Social Work degree (MSW). This too was an interesting experience, but once again, I found myself being acutely aware of the fact that some twenty years later, MUN's School of Social Work still did not offer any Indigenous-specific curriculum.

Following graduation from my MSW, I was employed by the *AIDS Committee of Newfoundland and Labrador* (ACNL) in St. John's for several years, until being contacted by the *National Canadian Aboriginal AIDS Network*, where I eventually accepted a research position

based out of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. This work was interesting and exciting, involving writing proposals for local HIV/AIDS initiatives funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR). I was also instrumental in advocating for HIV+ Indigenous people to have more control of their own healing.

Shortly thereafter, I took a position as the Mental Health Counsellor for the National Inuit Health Survey team, administered by McGill University. The Survey team travelled throughout the Arctic visiting every Inuit community, including those in my homeland, Nunatsiavut. My official role was to provide counselling to individuals who struggled with post-traumatic stress and childhood trauma. Since many of the survivors struggled with post-traumatic stress, I often heard stories of sexual abuse and addiction. Part of my role entailed counselling Inuit staff on the survey team who were conducting interviews with participants who came on board to be tested for health-related issues. These Inuit staff were often distressed after hearing the interviewees' stories, which served to trigger their own memories of abuse, intergenerational trauma, and/or unresolved grief. Sometimes my job even involved working with both Inuit staff interviewers and community members concurrently.

Throughout the research team's travels across the Arctic, I came to realize that I had much to contribute in this type of setting. I remained convinced, however, that social workers were not being adequately trained to work with Indigenous people in such communities, and that with the right approach, I could help develop and implement a training program for Social Workers whose work focused on Indigenous communities. Since, I had not yet been exposed to any university-level coursework that substantively addressed Indigenous issues, I decided that I would pursue this topic by undertaking a PhD in social work. As was the case during my BSW and MSW studies at MUN's School of Social Work, when I began my doctoral studies there was

still a conspicuous absence of courses being offered that spoke directly to Indigenous people and related social issues. Once again, therefore, I quickly realized that very little had changed in the core social work curriculum since my experience as either an BSW or MSW student, and this realization led to an epiphany. Social work students at all levels, I came to conclude, were simply not receiving adequate training in how to work with Indigenous people due in large part to the fact that there were no specific courses concerning social work policy and practice in Indigenous contexts, and no courses on Indigenous history and culture more generally. It suddenly became clear to me that the absence of Indigenous content in the curriculum was one of the main reasons why so many social workers in the region struggled to work with Indigenous people.

While I recognize that the ongoing efforts to reform curriculum in MUN's School of Social Work include issues affecting diverse populations (including Indigenous communities) locally and globally, there is still a significant amount of work to be done. Through not only this dissertation, but the subsequent endeavours it catalyzes, I have strong conviction that I will play a critical role in the nascent but ongoing movement to both decolonize and Indigenize social work curriculum. I endeavor to engage in this process of socio-cultural change by identifying how Indigenous BSW students and their instructors at three different Atlantic Canadian universities conceptualize and have started to implement the Indigenization of social work education. Here, perhaps the most central issues relate to the perceived benefits and challenges of Indigenization.

To conclude, I have chosen to articulate my personal location (or *methodological positionality*) by telling my story from *where it begins* for several crucial reasons. First, this is a form of preparation for the Inuit-specific methodological framework that I describe in more depth and detail in Chapter Four, which renders my personal connection to the research explicit.

Second, this dissertation was fundamentally inspired by my direct lived experience of both bearing witness to countless harms inflicted directly by social work and social work*ers*, and having been harmed by social work on a personal level. Third, this approach demonstrates in no uncertain terms how some institutions are so profoundly reluctant to accept, and unprepared to begin implementing a radical, enlightened truly Indigenized manifestation of social work practice. Finally, this narrative has provided ample evidence of how I have consistently and conscientiously worked to create spaces for Indigenization (/spaces of Indigeneity), as I have occupied various different professional roles and capacities, and moved between a wide variety of institutions.

Chapter Three: Indigenizing Social Work Education – A Review

In this section, I examine the scholarly literature relating to the following four interconnected fields of inquiry:

1. The history of social work as an academic discipline and field of practice in Canada.
2. The history of Indigenous-settler relations in Canada.
3. Contemporary Indigenous politics in Canada, including:
    a. the legacy and healing from the residential school system;
    b. legacy of Idle No More (INM);
    c. the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) and;
    d. the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).
4. The recent impetus towards decolonizing and Indigenizing the university.

These four fields of enquiry provide important historical and contemporary context for situating and critically interrogating the opinions and attitudes of my research participants in terms of the mandate of my research questions. To recap, the sections that follow provide crucial insights into how my interviewees experience, understand and speak about the Indigenization of social work in Atlantic Canada (and potential barriers to its implementation), their own Indigenous identities, and take up issues of de/colonisation, racism, Whiteness, spirituality, and Indigenization.

The history of social work as an academic discipline and field of practice in Canada

Situating the history of Canadian social work education requires a critical examination of the place of Indigenous people in Canada since the initial establishment of the *Indian Act* in 1876. This act dictated that any "Indian" who achieved a university degree would be "enfranchised" (1876, p. 69, sec. 86 [1]). This meant that they would lose their Indian 'status' and with it, their official identity as Indigenous peoples. Enfranchisement was another administrative tool of the Canadian state to assimilate Indigenous people and enforce their conformity with the European, colonial project, thus systematically eroding Indigenous cultures on a mass scale (Parrott, 2020). This aspect of the *Indian Act* remained in place until it was removed during a revision of the act in 1961 (Parrott, 2020). Thus any Indigenous student who may have obtained a social work degree in one of the four university social work programs established before 1939, or any subsequent programs that were established up to 1961, would have lost their Indian status (Drover, 2013).[3]

Since the imposition of the *Indian Act* in 1876, Indigenous people in Canada (and specifically Atlantic Canada) were considered in legal terms, as wards of the state. As such, the *Indian Act* can arguably be seen as a policy-based vehicle of both literal and metaphorical confinement: they were neither permitted to own property, nor to negotiate contracts; furthermore, in order to retain one's "status" as Indigenous, it was required to live on a designated "Indian Reserve". Educators of the day believed that Indigenous people were generally "not ready" to engage in higher education (Stonechild, 2006, p. 8). The practice of enfranchisement into the Canadian state and disenfranchisement from treaty rights and/or

[3]As Drover (2013) details, social work became a field study within Canadian universities first at the University of Toronto (1914), then at McGill (1918), followed by the University of British Columbia (1928) and Université de Montréal (1939).

Indigenous status was part of a broader policy of assimilation that was aimed at extinguishing Indigenous people from Canadian society (Stonechild, 2006).

The colonial roots of social work

When early philanthropic (social work) services in Canada began, they were undoubtedly a symptomatic manifestation of the rigid social class hierarchy characteristics of British society. These ideas were adopted to settler colonial society and its racialized Indigenous populations. So, as social work emerged as a field of study in Canada, it grew out of an imperial-colonial context where welfare policies paternalistically favoured poor White people as the "welfare elite" over poor Indigenous people (Patel, 2016, p. 33). At the time, Indigenous people were considered to be the lowest class possible, in fact not even part of the class structure itself. In the British colonies, philanthropic work was influenced and informed by liberal-utilitarian ideology that was most commonly employed in the demarcation and inscription of "deviant" identities (the homosexual, the addict, the 'mad' person) and the institutions that they were self-consciously designed to correspond to: the half-way house, the biomedical clinic, the detox or 'recovery centre', all of which can be seen as means of 'correcting' deviant typologies It is, however, of critical importance to also acknowledge the utility value of deviance throughout the various stages of capitalism. Here, as Sen asserts, scholarship in this area has "emphasized the utility of deviance [as a concept] in the extension of the state into uncolonized spaces of native society" (Sen, 2005, p. 8). The treatment of Indigenous people under colonialism was rooted in the ways that British aristocrats and capitalists mistreated and dehumanized their own peasant and working classes at the same time they were becoming colonial powers (Hick, 2014). As instruments of class-based, colonial oppression, early social workers clearly disrupted and

denigrated traditional relationships of Indigenous peoples in Canada and elsewhere in the Empire, such as in South Africa, Rhodesia, New Zealand, Australia, and other places.

By the late 1860s, British social work tended to mirror the concerns, fears and prejudices of the Victorian middle and upper classes regarding the "problem of the poor." Impoverishment was seen as threatening to the social fabric of British cities (Booth, 1893; Ferguson & Woodward, 2009). During the mid-19thcentury members of the British middle class openly "tolerated the poor living in overcrowded squalor and dying of disease and hunger" (Harman, 1999, p. 380). Shortly thereafter, however, major outbreaks of disease among the UK working poor – from dysentery to tuberculosis to cholera, and beyond – brought about a dawning realization among the middle class that without intervention in the squalid living conditions found in poor urban areas, disease would soon spread to other, more affluent parts of the cities. In this historical context, poverty was understood as an expression of an individual's character (agency) rather than a product of socioeconomic structures, based on bourgeois misappropriations of Darwinian evolutionary theory by the bourgeoisie. Such arguments maintained that some people were beyond help as a result of their weak genetic inheritance (Ferguson & Woodward, 2009, p. 18).

Meanwhile, with respect to social work education in the colonies, White dominance, shaped through colonialism, nation-building, and state formation continued to construct hegemonic scripts about the identity practices of social workers (Badwall, 2014; Jeffrey, 2002; Valverde, 2008). Heron (2007, p. 7) added that "colonial continuities have been modified over time in respect to their particular expression, and yet are recognizable for their similarity to their original colonial manifestations and effects." Scholars confirmed that the violent treatment of

Indigenous communities and immigrants was largely missing from dominant constructions of social work's history (Badwall, 2014; O'Connell, 2005; Park & Kemp, 2006; Sakamooto, 2003).

In Canada West (later to become Ontario), Edgerton Ryerson was appointed superintendent of education for the Provincial Normal School in 1847, which was the first teacher's college in Toronto, and later, evolved into the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE). Ryerson believed that "both the individual and society could be improved through religion and education" (Semple, 2021, para. 14). Ryerson supported an education system wherein Indigenous students were educated separately from their non-Indigenous peers, and converted to Christianity as a method of assimilating them into Euro-Canadian culture. Using the Hofwyl School for the Poor in Switzerland as a model, Ryerson was not only instrumental in setting up the Ontario public-school system, he was also instrumental in setting up Canada's residential school system. Spokespersons at Ryerson University acknowledged Ryerson's role in pioneering formal education but underplayed his central involvement in organizing the residential school system which was framed as nothing more than a harmful error (Semple, 2021).

To complicate matters even further, after Confederation in 1867, the newly-formed Canadian state soon expanded the residential school program, the stated objectives of which were literally to 'kill the Indian in the child' (Churchill, 2004). Furthermore, this policy directly contributed to the intentional erosion and eventual erasure of Indigenous language, culture, traditions and ways of knowing through forced assimilation (Stonechild, 2006). The intent of this programming was evident in An address to parliament by Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada's first prime minister, clearly revealed the true intent of the residential school system:

> When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with his parents who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly pressed upon myself, as head of the Department of Indian Affairs, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence . . . [and to the residential schools] where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men (Macdonald, 1883, p. 1107-8).

The above statement effectively set the tone for the 100-year legacy of the residential school system in Canada that followed.

In 1946, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), the parent body governing professional social work practice, joined with the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) to make a submission to the Government of Canada (Blackstock, 2009). The submission re-affirmed that Indigenous people in Canada needed to be assimilated into the broader Canadian society (Blackstock, 2009). The submission also outlined the position of the CASW the CWC, both of whom felt that residential schools had a "place in a well-rounded system of Indian education, particularly in so far as they meet special needs." (Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, as cited in Blackstock, 2009, p. 29).

Many Indigenous students were abused or died within residential schools, while social workers at the time actively denied having any knowledge of these abusive living conditions (Blackstock, 2009; Milloy, 1999). In spite of this denial, during the following century social workers routinely served on admissions committees that adjudicated child-welfare placements in residential schools (Government of Canada, 1996; Blackstock, 2009). The 1996 *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) would later confirm that in addition to serving on

placement committees, social workers were actively involved in the physical and forceful removal of substantial numbers of Aboriginal children from their homes into the residential schools (Blackstock, 2009; Caldwell, 1967; Government of Canada, 1996). In fact, social work graduates were actively involved in the placement of Indigenous children in residential schools as recently as the 1960s (Blackstock, 2009; Caldwell, 1967; Government of Canada, 1996).

Milloy (1999) dismissed claims that rationalized the involvement of social workers in the residential schools and denied that those involved knew about the many abuses and deaths. Milloy noted that information about what was happening in the schools was known to governments and the media. Despite widespread knowledge of abuse and murder, no action was taken to address concerns about what was happening inside the schools (Blackstock, 2009). While Caldwell (1967), a social worker by training, described the high percentage of child welfare placements in residential schools in Saskatchewan during the latter half of the 20th century, neither the authorities, the schools, nor government representatives recommended that the schools be closed. This is consistent with Blackstock's claim that social workers were complicit in supporting the residential school system (Blackstock, 2009).

When residential schools began closing in the 1960s, child welfare workers began the equally shameful practice of systematically removing children from Indigenous communities and placing them in non-Indigenous homes, often on a permanent basis. This blanket removal of so many Indigenous children thus became known as the "Sixties Scoop" (Johnson, 1983). Here, scholars such as Beaucage (2011) have drawn critical attention to the fact that the "number of children in care today is equal to or more than the number of children taken during the height of the residential school system" to argue that the Sixties Scoop should be re-branded as the 'Millennium Scoop' (p. 4).

In 2016, a Human Rights Tribunal led by Dr. Cindy Blackstock, challenged the ineffectiveness of Canada's child-welfare system, claiming that it had systematically overlooked, neglected and ignored the needs of Indigenous children for decades by consistently deprioritizing and underfunding child-welfare services operating on reserves.[4] The case went to the Supreme Court of Canada where, after years of foot dragging and reluctance to accept responsibility part of the Federal Government, Blackstock was, against all odds, victorious. The court upheld the Human Right Tribunal's position (PressProgress, 2019). In order to understand why Canada was not responding to the needs of Indigenous families and children as a national priority for social work, Blackstock (2009), insisted that the social work profession needed to initiate more "progressive action" (p. 31)

The Hidden Curriculum

The "hidden curriculum" refers to the unwritten, unofficial, and often unintended lessons, values, and perspectives that students learn in school, while the "formal curriculum" consists of the courses, lessons, and learning activities students participate in (Great Schools Partnership, 2015). Jay (2003) further defines the hidden curriculum as "the implicit messages given daily to students about socially derived and socially legitimated conceptions of what constitutes valid knowledge, 'proper' behaviour, acceptable levels of understanding, differential power, and social evaluation" (p. 6). Understanding the impact of the hidden curriculum in Canadian education systems, therefore, requires a critical examination of racism (Jay, 2003; Ghosh, 2008).

[4]While in most cases child welfare falls under provincial jurisdiction, on designated Indigenous reserves, child welfare falls under the control of the federal government authorities. As illustrated by the success of the 1907 legal challenge mounted by the *First Nations Caring Society* – an organization devoted to protecting and ensuring the rights of Indigenous children in Canada – child welfare on reserves has been consistently underfunded.

The silencing of Indigenous people and their histories is still being played out in the Canadian education system today through the hidden curriculum (Kuokkanen, 2008; Ghosh, 2008). The hidden curriculum is an integral part of the socialization process in schooling and has as much effect on students as the visible curriculum. Ghosh (2008) described the effects of the hidden curriculum as "not casual or unsystematic, but rather a reflection of the socio-cultural and economic political structure of society" (p. 28). If the lived experiences and knowledge of Indigenous students are unacknowledged and under-represented in the classroom, their beliefs and values are dismissed through the silencing capacity of the hidden curriculum. Indigenous students thus continue to be subjected to ongoing colonial violence through the hidden curriculum. The absence of Indigeneity in the classroom (as hidden curriculum) is obviously not politically neutral, but, in fact, yet another form of White privilege that directly impacts the lives and wellbeing of students.

MacDonald's (2019) work has illustrated how Indigenous Māori students in New Zealand struggled with the hidden curriculum. He explained how Indigenous students were forced to forgo their ethnic and cultural identities in the university in order to adhere to the socio-cultural and economic interests of the dominant culture. I argue that the same cultural and racial oppression is evident within the curricula of schools of social work in Atlantic Canadian universities, where Indigenous voices and knowledge are virtually absent. Within the academy, the omission of Indigenous ways of knowing is the norm, and hence the hidden curriculum continues to support White privilege (Gillborn, 2005).

Historically, Europeans considered Indigenous people in the Americas as sub-human "savages," or who were incapable of taming the land. And, since the land had not been "established by God," Europeans believed they had the divine right to simply seize the land from

them (Smith, 2005, p. 57). Since these racist narratives have been unchallenged in academic institutions, the dismissal of Indigenous knowledge and lived experiences continues to amount to what Ghosh (2008) has described as an affront to the central tenets of social justice. The colonial narratives described by MacDonald in New Zealand and Ghosh in Canada suggest that when faced with racism as a form of violence within the curriculum, Indigenous students must work hard to make themselves fit in with what is a predominantly a White pedagogy.

Despite their ostensible adherence to the lofty goals of social justice and equality, social workers often appear to follow the well-trod historical path of positioning Indigenous people as inferior and undeveloped human beings. Social work has therefore been complicit in forced assimilation into Canada's colonial, Euro-centric settler society, while Indigenous communities continue to struggle with the project of decolonizing and Indigenizing academic institutions.

A Brief Overview of Indigenous-Settler Relations in Canada

Relations between settlers and Indigenous people in Canada is punctuated by a litany of injustices including the signing of land treaties which meant nothing to those seeking access to Indigenous lands. Indigenous ownership claims were ignored. Atrocities inflicted on Indigenous people included the introduction of diseases and the destruction of resources which Indigenous people depended upon. These resources included the bison on the plains and blocking of access to salmon and other maritime resources the Beothuk depended upon. The fur trade was in part established on the exchange of alcohol for beaver and other animal furs. While this trade brought massive profits primarily to the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay Company, the alcohol inflicted individual harm and caused widespread social disruption in and among Indigenous communities. Eventually, European settlers arrived, promoting and perpetuating

images of themselves as morally, intellectually, socio-economically, and above all culturally superior. In other instances, some Europeans made claims of having Indigenous lineage (For instance offspring of a distant Indigenous grandmother, for example, or being someone like the *almost* Indigenous character in James Fenimore Coopers's 1826 novel *The Last of the Mohicans*, and the many blatantly exoticist cinematic reproductions it spawned from 1909 to 1992). Such claims of having distant Indigenous heritage were likely related to the discomfort that arose from settlers' being perceived as colonial invaders by the Indigenous populations.

European-Indigenous contact became especially confusing (and beneficial to the settlers) over Indigenous and European interpretation of what the treaties meant, especially given the significant cultural differences over the meaning of the land and ownership.[5] The European misinterpretation of treaties allowed them to be easily ignored and eventually forgotten. As Indigenous people were pushed to the margins of the new society, settler interests "came to dominate the politics of the colonies" (Smith, 2012, p. 24). The settlers moved to establish the British and later the Canadian and American states in their image. That image involved devising schemes as to how Indigenous people were treated and how their land could be taken.

The colonialist narratives of the European settlers followed dominant scripts which included viewing Indigenous people as savage "others" (Smith, 2012). One prominent historical example can be seen in Robert Flaherty's (1922) quasi-documentary film *Nanook of the North.* This early film reinforces the gross misrepresentation of Canada's First peoples, in this case the Inuit. While the colonialist narrative centred on Inuit resource exploitation, at the same time it patronized them by framing them as children. Although there was exchange of furs for beads, muskets, blankets, alcohol and so on, the settlers took what they wanted from the Indigenous

[5] Cf. the emphasis on oral tradition and the use of the wampum belt in the northeastern United States

residents without regard for the consequences. Those consequences carried implications such as poverty, inadequate housing and substance misuse.

What stands out in the historically one-sided relationship between European settlers and Indigenous people is the fact that the Europeans rationally justified their actions: that they were doing us a favour by civilizing us and bringing us Christianity. Such exclusion set the context for institutionalized containment, exploitation and the cultural disruption epitomized by the introduction of alcohol and the creation of the residential schools. Any explanation of this one-sided relationship asks the reader to question: *whose side of history is being represented*? *How were residential schools justified*? The complete dismissal of Indigenous Knowledge among colonial settlers, church authorities, government officials, and others occupying positions in the colonial hierarchy, should thus be seen as constituting the continuation of this one-sided relationship and long-held pattern of exclusion and cultural disruption.

Contemporary Indigenous Politics in Canada

In this section I will discuss (i) the end of the residential school system (and the legacy of healing from it), (ii) Idle No More, (iii) the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) and (iv) the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Before I begin, however, I want to offer the following caveat: For those who believe that these political forums are *mere politics* and are matters that can easily be disregarded, I maintain that such assertions are simplistic, reductive and ultimately dismissive of socio-cultural significance, particularly in the face of colonialist power structures that have been in place for hundreds of years.

The legacy of the residential school system and first steps towards healing

On June 11, 2008, then Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper stood in the Canadian House of Commons and issued the following apology to survivors of the residential school system in Canada. His '*Statement of apology to former students of Indian Residential Schools*' is reproduced here in full:

> *I stand before you today to offer an apology to former students of Indian residential schools. The treatment of children in these schools is a sad chapter in our history. For more than a century, Indian residential schools separated over 150,000 aboriginal children from their families and communities.*
>
> *In the 1870s, the federal government, partly in order to meet its obligations to educate aboriginal children, began to play a role in the development and administration of these schools.*
>
> *Two primary objectives of the residential school system were to remove and isolate children from the influence of their homes, families, traditions and cultures, and to assimilate them into the dominant culture.*
> *These objectives were based on the assumption that aboriginal cultures and spiritual beliefs were inferior and unequal.*
>
> *Indeed, some sought, as was infamously said, "to kill the Indian in the child."*
> *Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country. One hundred and thirty-two federally-supported schools were located in every province and territory, except Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.*
>
> *Most schools were operated as joint ventures with Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and United churches.*
>
> *The Government of Canada built an educational system in which very young children were often forcibly removed from their homes and often taken far from their communities.*
>
> *Many were inadequately fed, clothed and housed. All were deprived of the care and nurturing of their parents, grandparents and communities.*
> *First Nations, Inuit and Métis languages and cultural practices were prohibited in these schools.*

Tragically, some of these children died while attending residential schools, and others never returned home.

The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian residential schools policy were profoundly negative, and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on aboriginal culture, heritage and language.

While some former students have spoken positively about their experiences at residential schools, these stories are far overshadowed by tragic accounts of the emotional, physical and sexual abuse and neglect of helpless children, and their separation from powerless families and communities.

The legacy of Indian residential schools has contributed to social problems that continue to exist in many communities today.

It has taken extraordinary courage for the thousands of survivors who have come forward to speak publicly about the abuse they suffered. It is a testament to their resilience as individuals and to the strengths of their cultures.

Regrettably, many former students are not with us today and died never having received a full apology from the Government of Canada.

The government recognizes that the absence of an apology has been an impediment to healing and reconciliation. Therefore, on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian residential schools system.

To the approximately 80,000 living former students and all family members and communities, the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes, and we apologize for having done this.
We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions, that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this.

We now recognize that far too often these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you.

Not only did you suffer these abuses as children, but as you became parents, you were powerless to protect your own children from suffering the same experience, and for this we are sorry.

> *The burden of this experience has been on your shoulders for far too long. The burden is properly ours as a government, and as a country. There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian residential schools system to ever again prevail.*
>
> *You have been working on recovering from this experience for a long time, and in a very real sense we are now joining you on this journey. The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly.*
>
> *In moving toward healing, reconciliation and resolution of the sad legacy of Indian residential schools, the implementation of the Indian residential schools settlement agreement began on September 2007. Years of work by survivors, communities and aboriginal organizations culminated in an agreement that gives us a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership.*
>
> *A cornerstone of the settlement agreement is the Indian residential schools truth and reconciliation commission. This commission represents a unique opportunity to educate all Canadians on the Indian residential schools system. It will be a positive step in forging a new relationship between Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians, a relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward with a renewed understanding that strong families, strong communities and vibrant cultures and traditions will contribute to a stronger Canada for all of us.* (Government of Canada, 2008, p.1-2).

The complete apology is reproduced here because it is necessary for history to be told as it is, as opposed to what we hope it will be. In this speech, Harper implied that there were only a small number of residential schools in the Atlantic provinces, which was factually incorrect. I am a survivor from one of those residential schools in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) that he completely neglected in his 'apology'. The apology did, however, admit that the legacy of residential schools in Canada has contributed to social problems that persist in many Canadian communities today. The question here is thus why the federal government has not taken decisive, collaborative steps to address the aforementioned social problems? While the apology admits that "there is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the residential school system to ever again prevail," many Indigenous people, survivors residential school

survivors, maintain that such “attitudes” are evident within existing government policies affecting Indigenous people in Canada.

Although survivors initially welcomed the long overdue apology from the Federal Government, Harper's 2008 apology did not extend to NL schools were situated. The Government of NL had an informal policy based on the assumption that there were no longer any Indigenous people residing in the province, owing to the widespread belief that the former Beothuk people had been subject to genocide (Grammond, 2014).

After legal pressure from residential school survivors began ramping up in July 2009, Liberal Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, issued a second apology on November 24, 2017 that was specific to the survivors of the residential schools in NL. The full transcript is again reproduced below:

> *The treatment of Indigenous children in residential schools is a dark and shameful chapter in our country’s history. By acknowledging the past and educating Canadians about the experiences of Indigenous children in these schools, we can ensure that this history is never forgotten.*
>
> *At the turn of the twentieth century, the Moravian Mission and the International Grenfell Association established schools with dormitory residences for Indigenous children with the support of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Their stated purpose was to educate Innu, Inuit, and NunatuKavut children from the communities of Black Tickle, Cartwright, Davis Inlet, Goose Bay, Hebron, Hopedale, Makkovik, Nain, Northwest River, Nutak, Postville, Rigolet, Sheshatshiu and other parts of Newfoundland and Labrador. We now know, however, that Indigenous children in these schools were isolated from their communities, families, traditions and cultures. These residential schools were operated from 1949 until the last school closed in 1980, with the support of the Canadian government.*
>
> *To move forward with reconciliation, we must understand the role of residential schools in our history. We must recognize the colonial way of thinking that fueled these practices. It’s important because it was there, in these residential schools, that many former students were sorely neglected, while others were subjected to tragic physical and sexual abuse. Many experienced a profound void at the loss of their languages and cultural practices, while others were not properly fed, clothed or housed. Ultimately, every single child was deprived of the love and care of their parents, families and communities.*

Children who returned from traumatic experiences in these schools looked to their families and communities for support but, in many cases, found that their own practices, cultures and traditions had been eroded by colonialism. It was in this climate that some experienced individual and family dysfunction, leaving a legacy that took many forms. Afterwards, some experienced grief, poverty, family violence, substance abuse, family and community breakdown, and mental and physical health issues. Unfortunately, many of these intergenerational effects of colonialism on Indigenous people continue today.

On September 28, 2016, the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador approved the negotiated settlement agreed to by the parties to provide compensation to those who attended the residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador and those who may have suffered abuse. The agreement also includes provisions for healing and commemoration activities identified by former students. This settlement was made possible because of the exceptional courage and strength of representative plaintiffs and other former students who came forward and spoke about their experiences. Sadly, not all are here with us today, having passed away without being able to hear this apology. We honour their spirits – and we cherish their memories.

We heard you when you said that the exclusion of Newfoundland and Labrador from Canada's 2008 Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools and the absence of an apology recognizing your experiences have impeded healing and reconciliation. We acknowledge the hurt and pain this has caused you – and we assure former students that you have not been forgotten.

Today, I stand humbly before you, as Prime Minister of Canada, to offer a long overdue apology to former students of the five residential schools in Newfoundland and Labrador on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians. I also offer an apology to the families, loved ones and communities impacted by these schools for the painful and sometimes tragic legacy these schools left behind.

For all of you – we are sincerely sorry – pijâgingilagut – apu ushtutatat.

To the survivors who experienced the indignity of this abuse, neglect, hardship and discrimination by the individuals, institutions and system entrusted with your care, we are truly sorry for what you have endured.

We are sorry for the lack of understanding of Indigenous societies and cultures that led to Indigenous children being sent away from their homes, families and communities and placed into residential schools. We are sorry for the misguided belief that Indigenous children could only be properly provided for, cared for, or educated if they were separated from the influence of their families, traditions and cultures. This is a shameful part of Canada's history – stemming from a legacy of colonialism, when Indigenous people were treated with a profound lack of equality and respect – a time in our country when we undervalued Indigenous cultures and traditions and it was wrongly believed Indigenous languages, spiritual beliefs and ways of life were inferior and irrelevant.

Saying that we are sorry today is not enough. It will not undo the harm that was done to you. It will not bring back the languages and traditions you lost. It will not take away the isolation and vulnerability you felt when separated from your families, communities and cultures. And it will not repair the hardships you endured in the years that followed as you struggled to recover from what you experienced in the schools and move forward with your lives.

But today we want to tell you that what happened in those five schools – at the Lockwood School in Cartwright, the Makkovik Boarding School, the Nain Boarding School, the St. Anthony Orphanage and Boarding School and the Yale School in Northwest River – is not a burden you have to carry alone anymore. It is my hope that today you can begin to heal – that you can finally put your inner child to rest. We share this burden with you by fully accepting our responsibilities – and our failings – as a government and as a country.

All Canadians possess the ability to learn from the past and shape the future. This is the path to reconciliation. This is the way to heal the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. Today's apology follows on the heels of a historic new approach to reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous peoples.

And this year, as we reflect on 150 years of Confederation across Canada, we have an opportunity to pause – to think about the future we want to create, that we must create, that we will create, together, in the coming decades and centuries.

We have an opportunity to rebuild our relationship, based on the recognition of your rights, respect, cooperation, partnership and trust. The Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools settlement is an example of reconciliation in action, a settlement with healing and commemoration at its core.

We understand that reconciliation between the Government of Canada and Indigenous peoples can be a difficult process and is ongoing – and we know it doesn't happen overnight. But it is my hope that in apologizing today, acknowledging the past and asking for your forgiveness, that as a country, we will continue to advance the journey of reconciliation and healing together.

Former students, families and communities that were impacted by the Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools continue to display incredible strength in the face of adversity. Your resilience and your perseverance are evident through your actions every day. By telling the story of Newfoundland and Labrador residential schools, we ensure that this history will never be forgotten. All Canadians have much to learn from this story and we hope to hear you tell your stories – in your own way and in your own words – as this healing and commemoration process unfolds.

While we cannot forget the history that created these residential schools, we must not allow it to define the future. We call on all Canadians to take part in the next chapter – a time when Indigenous and non-Indigenous people build the future we want together."
(Trudeau, as cited in McIntyre, 2017)

Not unlike Harper's apology almost a decade earlier, this second apology also contains questionable conclusions. For example, when the Prime Minister stated that "we must recognize the colonial way of thinking that fueled these practices," he is presupposing that colonialism and colonial thinking are things of the past. Many Indigenous People, including survivors of the residential school system, continue to be negatively impacted by the debilitating effects of colonial policies, including those made under the Trudeau Liberal government. Thus, it is a misrepresentation of history for the Prime Minister to speak of colonialism as something that existed in the distant past, a wrongful act committed by "a few bad Europeans" that the present "good Europeans" look at with disdain. In spite of these apologies, survivors of residential schools have had to continually seek retribution through legal channels before they were promised even the most meager and symbolic forms of compensation.

Formed the same year as the Harper's formal apology in 2008, an unintended effect of the *Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement* (IRSSA) that proved to be beneficially transformative for Indigenous communities was the founding and development of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Above and beyond its 94 separate concluding 'calls to action', in its early years the TRC was in large part designed and intended to provide Indigenous students a chance to tell their stories and to promote healing. The work of the TRC concluded that there was a direct causal relationship between that the high levels of substance use, poverty, inadequate housing, and cultural dishevelment among residential school survivors and the trauma they endured during their incarceration at these institutions characterized by forced assimilation, rampant abuse, neglect, and worse (TRC, 2015c). Through the provisions of the TRC agreement, the process for payments to survivors created the steps for reimbursement, and for next steps.. In addition, the TRC was mandated to:

- compile a historical record of the residential school system;
- write a report about their findings that included recommendations to the Canadian government on how to deal with the legacy of the residential school system;
- establish a research centre to act as a permanent resource for Canadians seeking to understand the nature and legacy of the residential school system;
- host seven events across Canada designed to promote awareness of the residential school system and its legacy; and,
- participate in a Commemoration Initiative that would pay tribute to residential school students (CBC, 2008)

In addition to exposing the Eurocentric nature of the Canadian education system, the TRC revealed how the system was directly linked to incredibly high rates of post-traumatic stress, alcoholism, substance abuse, and suicide in relation to the broader Canadian population. The heartbreaking stories that the TRC revealed described 'third world' conditions on many Indigenous reserves, inadequate – and arguably *harmful* – child welfare services, decades of having to endure systemic racism and discrimination, and the (intergenerational) trauma associated with the residential school system (TRC, 2015a). Entitled *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* the TRC's Final Report contained 94 calls to action designed to redress the many issues faced by Indigenous people (TRC, 2015b). Several of the TRC calls to action explicitly addressed the need to Indigenize Canadian universities. These are reproduced below, complete with their original section and subsection numbers:

> 10. iii. To introduce government legislation that would incorporate the principle of "[d]eveloping culturally appropriate curricula" (TRC, 2015b, p. 2) […]

62. ii. "Provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms

iii. "Provide the necessary funding to Aboriginal schools to utilize Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in classrooms.

iv. "Establish senior-level positions in government at the assistant deputy minister level or higher dedicated to Aboriginal content in education" (TRC, 2015b, p. 7).

63 iv. Conducting a needs assessment among existing instructors regarding their knowledge of Indigenous cultures in Canada, and developing training programs to enhance the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge in the classroom, including "[s]haring information and best practices on teaching curriculum related to residential schools and Aboriginal history" and "[b]uilding student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect." (TRC, 2015b, p. 7).

I have drawn particular attention to these specific calls to action because they all explicitly address the direct need to Indigenize university education in Canada. If these calls for action– particularly as they address education – are taken seriously by the Canadian public, and, in time, implemented with the requisite levels of both public support, and state funding, we will witness an unprecedented and fundamentally radical, transformative movement towards Indigenization.

Idle No More (INM)

An inter/national protest movement rooted in Indigenous resistance, Idle No More (INM) suddenly burst onto the Canadian political landscape shortly after it was formed in November 2012 with a nationwide call to strike down oppressive legislation being proposed by the Harper

Conservatives (see Barker, 2015; Coates, 2015; Galloway & Moore, 2013; the Kino-nda-niimi Collective, 2014). Based on "an inclusive, continent-wide network of urban and rural Indigenous [people] working hand in hand with non-Indigenous allies", INM seeks to "build a movement for Indigenous rights and the protection of land, water, and sky" (INM, 2022b, para. 2). Since its inception a decade ago, INM was a movement supported by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike, a characteristic of the movement that continues today (Marshall, 2019).

Seven years of the Federal Conservative Party's "unwillingness […] to address Indigenous issues" (Martin, 2021, para. 2), along with more than a century of lukewarm government responses to the repression of Indigenous people's rights effectively set the stage for a widespread Indigenous resistance movement, thus leading to the establishment of INM. The movement was originally founded by four women in Saskatchewan – Jessica Gordon, Sylvia McAdam, Sheelah McLean and Nina Wilson – who created a Facebook page entitled "Idle No More". The Facebook page, as well as the name of the group caught on like wildfire, and quickly came to represent a nation-wide movement to both "safeguard the environment and respect Indigenous sovereignty" (Marshall, 2019, para. 2). The initial focus of INM in 2012 was to catalyze organized resistance to Bill C-45, the *Jobs and Growth Act 2012*, more popularly known as the 'omnibus bill' due to its multifaceted and far-reaching implications. With the Conservative Party as its architect, the Bill C-45 would make sweeping changes to over 60 pre-existing federal government bills and enactments that would diminish treaty rights, remove environmental protections and exempt major multi-national energy corporations, including the oil and gas sector. For example, the proposed omnibus bill encompassed changes to: the *First Nations Elections Act* (Bill S–6); the *Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act* (Bill S–8); the *Family Homes on Reserve and Matrimonial Interests or Rights Act* (Bill S–2); the *Indian Act*

Amendment and Replacement (Bill C–428); the *An Act to Amend the Interpretation Act* (Bill C–207); the *First Nations Self Government Recognition Act* (Bill S–212); the *Indian Act*, the *Fisheries Act*, the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*, and the *Navigable Waters Act*. (Miskonoodinkwe-Smith, 2013).

Perhaps the most upsetting aspect of the proposed omnibus legislation was that "[t]he Government of Canada never consulted with ANY [Indigenous groups or communities] in regard to these amendments as outlined in our treaty rights and the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*" (Miskonoodinkwe-Smith, 2013, para. 6). As clearly embodied by the far-reaching implications of Bill-45 for Indigenous communities, trying to undermine Indigenous rights had been a distinguished hallmark of Harper's Conservative government since it came to power in 2006 (Martin, 2021).

Despite the significant momentum it inspired, INM was, however, unable to stop Bill C-45 from being passed in the Canadian House of Commons. Having said that, the movement did succeed in bringing heightened attention to Indigenous rights and the destruction of environmental protection policy across Canada. The Harper Conservatives successfully won two federal minority governments in 2006 and 2008, followed by a majority government from 2011 to 2015, but Bill C-45 was enough to shake the Canadian public's faith in the Conservative Party. Most significantly, Indigenous-led activism helped create a wider public discourse that contributed to the Conservative government's downfall in the October 2015 federal election.

Idle No More was a manifestation of Indigenous peoples' long-standing anti-colonial and anti-racist struggles with the Government of Canada over land and rights that stretched back to before the formation of the Canadian state itself in 1867. In this light, INM in the 2010s was another, perhaps even stronger, expression of Indigenous anger and resentment that was seen in

the "Red Power" movements of the 1960s (Palmer, 2009, p. 367-411). The INM movement also shared significant resonance with several other prominent examples of Indigenous activism in Canadian history, including: the Kahnesatake and Kahnawake standoffs with Quebec's national police force and the Canadian army in 1990 (see Obomsawin, 1993); the Liberal Chretien government's 1996 Bill C-79, the *Indian Act Optional Modification Act*, which dismissed the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (Istormnews, 2014). Bill C-45 was seen by the majority of Indigenous people as a major paternalistic attack on treaty status and land/human rights. This bill fortunately died on the Order Paper with the dissolution of the House of Parliament in April 1997 (Government of Canada, 2013). All such historical moments and the Indigenous responses to them have contributed to the momentum that propels contemporary Indigenous movements for social/environmental justice, as epitomized by INM.

As Indigenous-based movements multiply and gain increasing, INM continues to lead campaigns for the rights of Indigenous people. Most recently, INM led the *Cancel Canada Day* movement in response to the "discovery of over 1300+ unmarked graves of Indigenous children at residential 'schools'" (INM, 2022a, para. 2).

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG)

Established in 2016, the *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* (MMIWG) represented the culmination of decades of pleas on the part of Indigenous women, girls, families and allies that went ignored (see the 2019 publication entitled *Reclaiming power and place: final report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*). The inquiry allowed Indigenous communities, and of the Canadian public

more generally, to come to terms with the question of why Indigenous women have and continue to be seen and represented as being 'disposable'.

The case of convicted serial killer Robert Pickton perhaps best exemplifies the representation of Indigenous women and girls (particularly those engaged in so-called 'risky' behaviors such as substance use and/or sex work) as 'disposable'. While in jail awaiting trial, B.C. pig farmer Robert Pickton admitted to an undercover police officer that he was responsible for the death of up to 49 different women, many of whom were of Indigenous descent. Beginning in 2007, however, he was convicted and sentenced for his role in the murder of 26 women based on evidence collected from his pig farm in Port Coquitlam (outside of Vancouver) – a widely known site used by criminal motorcycle gangs for parties and other illicit activities. Although Pickton's victims were not strictly Indigenous, it took four years before there was any serious police follow up on the murders that led to the investigation of his pig farm and eventual conviction.

The struggle of Indigenous women and girls to address what the Canadian Government has framed as cultural genocide, has led to a growing number of increasingly powerful Indigenous women such as Dr. Cindy Blackstock and Pamela Palmater, both of whom have become role models for their role in catalyzing profound social change through their activism. (Luoma, 2021; Palmater, 2019).

The dominant worldview within the academy must be decolonized

Grosfoguel (2007) has argued that contemporary public school systems do not invite the voices of marginalized people and that the curriculum has been overwhelmingly drawn from the Western canon. In other words, as a place of contention and struggle, many school systems will

often deny space to, and thus further dismiss, marginalized populations. Dismissing the notion that there is only one universal truth, Grosfoguel argued further that decolonization requires that there be more than one set of knowledge besides the Western canon, and that there needs to be other "epistemic perspectives/cosmologies/insights" reflecting the voices "from and with marginalized people" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 212). Given that Western scholarship has traditionally privileged the scientific method as the only way of producing *true*, 'objective' knowledge, for over 500 years, the colonialists and their Enlightenment ideas of progress through rational, scientific evidence, considered themselves to be at the "center of the world because they ha[d] conquered it" (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 215). For Grosfoguel (2007):

> European patriarchy and European notions of sexuality, epistemology and spirituality were exported to the rest of the world through colonial expansion as the hegemonic criteria to racialize, classify and pathologize the rest of the world's population in a hierarchy of superior and inferior races. (p. 217-218)

Such thinking implies that the myth of a postcolonial world persists in present day because colonialism has become nonexistent since the administrators have long gone from the colonies. This is, of course, also patently untrue: many so-called post-colonial nations arguably continue to live under conditions that bear an uncanny resemblance to the colonial period. The shift from life under colonial rule to the current period of 'global coloniality' has thus been hidden (Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 219).

While some scholarly have contended that the colonial era has ended, Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano's "coloniality of power" demonstrates that this is not the case. As it has been suggested, "[w]e still live in a colonial world, and we need to break from the narrow

ways of thinking about colonial relations, in order to accomplish the unfinished and incomplete twentieth century dream of decolonization" (Quijano, as cited in Grosfoguel, 2007, p. 210). Grosfoguel (2007) drew upon both the South Asian and Latin American Subaltern Studies camps, who agreed that alternative approaches to knowledge production that have been developed to date merely serve to continue privileging Western thought.

Blackstock's (2009) work provided many important insights for both engaging with my research participants, and designing my interview guide, including the types of questions I explored and how I analyzed the interview data this work generated. Blackstock (2009) warned that social workers must learn from past mistakes so as not to replicate them. She revealed research findings that confirmed how Indigenous people in Canada always made the best decisions regarding matters affecting themselves, their families, and communities, prior to first contact with the colonial powers. She argued that neglect on the part of the authorities was instrumental in causing the deaths of many Indigenous children and youth in government- and church-led residential schools, while those who ostensibly occupied positions of authority (right up to the top) simply turned their heads. Documenting social workers' complicity in the establishment and daily operation of the residential school system, Blackstock (2009) drew specific attention to their role in rounding up Indigenous children and placing them in these institutions (Blackstock, 2009, p, 29). Perpetuating widely held beliefs regarding the imperative of Indigenous assimilation among the dominant European majority in Canada at the time, the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) and the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) met in 1946 to cement the perception that residential schools were appropriate for the education (read: forced assimilation and conscious cultural erosion) of "Indians" (Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons, 1946; Jennissen & Lundy, 2019). In present day,

education is still arguably imposed on Indigenous people in Canada without their consent, as illustrated by school programs that continue to disregard the impact of the colonial underpinnings of the curriculum, as much as contemporary forms of pedagogy (Walkem & Bruce, 2002; Blackstock, 2003; Hart, 2007).

Blackstock (2009) was baffled: why did social workers and the Canadian child welfare system not adequately respond to the needs of Indigenous children and families, and why was there not a "national strategy for social work"? (p. 30). The Hippocratic oath – '*First do no harm'* – that has often been applied to the discipline and practice of social work is thus called into question. Social workers' complicity with the residential school system begs the question: what was the nature of their so-called professional training and instruction? Furthermore, why were social workers engaging in – and, in fact, rationalizing – systemic acts of harm? In response to initial reports of harm in the residential school system, Blackstock (2009, p. 32) queried "just how high a threshold need[ed] to be reached" before risks to Indigenous children's safety were acted upon? Appalled by the role of early social workers in the operation of residential schools, Backstock (2009) deconstructed the ways in which social workers often rationalized and covered up ongoing atrocities in Indigenous Child welfare services:

1. Social workers claim ignorance by saying they neither knew about the abuses, nor the deaths that happened (i.e. in residential schools);
2. Social workers insist that they have the best approaches and solutions to social problems. They state this, despite evidence that "Indigenous communities, when provided with adequate supports, develop the most sustainable socio-economic improvements for their children";

3. Unclear government mandates placed on social workers were often used to their advantage;[6]
4. Social workers believe that their thoughts and actions are well-intentioned (as was the case when residential school staff were divinely legitimated by Christ and Christian doctrine). Thus, their interventions with clients "regardless of consequences . . . [would be] absolved from moral responsibility". (p. 34)

Regarding this last point, citing a Methodist Church report dated from 1911, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) stated that:

> Politician, civil servant and, perhaps most critically, priest and parson all felt that in developing the residential school system they were responding not only to a constitutional but to a Christian "obligation to our Indian brethren" that could be discharged only "through the medium of the children" and "therefore education must be given the foremost place" (Government of Canada, 1996a, p. 310).

Drawing from Spivak's notion of 'sanctioned ignorance,' Kuokkanen (2008) referred to the academy's approach to non-Eurocentric types of knowledge as "epistemic ignorance" (p. 60). Kuokkanen (2008), thus asserts that Eurocentric academic institutions effectively serve to promote the continued exclusion of non-Western knowledge (p. 60). This means that not only are Indigenous forms of knowledges left unrecognized by the dominant intellectual culture, but moreover, they are neither "heard [n]or understood" (Kuokkanen, 2008, p.60).

Acknowledging that Indigenous students may need assistance adapting to life in the academy, Kuokkanen (2008) argued that it was academics' responsibility to change their

[6]Prior to the death of Jordan Anderson, there was often confusion as to the responsibilities of federal and provincial governments, respectively. A "First Nations boy from Norway House Cree Nation who was born with complex medical needs," Jordan Anderson was hospitalized, but owing to fierce disputes between federal and provincial health authorities regarding responsibilities and remuneration, Joran later died in hospital before reaching his sixth birthday. (Blackstock, 2009, p. 33).

approach so as to be more welcoming to Indigenous students. Asserting that we need to focus on the academy itself, Kuokkanen (2008) insisted that it was imperative for academic administrators to critically reflect on their own discourses and assumptions in order to address the sanctioned epistemic ignorance that prevailed. Kuokkanen further expressed shock and dismay at the fact that antiquated Enlightenment thinking was still so pervasive in Western institutions (Kuokkanen, 2008).

Kuokkanen (2008) proposed that Indigenous epistemologies are a gift that academics can choose to accept. This gift consists of both a philosophy of reciprocity, together with a "set of shared and common perceptions and conceptions of the world related to ways of life, cultural and social practices and discourses that foreground and necessitate an intimate relationship with the natural environment" (Kuokkanen, 2008, p.65). At present, Kuokkanen's (2008) gift of Indigenous epistemologies is arguably near impossible to actualize given the lack of receptivity demonstrated by most academic instructors, who are thus not only unwilling, but unable to accept such a gift. Meaningful incorporating Indigenous epistemologies may therefore begin with initiatives designed to increase the receptivity of instructors to obvious and accessible gifts as articulated by Kuokkanen (2008).

The Recent Impetus Toward Decolonizing and Indigenizing the University

This section examine and critically assess the efforts of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars to Indigenize academic institutions. Walton & Abo El Nasr (1988) investigated how imported models of social work from nations such as the United States were affecting the developing world. Walton & Abo El Nasr (1988) were interested in how the key concepts of Indigenization and what they called "authentization" in developing nations related to and/or

countered imported foreign models of social work. Walton & Abo El Nasr's study is of particular relevance to my study as they are concerned with the impositions of models of social work being made from the outside onto people in subordinated positions.

The concept of Indigenization was first introduced at the Fifth United Nations International Survey of Social Work Training in 1971 at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina (Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988). In their article Walton and Abo El Nasr (1988) exposed how American social work theories were being exported worldwide, and how these theories were more often than not inappropriate for developing nations (p. 135). Here, drawing from other scholars, Walton and Abo El Nasr (1988) present two vastly differing definitions of the notion of *Indigenization.* In the first case Indigenization equates to 'appropriateness' in the sense that "professional social work roles must be appropriate to the needs of different countries, and social work education must be appropriate to the demands of social work practice" in those societies (Midgley, as cited in Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988, p.136). In the second instance, Indigenization is articulated as "adapting imported ideas to fit local needs" (Shawsky, as cited in Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988, p.136). Both definitions of Indigenization counter the dominant, external (i.e. U.S.-based) models of social work practice that are often imposed on other, less developed settings, implying that those in other cultures are expected to modify and adapt these models to fit their own cultural contexts (Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988). The term *glocalization* is often used to describe how localities associated with specific cultures adapt to and/or selectively incorporate elements of larger, dominant global forces. A centrally important trope in the arguments advanced by Walton & Abo El Nasr (1988), the notion of "authentization" can be understood as "the identification of genuine and authentic roots in the local system [..] used for guiding its future development in a mature, relevant and original fashion" (Ragab as cited in

Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988, p. 136). Taken together, the concepts of *Indigenization*, *authentization* and *glocalization* form a natural, complementary, and culturally sensitive framework appropriate for developing and adapting the practice of social work among Indigenous populations and communities.

The imposition of ideas from developed nations onto Indigenous people in general and in the specific case of social work education, has been part of the Western Colonial project since its inception. In this context, the ideas being exported were not a *bad fit*, but were central to achieving and maintaining the social control of the colonial power. Attempts at exporting such models were thus tantamount to "professional imperialism" (Walton & Abo El Nasr, 1988, p.136). More appropriate and authentic models were required that could be more culturally relevant to Other cultural contexts. Evidently, the imposition of values derived from the dominant, developed countries onto people in less developed nations, and assumptions being made about the needs and problems of people there have an eerily similar parallel to the Canadian experience, where Indigenous people have historically been forced to adopt and/or adapt to the dominant Eurocentric culture.

As part of their objective to 'develop the authentization of social work', Walton and Abo El Nasr (1988) advocate five general principles that can be applied in the development of authentic, localized forms of social work praxis: recommended five examples of social work practice, including: the degree to which the specific form(s) of social practice being implemented are appropriate to local cultures; examining social work practice on a developmental level; promoting debate and communication that meets professional standards; the inclusion of institutions devoted to further inquiry and practice innovation, and, finally; the allocation of funding to establish projects relevant to specific populations outside the dominant culture (p.

143-143). As the above arguments suggest, such practices have enormous potential to make an immeasurable contribution to the development of a more authentic and Indigenized model of social work practice in Atlantic Canada.

Can the Canadian academy move beyond Indigenous inclusion?

Drawing from the results of an anonymous survey, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) concluded that policy relating to Indigenization can be located on a spectrum: while one end of this spectrum can be described as *Indigenous inclusion*, the mid-way point represents *reconciliation Indigenization*, and, at the opposite end, we find *decolonial Indigenization*. The far left of this spectrum is, by its very nature, speculative. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) invoked several specific examples of efforts to Indigenize higher education along this spectrum, although they admit that decolonial Indigenization was merely a preconfigured concept, as no cases actually exist in practice. They concluded that decolonial Indigenization was simply too discomforting for the academy. Qualifying their three ideal forms of Indigenization Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) begin by explaining that Indigenous inclusion merely aims to increase the number of Indigenous students, faculty and staff within the university. The thinking behind this approach is that Indigenization will transpire simply by increasing the number or proportion of Indigenous bodies. Unfortunately, without concrete structural change, however, bringing more Indigenous people into the academy in and of itself will not automatically make it Indigenized. The same thinking applies to those who believe that all we need to do is to engage in a discourse about the "need for change." (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 218-219). Without structural change at the level of academic institutions, in other words, Indigenization will continue to be little more than a buzzword.

As the experience of Australia and other similar jurisdictions has demonstrated, Indigenous inclusion marks the most basic and superficial form of Indigenization. Moreover, inclusion policies in Australia place undue expectations on Indigenous resource centres to accept sole responsibility for progressive social transformation. Ultimately, many universities in Australia have merely adopted policies whereby universities require "Indigenous peoples, not the academy, to bear the responsibility for change" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 220).

Occupying the middle of the spectrum, 'reconciliation Indigenization' calls for the university to change the way that it welcomes Indigenous students. This approach represents a more concerted effort to Indigenize the university as universities are obligated to establish Indigenous advisory and/or reconciliation committees. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), however, assert that such policies often do not move beyond optimistic rhetoric. Instead of genuinely transforming the university, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) revealed that Reconciliation Indigenization simply reproduced Indigenous knowledge within the European Enlightenment tradition.

Decolonial Indigenization, however, takes the Indigenization imperative even further. Under decolonized Indigenization, university institutions would need to be completely dismantled and rebuilt. Previously marginalized Indigenous knowledges would become re-centred, or, at least, resituated as parallel as Western knowledge. Although many scholars consider Indigenization as a necessary process and would welcome decolonial Indigenization with open arms, in spite of the endless superficial rhetoric surrounding the notion of Indigenization, the present university administrators consider the necessary prerequisite steps too radical to consider.

Creating space for Indigenous knowledge within the academy

Contrary to the need for structural changes within the university, Hertel (2017) provided evidence that above and beyond their activism, the very presence of Indigenous scholars in the university *can* make a difference, for example, by pushing for the inclusion of transdisciplinary research within universities. Hertel (2017) cautioned that no one epistemological framework can claim dominance over any other in academia, providing a holistic framework for innovation in doctoral education that drew on her experience as a transdisciplinary research team member. Hertel's (2017) framework emphasized respect and appreciation for the "physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual aspects of people, communities, and the society as influenced by history, present, and future and the interconnectedness of all things on all levels […] in the natural world" (p. 176). Referred to as the *four R's* Hertel's (2017) model for redesigning doctoral education in accordance with Indigenous values and principles rests on four core values: relationships, responsibilities, reciprocity, and redistribution. Welcoming the inclusion of scholars from other disciplines to a round-table exchange, the first value – relationships – brings together those whose knowledge contributes to science. Hertel's (2017) second value, responsibilities, refers to the specific contributions of each different discipline to collaborative scholarship. The third value, reciprocity, Based on the dynamic circulation of theoretical, methodological, and praxis-driven models and frameworks, the third value is termed reciprocity. Representing a call for contemporary scholarship to ubiquitously move away from disciplinary silos and instead adopt interdisciplinarity as the fundamental basis of all research, the fourth value, redistribution "allows for the development of new conceptual models and innovative interventions" (Hertel, 2017, p.176). In summary, Hertel (2017) believes that by working together, transdisciplinary scholars can collaboratively integrate different forms of knowledge

production, while elevating those forms that have traditionally been excluded, ignored, or silenced, as in the case of Indigenous ways of knowing.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The Anti-Colonial Discourse Framework

The anti-colonial discourse framework (ACDF) is a method for theorizing social reality from the vantage point of socially marginalized and subordinated people (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). As such, the ACDF provides the basis of my methodological framework and stories/'storywork'. The responses of my participants can be seen as for example as acts of colonial resistance. When my respondents ask for change, they are offering alternatives to the current order, actions supported by "discursive and political optimism" (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 298) of the ACDF.

By choosing to speak to theory through a discursive framework, the ACDF accepts the fact that change is inevitable in university study (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 299). Dei (2000) had earlier pointed out that "the anti – colonial discursive framework is an epistemology of the colonized, anchored in the Indigenous sense of collective and common colonial consciousness" (p.300). The goal of this framework is to challenge the existing power structures of the privileged, and, speaking from their own lived experiences, my research participants have done precisely that. In addition, and following Dei's earlier anti-racist discursive approach (1996) my participants challenge the social dominance and inequitable corporate power in postsecondary education which has increased over the last few decades. The hiking of tuition fees that my research participants challenge is an example of how oppressive and unequal structures of power are challenged (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001).

Allusions to non-hierarchical forms of teaching and organizing the classroom as a means of encouraging more bottom-up interaction in social work education on the part of my research

participants, were highly complementary to the ACDF model, which constitutes a "counter/oppositional discourse to the presence of colonial oppression" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 301). What my research participants asked for was to change the way that the existing classroom instruction was delivered to reflect the traditional Indigenous notion of a collective approach, whereby instruction is envisioned as a shared, interactive experience. Another example of counter/oppositional discourse can be seen in my research participants' requests for Indigenous ceremonies to be naturally integrated into social work classroom settings. Illustrating a further degree of resonance, the ACDF thus elevates the "oral, visual, textual, political, and material resistance of colonized groups, which entails a shift away from preoccupation with victimization" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 301). Following this, Indigenous ceremony is a key site of Indigeneity in terms of tradition, orality, visual representation, and material and intangible culture, as ceremony indisputably empowers the colonized and marginalized groups. The ACDF perspective seeks to identify such sites of empowerment and "celebrate [their] strategic significance" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 300). As an example of ceremony, smudging veers away from the consistent public focus on victimization, embodying a constructive, celebratory expression of Indigeneity. Traditional classroom instruction models can thus be destabilized when we listen to the voices of the colonized and create space to facilitate and value concrete expressions of their lived experiences, including "geography, history, language, and spirituality" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 300).

Contemporary examples of colonial domination over the past century can be seen in the creation of the residential school system, the 60's scoop, the millennium scoop, and the ongoing state of the child welfare system that came to replace residential schools. Indigenous resistance to such assimilationist efforts, however, continue to persist. It appears that the Canadian state

tolerates this resistance because it is perceived to pose little threat to the dominant colonial order. In the meantime, Indigenous people continue to revitalize their languages and communities to maintain their ways of living as they work towards collectively revitalizing their culture.

The ACDF defines colonialism as "all forms of dominating and oppressive relationships that emerge from structures of power and privilege inherent and embedded in our contemporary social relations" (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 308). These authors additionally remind us that "colonial is defined not simply as foreign or alien, but more importantly as dominating and imposing" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 308). In this research study, my research participants clearly maintain that there is nothing "post" about colonialism as long as there remain "relations of power and domination" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 308) which impact "race, gender, sexuality, religion, language and class" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 308).

My research participants maintain that social work instruction continues to reflect racist language and social constructionism. While *race* clearly intersects with class, gender and sexuality, racism alone presents a serious challenge to Indigenous students interested in pursuing their education. The ACDF warns of "the multiplicity of race's real-life effects as both a social construction and a social fact" (Dei & Asgarzadeh, 2001, p. 310).

My research participants are providing a form of counter-hegemonic resistance to issues of race, class and gender present in academia. Through their insistence on promoting change in classroom instruction, they appear to be "fighting against all forms of domination; as all forms of domination ought to be fought together if any one domination is to be successfully resisted" (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p.313).

Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) proposed that the ACDF is an "epistemology of the colonized," that reflected the collective nature of Indigenous life (p. 300). Dei and Asgharzadeh

(2001) noted how colonial structures created inequalities, while acknowledging the strength of survivors and being respectful of the lived experiences of marginalized people. The ACDF helped me to reconceptualise present-day violence perpetrated against Indigenous people in this country. Building on Indigenous attachment to place, the ACDF also lauded Indigenous expressions of geography, history, culture, language and spirituality (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 200l). In fact, as Dei and Asgharzadeh pointed out, the sense of Indigeneity residing in a place of occupancy naturally resists the oppression of the colonial masters. In short, the ACDF is a discourse that opposes colonial oppression and applauds and celebrates the ability of marginalized people to demarginalize and empower themselves.

The ACDF also stressed the point that the billions of people worldwide who remain impoverished and subjected to socio-economic deprivation, provided living proof that there was no *post* in *post-colonialism*; post-colonialism was a misnomer that suggests a move away from the colonial past, which is patently untrue (Smith, 2012). As long as social life is marked by external power that often sows racial discord, people and nations that were previously considered colonial and peripheral, remain so. Just as the ACDF provides an 'epistemology of the colonized' and challenges colonial structures in support of marginalized people, so too it recognizes that race, racism and xenophobia promote a discourse of Whiteness (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001). Building on the works of Kovel (1970), Gordon & Newfield (1995) and Feagin & Hernan (2000), the ACDF further obstructs all types of power, prestige, and privilege stemming from scripts of Whiteness. While Dei and Asgharzadeh (2001) recognized that the concept of *race* was socially constructed and therefore illusory, race remains a crucible for the struggle against equality and justice. The ACDF thus acts as the framework for my methodology and stories/storywork as detailed later in this chapter.

This study employs a qualitative research design that combines Indigenous and non-Indigenous methodologies. I use Inuit *Kaujimajangit* (Inuit Knowledge) for gathering data and for interpretation, and a non-Indigenous approach for thematic analysis, organizing and (re)presenting the data generated by the study.

A comprehensive review of the historical roots of Indigenous methodologies as they developed for Indigenous people in Canada, Australia and New Zealand will help to place that development in a broader context. Beginning in Canada, I call attention to the fact that contained within the *Indian Act* (1876) was a piece of legislation specifying that an Indigenous person who attained a university degree would automatically become enfranchised into the Canadian state and, thereby, have to give up their formal Indigenous 'status'.[7] The *Indian Act* was revised in 1927 but this clause remained. The Canadian state, through its *Department of Indian Affairs*, "confirmed the continuing agenda to coerce Indians to enfranchise" into Canadian-ness (Stonechild, 2006, p. 21), a colonial policy that would last until 1951. It would not be until 1996 and the release of the Government of Canada's *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) that Indigenous voices (and allies) were properly heard. The report called for "strategies to ensure that higher learning (involving both pedagogy and methodology) is not a mechanism of assimilation" designed to convert Indigenous people into Canadians (Kovach, 2009, p. 162).

By 1999, however Indigenous researchers were calling for a research methodology that would be more explicitly focused on our Indigenous realities (Weber-Pillawax, 1999; Smith, 2012) and which would ultimately come to be research and research methodologies that were conducted by Indigenous people themselves (Weber-Pillawax, 1999; Smith, 2012).

In the early 1990s Indigenous scholars gathered in Ottawa, Ontario, to discuss and plan for the future of Indigenous research in Canada based on the shifting priorities of the Royal

[7] The specific section of the *Indian Act* (1876) that contains this clause can be found in sub-section 86(1).

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (Castellano, 2004). Although at the time, many Indigenous researchers were lamenting the fact that 'research fatigue' was a ubiquitous, commonplace phenomenon among Indigenous communities throughout the world (Castellano, 2004; Smith, 2012). Directly addressing this, Castellano (2004) cites an Indigenous Elder, who argued that: "[i]f we have been researched to death, maybe it is time that we started researching ourselves back to life" (p. 98). Commissioned by the National Aboriginal Health Organization to assist in developing an organizational position on research ethics, Castellano (2004, p. 113) proposed a set of guidelines to assist in developing standards for the ethical conduct of research with or for Indigenous communities. Similarly, Indigenous allies and Aborigines in Australia and the *Māori* in New Zealand were calling for research protocols that reflected their culture, values, and ways of knowing.

While research ethics in Canadian universities are governed by the federal Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS), Castellano (2004) examined many of the existing Indigenous principles regarding research Ethics, noting that Indigenous academics (most of whom had been educated in traditional Western style institutions) are becoming increasingly familiar and comfortable with Indigenous "ways of knowledge-seeking and challenging Western [research] assumptions and methodologies" (p. 103). Describing the encounter between Indigenous philosophies and positivist scientific thought, Leroy Little Bear invoked "jagged worldviews colliding" (Little Bear as cited in Castellano, 2004, p. 103). This is because Indigenous thinking naturally accepts that "worldviews assume that human action, to achieve social good, must be located in an ethical, spiritual context as well as its physical and social situation" (Castellano, 2004, p. 103).

As Little Bear further explains, the "function of Aboriginal values and customs is to maintain the relationships that hold creation together" (Little Bear, as quoted in Castellano, 2004, p.103). In a situation where research is considered to be "knowledge creation for social benefit" (Castellano, 2004, p. 103), yet the researcher and the researched have entirely different notions of what constitutes social benefits, then neither the researcher nor the participants benefit. Castellano (2004, pp. 104-109) further contributes to Indigenous research methodologies in Canada by outlining eight "ethical regimes" with direct relevance to Indigenous research:

1. As Indigenous people maintain an intimate relationship with both material and spiritual realms, including animals, plants, and the natural world, in other words, the notion of ethics therefore extends beyond human subjects, encompassing well-being for all;
2. Indigenous thinking acknowledges the spirits of the plants and animals and through observation honours collectivity and holistic awareness. Any research endeavours are thus encouraged to accept this reality as complementary;
3. Indigenous people live in tune with the world that epitomizes the Indigenous belief that "all aspects of the world we know have life and spirit and that humans have an obligation to learn the rules of relating to the world with respect" (Castellano, 2004, p. 104-105);
4. Capitalist laws and regulations such as property ownership directly contradict the Indigenous concept of collectivity, thus calling into question the notions of 'ownership' and 'authorship' with regard to with regard to the traditional finished products of academic research;
5. Traditional Western conceptions of research ownership in relation to Indigenous knowledge overlook the notion of *community* as opposed to the Western preoccupation

with *individual* ownership. Indigenous people typically do not agree with individual property rights as they have become embedded in Western capitalist culture;

6. Given the long history of gross misrepresentation by Western 'scholars', there is a considerable degree of suspicion and wariness – not to mention research fatigue – regarding anything proposed by Western researchers that is used for purposes other than that which is of direct value to Indigenous communities. From this perspective, Indigenous people must be actively included in all aspects of the research, conceived as a fundamentally collaborative process;
7. Indigenous people are concerned that the integrity and validity of research must be tempered by methodologies that are congruent with Indigenous worldviews, customs, ways of knowing / knowledge production, and means of assessing the validity of research findings;
8. Survival for Indigenous people means perpetually adapting and updating the unique diversity of their knowledge base. Since Indigenous people are tired of being situated as add-ons to Western structures of knowledge creation, they are wary of regulations that seek to include them as an addendum to protocols based on Western liberal assumptions concerning the construction and distribution of knowledge. When considering the basis for self-governance in Canada, for example, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples proposed that literally any and all issues related to their culture, economy, way of life, and everyday lived experience must be considered as being at the sole discretion of the Indigenous group or community they serve to directly or indirectly affect (Castellano, 2004).

Questioning academic research and knowledge production in Australia and New Zealand was itself a relatively recent event as Indigenous people in these two countries did not truly emerge from the dominance of Western science until Bin-Sallik (1989) began critically interrogating the relationship between education and *Indigeneity*. The concept of Indigeneity emerged from the struggle for self-determination, representing a "growing field of study, researched and written from an Indigenous perspective" (Rigney, 2001, pp. 1-2). At the same time, however, this growing field was also, the "body of knowledge by Indigenous scholars in the interests of Indigenous peoples for the purpose of self-determination" (Rigney, 2001, p. 1).

Critical debates regarding Australian Indigeneity began by problematizing the notion that Indigenous Australians were perceived by Western scholars as "objects of study, just as they were in North America" (Rigney, 2001, p. 1). These debates went on to include: (1) ensuring adequate voice for Indigenous Australians in academic and public discourse surrounding science and technology, environment, and national cultural identity; (2) creating a space to foster the emergence of critical Indigenous scholarship, and; (3) the analytical reframing and re-presentation of Indigeneity "within a broader struggle for Indigenous Australian intellectual sovereignty" (Rigney, 2001, p. 2).

Science and Western traditions were interrogated and critiqued as 'truth', and their impact on the colonization of Aborigine culture was sharply brought into question. The development of theoretical frameworks premised on inherently biased, race-based concepts was deployed, in other words, in an explicit effort to shape and inform the very foundations of the dominant, (neo-)colonial Australian narrative. Closely mirroring the early chronology of Indigenous-settler encounters in North America, Indigenous Australian scholars came to radically *un-settle* and *de-centre* the naturalized and taken for granted, seamlessly integrated

social constructions of ‘race’ and the ‘Other’ that formed, in part, the very basis of hegemonic Western dominance. The era during which Indigenous people from across the world were being categorized and stigmatized as uncivilized, misrepresented and reductively depicted as ‘savages’ in the colonial imagination had come to an end.

With the imposition of Western hegemony, Indigenous Australian society became racialized, as “Indigenous Australian systems of knowledge, governance, economy and education were replaced by non-Indigenous Australian systems on the assumption that Indigenous peoples were sub-humans, and thus had no such systems in place prior to the invasion” (Rigney, 1999, p. 112). Attempts by Indigenous scholars to use science as a way to produce Indigenous knowledge was belittled by Western scholars. A perfect embodiment of Enlightenment values and principles, rational science dictated Western culture’s understanding and reproduction of what constituted ‘truth.’

With calculated and enduring persistence, however, over time Indigenous ways of seeing, knowing, and being have slowly begun to gain not only acceptance and legitimacy, but, more recently, also equality, and, moreover, a new and unique form of timeless intrinsic value alongside traditional western academic theories and methods. Here, scholars in this tradition have challenged the validity of dominant, socially constructed discourses such as that which was responsible for theories of race that were exposed as little more than social constructions. But, as in North America, “not only did the Indigenous scholar have to be a political advocate for Indigenous people, but s/he had to rapidly become familiar with classical Western epistemes in order to identify partial distortions and racist biases within the philosophic reasoning of science” (Rigney, 2001, p. 6). This meant that Indigenous scholars not only had to also defy barriers preventing their participation in making meaning, they also had to organize their thoughts and

ideas so as to create space within scientific research methodologies. Making space for Indigenous thinking within research methodologies brought even more challenges for Indigenous Australian scholars. Now they had to "overcome the dichotomies in scientific thought such as object/subject, rational/irrational and white/black" (Rigney, 2001, p. 6). An Indigenous researcher at the University of Otago, in Dunedin, New Zealand, Bishop (1998) represents an illustrative example of someone who helped liberate Indigenous research and researchers from colonial domination and, in general, demarginalize Indigenous ways of knowing and scholarship.

After Lincoln and Denzin (1994, p. 199) coined the term '*epistemological version of validity*' to describe the relational, situated nature of different ways of knowing, Bishop (1998) appropriated this term to articulate an inherently Indigenous research agenda that built on his prior scholarship on critical Indigeneity. Bishop (1998) conducted a follow-up study that involved "a collaborative meta study of five projects that addressed Māori agendas in research to ascertain in what ways the researchers were addressing Māori people's concerns about research and what the researchers' experiences of these projects meant to them" (Bishop, 1998, p. 199). Just as in North America, Indigenous people were concerned that ongoing research was not benefitting the community.

Focusing on *Kaupapa Māori* research, Bishop (1998) challenged the approaches taken by Western scholars. According to Smith (1992), Kaupapa Māori is the philosophy and embodied practice of being and acting Māori (p. 1). Similar to events transpiring in North America around the same time, this practice involved unearthing the roots of ancient Indigenous Māori Knowledge, ceremonies, and traditions (Bishop, 1998). Critiquing the ways that multiple forms of Indigenous knowledge and cultures within a given society have been systematically ignored and invalidated by dominant western systems of knowledge, contrary to this assumption,

Kaupapa Māori have continued to proudly stand true to their identity and ways of thinking (Bishop, 1998). Heshusius (1994) also had much influence over how Māori Knowledge should be recognized. He noted that Māori Knowledge involves a way of thinking and being that is free of hierarchy and where the ideation of kinship is embedded (Bishop, 1998). From this perspective, Māori thinking is thus strikingly similar to Inuit systems of knowledge.

Debates about the legitimacy and relevance of Indigenous knowledge and research methodologies were brought into stark contrast with the 1999 publication of the first edition of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's groundbreaking book *Decolonizing Methodologies*. A Māori theorist based in New Zealand, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012) noted that even though non-Indigenous scholars were for many years researching Indigenous people, they in fact knew nothing about them. Smith "challenges the hegemony of Western research through a grassroots approach that comes from the community and empowers the community" (Sinclair, 2003, p.120). Smith became a strong advocate for the development and institutionalization of Indigenous research ethics boards (REBs). Offended by the imperialist orientations and values of Western researchers, Smith (2012) succinctly expressed the experience of many Indigenous scholars by asserting that "Western researchers and intellectuals can assume to know all that is possible to know of us, on the basis of their brief encounters with some of us" (p. 1). Given the respect and legitimacy she demonstrated for Indigenous ways of knowing, Smith's (2012) contribution to Indigenous research is important to Indigenous communities around the world (Sinclair, 2003).

Crazy Bull (1997), a Sicangu Lakota scholar, was one of the earliest to suggest that an Indigenous research agenda needed to concentrate on the preservation and maintenance of Indigenous traditions and must include stories and storytelling guided and led by community Elders. While Western approaches dominated research agendas, Crazy Bull (1997) argued that

Indigenous researchers preferred a qualitative approach because it was more compatible with Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world. For Crazy Bull (1997), Indigenous research would include recognizing the authority of Elders, as well as the validation of oral histories, community forums, surveys, and storytelling as legitimate methods of research and inquiry.

Further to this discussion, in her account of Indigenous research, Struthers (2001) noted that orality "brings a metaphysical presence and a natural, holistic, intuitive and spiritual response to the research context." Similarly, Bruyere (1998) argued for radical changes to the dominant colonial worldviews that subsumed Indigenous agendas and ignored the holistic nature of Indigenous research. With an even more focussed critique, both Rigney (1999) and Rains et al. (2000) called for the fundamental imperative of adopting culturally appropriate research methodologies that speak to the specificity of Indigenous cultures. While Wilson (2001) also argued that academics must think of research in terms of ethical obligations to Indigenous groups, perhaps even more specifically, appropriate cultural sensitivity to Indigenous people's history, culture and community has come to form a crucially important issue in contemporary research ethics. Cardinal (2001) added that storytelling and the processes of "circle work and dream work are […] Indigenous methods […that] speak clearly to an Indigenous perspective [and…] world view" (p. 181). Steinhauer (2001), an Indigenous scholar of Pueblo origin, related how she used talking circles (akin to group interviews or focus groups) as a central methodology in her research. Drawing on the wisdom of her ancestors, Steinhauer (2001) developed the metaphor of a tree to explain Indigenous research methods, situating the tree's trunk as the community on the whole, its branches as the various families that compose the community, and the individual leaves as the community's youth and adolescents (p. 187).

In a research project that sought to learn about the lived experiences of Elders, Archibald (2001) coined the term '*storywork'* to describe the relations between the storyteller and the listener as they both generate meaning and understanding from a shared narrative. Archibald (2001) defines storywork as "a process-oriented approach where the learner engages in the story to find answers and meaning", whereby the "subjective meaning is often not evident until the learner engages in and works through the story process" (p. 5).

In her effort to operationalize Indigenous worldviews, Raven Sinclair (2003) noted that the use of interview methods with Indigenous participants rarely worked well because Indigenous participants are storytellers by nature, and as such they tended to respond to direct questions in a decidedly narrative format. While this method was efficient, and in many cases led to productive unexpected results, it also meant that the interviews often took much longer than they were scheduled for, in some cases effectively leading to interviewers straying from the formal interview guide. This approach, however, worked well for Sinclair (2003), who asserted that "a wealth of information arose out of this [approach to data gathering] and provided a broad picture of the participants' experiences, and […] knowledge of the subject areas" (p. 125).

Reflecting on Indigenous research protocols, Baskin (2005) noted that Indigenous forms of knowledge are commonly are passed on through oral traditions, which not only comes to form a distinctly Indigenous research method, but also becomes

> a valid form of Aboriginal knowledge as it includes responsibility on the part of the listener/researcher, incorporates both interpretation and analysis, has room for many explanations for the phenomena being researched, is a creative search for solutions, and is a political act of liberation and self-determination. (p. 180)

Storytelling, furthermore, played an instrumental role in the critical rejuvenation of Indigenous resistance and research, concepts that are often conflated in Indigenous-based forms of scholarship, serving as a "starting point for moving away from assimilationist to liberationist education":

> Stories have many layers of meaning, giving the listener the responsibility to listen, reflect and then interpret the message. Stories incorporate several possible explanations for phenomena, allowing listeners to creatively expand their thinking processes so that each problem they encounter in life can be viewed from a variety of angles before a solution is reached. (Lanigan, as quoted in Baskin, 2005, p. 180)

When Indigenous researchers Absolon and Willett (2004) spoke about Indigenous methodologies, they described them as a way of remembering and focusing on "collective learning and knowing consciousness" (p. 13). Further, they state that remembering "facilitates recovering stories, experiences, teachings, tradition and connections" (Absolon & Willett, 2004, p. 13).

Inuit Kaujimajangit (Inuit Knowledge)

My research involved gathering stories through in-depth, semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews with Inuit, Innu, Mi'kmaq and Maliseet BSW students, and nine social work instructors, one of whom was of Indigenous heritage, with the remaining eight instructors consisting of seven of European descent, and one individual of Afro-Caribbean background. Throughout, my research employed an Indigenous framework centred on *Inuit Kaujimajangit,* or Inuit Knowledge. This approach closely resembles other Indigenous ways of knowing found among groups and communities across North America (Kovach, 2009).

With the exception of the Inuit-centred Indigenous methods I incorporated, my methodological framework is thus drawn from "the standard research design familiar to qualitative researchers" (Kovach, 2009, p. 44). This model entails several distinct elements, including *Ikajujuk Kinigajunit* (i.e. "researcher preparation"); *Maligatsaujunnit tautsetitsijik* (i.e. "decolonizing and ethics"); *Katisuinit Kajimajatsanit* (i.e."gathering knowledge"); *Tukititsagatsnik iKajik* (i.e. "making meaning"); and *Aittuinik Aittutausimajunnit* (i.e. "a way of giving back").

Caribou has been a central food source and aspect of Inuit cultural identity for centuries – stretching back to well before the arrival of European colonists. Just as whole Inuit communities prepare for the caribou hunt, for example, so do Inuit prepare to engage in research. Well in advance of the actual hunt (/research), hunters (/researchers) have to determine whether caribou are in the region and precisely where they will need to travel to find them. Prior to engaging in the caribou hunt, participants must purchase a licence from the local Wildlife Officer, then wait to hear when the caribou have migrated out towards the coast and high country. Depending on where the caribou are at the time, hunters frequently consult Elders for advice as to how (and by what route) to most efficiently travel up into the high country. This anecdote begins to illustrate the many similarities between research and hunting in Inuit culture. In the context of research, scholars write up and submit their research proposals, consult with knowledgeable colleagues, and await notification of formal acceptance from research ethics board and/or funding bodies. Simultaneously, researchers must begin to make preparations and plans to travel into the field, develop an appropriate recruitment strategy, and pilot their proposed research designs, etc.

Preparing for the hunt also means ensuring the group has a feasible hunting party organized around the *illagit* (i.e. kinship network). Hunters have to purchase enough fuel and

supplies for the long journey up onto the high country, and due to the unpredictable nature of weather in such regions, at least one of member the hunting party with the necessary knowledge and skill to construct a traditional *igloo* (i.e. snow house) for shelter.

My research involved talking to Indigenous BSW students and their instructors at three Atlantic Canadian schools of social work. Overwhelmingly qualitative in nature, my research involved participant recruitment, establishing the most fitting and appropriate methods for gathering and interpreting data, and, importantly, establishing a sense of ***oppik*** (trust) between myself and my participants. My identity as an Indigenous researcher was enriched by the fact that I am older and could be considered to be an Elder. Furthermore, during the course of individual interviews, my longstanding involvement in and familiarity with social work education made it easier to gain the trust of my interview participants, the majority of whom were not only interested in, but also supportive of my research. These are all factors that helped establish a mutual sense of respect and intimacy between myself and my participants, thus helping to facilitate recruitment and generate enthusiasm for the interview process itself.

Indigenous Research Ethics

After determining the basic fact that my research would follow an overwhelmingly qualitative orientation, and entail conducting semi-structured interviews with individuals who were already immersed and invested in the Indigenization of social work, I slowly began to prepare applications for the various research ethics boards (REBs) that I would have to gain permission from. First and closest at hand, I submitted my research proposal to MUN's Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR), who require all applications to be accompanied by a Certificate of Completion from the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS

2) Course on Research Ethics (CORE – see *Appendix F*). I then successfully completed the human subjects ethical review process at St. Thomas University (see *Appendix D*).

Above and beyond being required to negotiate the REBs at two academic institutions, due to the nature and subject matter of my proposed research, I was additionally required to compete the Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch at Unama'ki College in Cape Breton (see *Appendix E*). This is becoming increasingly common with research regarding any and all aspects of Indigeneity – an additional level of ethical scrutiny to ensure adherence with cultural sensitivity. Finally, in the case of Dalhousie, I received a waiver for the normative research ethics application procedure owing to the fact that my application had already been approved by three significant REBs (see *Appendix G*).

Participant Recruitment

My research involved talking to Indigenous BSW students and instructors about the Indigeneity of BSW programs in Atlantic Canada. In terms of recruitment, I employed a variety of means of locating and/or identifying my participants. At Memorial University (MUN), I began by discussing my dissertation research with Indigenous students I had previously established relationships with. In an effort to meet my minimum recruitment goal of five Indigenous social work students at each institution, after speaking with the small handful of Indigenous students I had previously engaged with at MUN, I then disseminated interview invitations through posters distributed across the MUN campus. At both St. Thomas University (Fredericton, NB) and Dalhousie University (Halifax, NS), however, my first step was to contact the administrative offices of each respective school of social work. Here, I sought to gain clarification and ethical permission regarding the process of contacting Indigenous social work students to solicit their

interest in participating in an interview concerning the Indigenization of social work. Indigenous social work students and their instructors from both campuses responded, and I made arrangements to travel to both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to meet with them there. Before I left Newfoundland and Labrador, I called ahead to verbally confirm my dates with potential participants. The three faculty members from St. Thomas University's school of social work who responded and eventually participated in interviews tall taught in the *Mi'mac/Maliseet Indigenous social work program*, but none of them were themselves Indigenous.

Based on what I felt was a realistic goal of interviewing five (5) students and three (3) instructors from each of three universities, I initially sought to conduct a total of 24 interviews – 15 with students and nine (9) with instructors. Making contact with potential participants was done several ways, involving both the use of a flyer (see *Appendix B*), and identifying and contacting senior faculty to solicit their assistance with recruitment. Word-of-mouth also played a role in recruitment, such as the case of St. Thomas University, where a faculty member mentioned it to Indigenous students in their class. Due to a number of unforeseen factors beyond my control, however, I was unfortunately only able to conduct a grand total of 20 interviews – 12 with Indigenous students, and eight with social work instructors, one of whom identified as indigenous, 7 of European background, and one of Afro-Caribbean heritage. For obvious reasons of confidentiality and anonymity, however, I have deliberately chosen not to disclose the institutional affiliation of the interview participant who identified as Afro-Caribbean.

At MUN, I conducted interviews with five Indigenous BSW students, along with three instructors. At St. Thomas University I interviewed five Indigenous students and three faculty. Finally, at Dalhousie, I was able to schedule interviews with five Indigenous students and three instructors. While interviewing one of these five students, however, it became evident that the

student was not Indigenous, so this interview was excluded from my data and subsequent analysis. In another case, a second student postponed on several occasions until I ran out of time and had to depart. Of the three instructors, moreover, one did not show up at the appointed time and place, so I was only able to collect data from the remaining two. In retrospect, perhaps I should have planned to spend more time on each campus. A total of 20 viable interviews was, therefore, included in my analysis.

Data Collection

Data collection was completed between Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. In my interviews with BSW instructors and Indigenous students at all three schools of social work, the questions in my interview guide were well received by participants, who invariably grew more eager to tell their stories with each passing question or prompt. Arising from my stated research objectives, the interview guide opened with a series of specific, structured questions, although owing to my semi-structured approach to the interview process, much of the most valuable content was derived from respondents' tangential narratives. In other words, I was often able to get the answers I wanted, but not in the same order as the questions contained in my interview guide. Hence, my interviews were fundamentally rooted in what Archibald (2001) called "storywork." In this sense, participants were so engaged in the subject matter that they began spontaneously sharing relevant narrative anecdotes about their lived experience as Indigenous students in largely Eurocentric educational systems. These anecdotes were, however, periodically focussed and guided by non-linear prompts and questions from my interview guide. After the first few general questions, in many cases, participants started to feel sufficiently comfortable to depart from the formal structure of the interview, and began exploring related issues with direct relevant

to their personal experience that were catalyzed by the dialogic, semi-structured interview process.

Each digitally recorded interview/storywork lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. To protect participants' anonymity and confidentiality, all names were changed, and pseudonyms were assigned to each. Interviews with Indigenous BSW students were held in a wide variety of different locations, including study rooms at the main libraries of both Memorial (St. John's, NL) and Dalhousie (Halifax, NS) Universities, while I was granted the use of an office for visiting scholars at St. Thomas University (Fredericton, NB). Interviews with instructors, on the other hand, occurred either in their offices or in study rooms at their respective university libraries. Following the completion of several interviews at Memorial University during Fall 2017 and Winter 2018, I packed up my car and began the long drive across NL. Upon reaching the west coast of NL, I then caught the ferry to North Sydney, Nova Scotia, before driving on to St. Thomas University in Fredericton, NB. After completing my interviews at St. Thomas, I arranged a meeting with staff and faculty at what is the one and only Indigenous-specific school of social work in Atlantic Canada – the Mi'kmac/Maliseett Bachelor of Social Work program, housed within St. Thomas University. I then drove to Halifax, Nova Scotia to complete my data collection at Dalhousie University.

Interview Questions

At the beginning of each interview, I briefly introduced myself to the respondent, discussed the objectives of the research and went over the plain language informed consent document with them (see *Appendix A*). I then invited them to read and sign the consent form, and informed them of the average duration of the interviews.

The questions that served to structure and inform the interview guide (see *Appendix C*) were developed to capture the thoughts and opinions of students and instructors on the Indigenization of social work education. Together with my respondents, we explored issues of the influences of de/colonization, racism, discrimination, oppression and Indigenous activism and resistance in Canada, Whiteness, social work education, the challenges, risks, and costs of Indigenization, and the notion of spirituality as it relates to Indigenous identity. I opened my interviews by posing variations on one general question: "*What does Indigenization mean to you*?" I wanted to ensure that I was not unconsciously limiting or imposing my own beliefs and assumptions on how other people understood (and, in some cases, experienced) the notion of Indigenization. This was a purposeful strategy to generate fodder for further discussion later in the interviews, which almost without question went over the allotted 90min. maximum time limit. The next question I usually asked was also a general one: "In your own language, what could a truly Indigenized social work education look like or involve?" At this point, the respondent often went off in many directions and gave me plenty of stories to think about. During this part of the interview, it was often the case that the respondent addressed questions that were further down in the interview schedule without me even having to ask. But if areas were not addressed by the interviewee in this point of their story telling, I gently guided them back to the main question by prompting: "Teaching curricula?" "Student representation?" "Instructional practices and pedagogy?" By this point in their stories, I had usually obtained references to my third guiding question on whether or not they thought their social work program to be Indigenized?

Building upon their stories up to that point, and after respondents seemed to pause at end their responses, I waited and then followed up with: "In what ways does the current social work

curricula speak or not speak to your history, culture, knowledge, and experience?" This was usually followed by more probing about their direct experience in the BSW program (as Indigenous students and as faculty teaching those students). I asked: "Tell me about your experience through the BSW as an Aboriginal person?" (for students), and "Tell me about your experience teaching courses in the BSW?" (for faculty members). These open-ended questions often produced a lot of stories and engagement by the respondents.

After the respondents were given the time to respond, sometimes with gentle prompts to remind them of the initial question or theme, I switched course. At this point, I wanted to broaden the scope of the interview so I posed two specific questions: "Do you consider colonialism, racism and discrimination to exist in Canada?"; and "Do you consider the following to influence, shape, and inform the way social work education is organized and structured in your school, and if so how and why? (a) colonialism, (b) racism, (c) Whiteness?". If the topic had not been broached already or had only been minimally touched up on, I then took a more direct approach: "If you are given an opportunity to recommend ideas to improve the social work education in your school to address issues of Indigeneity, what would be some of your suggestions? And then: "In your view, what are some of the challenges, risks, and costs (if any) of Indigenizing the social work program in your school?"

To further explore the relationship of spirituality in social work education, respondents were asked three related questions. I started by first assessing how they understood spirituality by asking: "What do you understand by the concept spirituality?" I followed up with "Do you see any connection between spirituality and Indigenizing social work education?" and, if the topic had not already been covered, I asked the last question that would link their views on

spirituality by asking: “Will you recommend spirituality to be included in social work education as part of the decolonizing process?”

The Method of Thematic Analysis

While I used Indigenous methodology to collect the data for my study, I will use thematic analysis to analyze it. Thematic analysis is a flexible qualitative method whereby the researcher identifies key themes or patterns in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It can constitute the foundational basis for qualitative analysis, and is “a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes, stories) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic analysis involves transcribing the interviews and then through careful study of the data, seeking out patterns of meaning, which become themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

I conducted the interviews and transcribed them verbatim myself. I tried my best to transcribe the interviews to make them as accurately as possible. I made it a point to read through the transcriptions several times before beginning coding and interpretation. Through repeated reading of the interviews, I was immediately struck by their richness and was excited by what I found emerging in the coding process.

As I re-read over and over the interview data, I was able to start identifying and generating potential codes. Once I had completed this phase, I began thinking in terms of themes. I had sorted through the different codes in the previous phase and was now thinking in terms of themes. I started noticing how different codes came together to form different themes. During this iterative process, I also noticed not only how different codes appeared to relate to different themes, but also how the different codes and themes related to one another. As Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest, this is normal given that the themes are often themselves related.

In the next phase I concentrated on refining and defining my themes in preparation for analysis. In this phase I ensured that I pared down my themes if they appeared to be too general.

Finally, I began to formalize my analysis and prepare the final write-up of my material.

Chapter Five: Research Participants

In this chapter I introduce the voices of the 20 study participants located in the three Atlantic Canadian universities. In the next chapter, Chapter Six, I use the thematic analysis developed in Chapter Four to discuss the central themes that emerged. My participants consisted of twelve Indigenous students in Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs and eight faculty members who teach in those programs. As explained above, both the Indigenous students and faculty were recruited using several approaches to create a small non-probability sample. This included via a flyer advertisement, by contacting a random selection of faculty from each campus and word-of-mouth.

Three of the Indigenous students were in their first year of study in social work and the remaining nine others were in their third to fifth year of study. Of the faculty members who participated, all eight had between three and nine years of teaching experience in Atlantic BSW programmes. The gender imbalance of my sample reflects the tendency for women to predominate the profession of social work, both among the faculty and among Indigenous and non-Indigenous students alike.

The Students

1. Polly: 'I may not have anything to contribute.'

Polly was a mature student who responded to the study as soon as she heard that someone was asking about the experiences of Indigenous students. She wanted me to know that she might not be the right person to include in the interviewing because she considered herself to be

someone who is uneducated and inexperienced. Polly disclosed that she had dropped out of school when she was still a young girl living on her reserve. As the interview with her proceeded, she started to relax and feel more comfortable. I soon discovered that I was talking with a person who brought a lifetime of experience doing informal and Indigenous-specific social work in her community. Polly had dropped out of school when she was a young girl and along with her social group immersed herself in the tumultuous life of growing up in a remote Indigenous community. (She eventually dropped back into school as will be explained below.) As a young adult, Polly recognized that many people in her community had addiction and substance-use issues and in 2003, she applied for and accepted an offer of a position working as a community-based Addictions Counsellor. Even though, as she claimed, she was naturally talented in the field, Polly was not formally recognized in her role and was not certified by the province until 2009.

Following her experience as an addiction's counsellor, Polly accepted a position as After-School Coordinator, a job that involved helping students to pursue higher study or to find jobs. Success in that role led to her being hired on by her Band Council as a Community Events Organizer. In this position she was charged with planning and organizing social activities for the community. Yet somehow these community organizing experiences were not truly fulfilling enough for her and so, following her heart, Polly finally decided to go back to school to do upgrading; eventually she qualified for university. Once there, Polly realized her dream of studying social work.

When we began the interview, Polly appeared hesitant, announcing that she did not believe that she could make much of a contribution to my study because she felt somehow unqualified. With prodding, Polly elaborated on the subject. She stated that she did not feel

anything she could offer would be of any value to the study because she had dropped out of school while still in her teens. It was only recently that she decided to return to formal study and to focus on a career in social work. I was surprised to hear her express her lack of self-confidence, after just having heard her speak about all of the prior Indigenous community-service work she had done. When asked about this disjunction, Polly explained: “I don’t think that my community service work was important enough to qualify me to offer advice on Indigenizing social work education.”

When asked about how she incorporated Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing into her social work education, Polly agreed that this was indeed consistent with how she lived her life, adding that she was entirely comfortable with the concept of Indigeneity, stating that: “I consider Indigeneity as something that is a normal part of my everyday living.” Polly added that whether she is in the community or on the university campus, she daily grounds herself by using her medicines, smudging with sweet grass and sage, attending pow wows, and participating in traditional dances.

In terms of Indigenizing Social Work education, Polly disclosed that she has been actively seeking out literature from Indigenous scholars to inform her studies. She seemed to have several opinions on this subject and began by stating: “I am concerned by the fact that neither me, nor my classmates, are receiving instruction in our native language." Polly expanded on this concern:

> They do not have any Indigenous faculty members on staff, and the faculty doesn’t make enough of an effort to invite Indigenous social workers into the classrooms to speak to my class. I would love to see Indigenous professors teaching our own teachings and to have Indigenous guest speakers who could give us a better

> understanding of the lived experiences of Indigenous life and how to live the good life . . . It would be a good idea to have good powerful First Nations' women speak to our class.

Polly was interested in learning more about how to work with her community as an Indigenous social worker. She lamented the fact that the social work program at her university is Indigenized only to the extent that the faculty have recently begun to focus on the work of some Indigenous scholars, and that much of the discussion in her classroom have only begun to address specific social issues of Indigenous communities. Expanding on this topic, Polly pointed to the fact that her class was beginning to learn more about Indigenous histories, the residential schools and their legacy, the Sixties Scoop and the other current issues within Indigenous communities.

In a subsequent musing, which was to emerge as a follow-up theme in the interview, Polly began to disclose her sadness over the fact that before her parents married, her father had been forced to attend residential school and, as a direct result, lost his language and much of his culture. Polly lamented that the experience has further meant that her parents were not able to pass their mother tongue (Polly's grandmother) on to her. Consistent with the fallout created by the residential schools, Polly now does not speak her Indigenous language and, as a result, expressed her additional sadness that she cannot pass her language along to her children and grandchildren. Polly would like to see a revival of Indigenous languages and believes that social work programs could ply a role in this.

Polly was aware that a colonial legacy pervades her community. She stated: "I don't fully understand it, but I am learning more and more about the destructiveness of colonialism."

She describes how the day-to-day racism, discrimination and Whiteness impacts the lives of her people, especially in terms of having to endure it.

Polly is a spiritual person and described spirituality as "the ability to ground myself and to follow the teachings of my ancestors." When she finds herself struggling with trauma or being stuck on something, she discussed how she learned "to listen to guidance from the Creator, and how he provides signs for me." Polly also carries a medicine pouch where she keeps her sacred rock and sage that she uses to help her find "balance" when she needs it. Polly went on to explain how she relies on her spirituality to guide her work: "I use my spirituality to make a common connection when I am working with a client." While drawing on her spirituality was effective much of the time, Polly admitted that the decolonizing work with many Indigenous people was made difficult because "many of them are still tied to formal religion [mostly of various Christian denominations] and are not fully prepared to make the shift back to ancient ways."

For many Indigenous people like Polly, discovering Indigenous education later in life is for her, a case of better late than never.

2. *Hannah: 'It's like being born without a limb versus having a limb amputated.'*

Hannah began our interview by announcing that for her an Indigenized social work education meant having courses that "always incorporates Indigenous knowledge and is taught through an Indigenous lens." Hannah lamented that none of the courses she had taken in social work so far had integrated Indigenous material. This was something Hannah would like to see change in social work coursework because she felt that Indigenous knowledge "needs to be taught and integrated into the curriculum." She added that, "it would be great to have an

Indigenous person from the community come into the classroom and talk to us about Indigenous values." Hannah further explained that it was frustrating for her to repeatedly hear people teach about Indigenous culture, tradition, and ceremony, even though they do not have the experiential understanding. Elaborating on this subject, Hannah stated the following:

> I don't believe that the social work program at my school is Indigenized. I don't think the faculty really understands Indigenous populations. I think a lot of people have a stereotypical view of Indigenous people as somehow needing to be saved, and yet they don't appear to fully understand their own White privilege. A lot of professors don't recognize how Indigenous populations were failed by the government, by the residential schools and now, currently being failed by the child welfare system.

Continuing with her thoughts about how social work education was taught at the time of the interview, Hannah expressed frustration that in addition to the lack of Indigenous content that her experience as an Indigenous person in the classroom was being exploited by the professor. She recalled how "she was often asked to speak about her personal experiences as an Indigenous person even though she sometimes found it difficult to do this' Often, she also felt inadequate when ask to speak in class because she felt that the social work professors expected her to have more and different experiences than she actually felt she had. Hannah went on to suggest that in her opinion it should be the job of the social work instructors to provide that type of information. She also said that she was not always willing to do it and that she did not think it was fair for her to be expected to do so. Hannah continued as follows:

> As a social work student, I was hoping to be just a learner, but I was too often put on the spot and asked to educate the class. I was constantly being asked to speak to the cultural aspects of being Indigenous, rather than to speak to the policies. I didn't want

to do that.

Hannah was also concerned about the subtle racism that exists in Canada and in Canadian universities. She believed that the very act of singling her out and asking her to be the educator for the class is kind of a passive racism on the part of her instructor(s). She pointed to the act of singling out Indigenous students to do this educating as one of viewing Indigenous people as a novelty and not deserving of the same consideration in social work education.

Moving on, Hannah talked about the impact of colonialism on Indigenous people in Canada. She explained that she did not really believe in the concept of decolonization because it implied that colonialism could be reversed — and she did not think that was necessarily possible. For her, reconciliation is not about changing the past or reverting to the past. It is about addressing the issues, talking about them, and moving forward in a better way. Hannah elaborated: The fact that we have White professors teaching White students to work with marginalized people (or Indigenous people) while in the process, ingratiating White privilege, means that they are teaching from a colonial lens. She pointed out that in her school of social work, the predominately White students were being trained from the perspective the colonizers to perpetuate existing dominant practices. This practice worried Hannah: of she wondered how practice-ready non-Indigenous social work graduates will be if they were going to be working with Indigenous families and children, if they yet are not truly learning about Indigenous knowledge, values and beliefs.

Hannah believed that White people often recognize that Indigenous realities are different to theirs, but do not understand these realities and in so doing make a choice of whether or not to talk about Indigenous realities as a race issue. Hannah believed that by ignoring Indigenous realities as a race issue was yet another example of subtle racism. She described how her

instructors expected her to provide deeper reflections on current issues, such as the growing list of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and was graded harshly because there was an expectation that she "should have more to say on the subject" than her non-Indigenous classmates. Hannah described it further in this way:

> I can tell you that I was graded poorly on a reflection paper about the murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls because I was expected to have more to say than the rest of my classmates.

Hannah continued on. She described how her instructors expected her to provide deeper reflections on current issues, such as the growing list of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and was graded harshly because there was an expectation that she "should have more to say on the subject" than her non-Indigenous classmates. Hannah went on to describe how racism was not restricted to hate. She disclosed how many of her White classmates and instructors seem to see an Indigenous person

She described this as a "painful and lonely experience" because she also wanted to fit in and share learning experiences with her fellow classmates. Taking it a step further, Hannah suggested the following:

> I don't think that White people are aware of their White privilege. One white professor told my class that she is aware of her White privilege and therefore won't use it in the class setting. But then she continued on to ignore the issue as a way of not addressing it as a race issue, nor one of holding a certain power in a mixed-race classroom.

Hannah believed that solutions to Indigenizing social work classrooms can be better addressed in the following way:

> We need to have Indigenous educators and Indigenous guest lecturers invited to speak to our social work classrooms. We need to include ceremony and to have Indigenous Elders bring in the spiritual and cultural elements central to Indigenous knowledge. This is the way to make classrooms safer places for Indigenous students.

Hannah also stated the following:

> Where Indigenous students are subjected to the emotional violence and the pain of being expected to be the educators, the classrooms become unsafe spaces for Indigenous students.

Hannah urged social work educators to also recognize residential schools and their legacy as an integral part of colonialism and an area in need of reconciliation. She contended that:

> The residential schools weren't designed just to eradicate Indigenous culture, but to eradicate what made them [the children] Indigenous.

Although Hannah did not attend residential school, Hannah lamented that her father and grandfather were forced to, and so she sees herself as being born into a world where her "culture was interrupted." She likened the example as one in which:

> Not having that cultural connection is like being born without a limb, versus having a limb amputated.

Hannah felt that she was missing something that she never had.

3. George: 'Indigenous people are creating culture.'

When he entered the interview setting it was clear that George was an angry young man who wanted to vent. He argued that during his experience in social work education Indigenous students were considered somehow as "being primitive," and that "what social work education

was teaching was good for Indigenous people." George takes issue with this, complaining that his social work instructors were "not incorporating Indigenous ways of thinking into their teaching." He went on to place particular express concern with this issue:

> Too much emphasis is being placed on fancy pow wows and sweat lodges and we are overlooking what is the true culture. Indigenous culture(s) is the only thing that survived colonialism and so we should be going to the communities to learn about those cultures. The surviving traditional ways represents the spiritual voice of resistance, something that is not being taught at his school of social work.

George argues that most Indigenous people "don't have formal education" and that: "those who are trying to teach about it are relying on Western philosophies and scientific evidence." George views Indigenous and Western ways of thinking as being two separate ideologies and cautions that, "if you learn too much of the Western philosophies, you risk becoming a part of it." He continues that, in schools of social work "we need someone who understands the effects of colonialism in order to teach the courses." At the same time, however, George also believes that "people in the helping practices, such as social work, are a part of the first responders," and this coincides with his view of how Indigenous people view this aspect of learning and life circumstances.

George is adamant that colonialism and racism are evident wherever Indigenous people are present, even inside the universities. He explained this phenomenon as follows:

> So many White people change faces when they see Indigenous people express themselves. This is evident among some faculty at my school of social work, but it is more discreet among professional people.

George expands his concern to include the following:

> When faculty are teaching about Indigenous peoples they fly by the subject. When it's time to talk about colonialism not every school of social work wants to talk about it. It's like they know what it means, but when I speak to them about some of the things that happened, they say they want to know this stuff, but they don't want to know about the early part.

Taking it a step even further, George continued on to describe how many faculty members were trying to speak about spirituality. He takes issue with this, propounding that, "that's sacred stuff that must be respected." Pondering the moment, George wondered out loud, "how can you teach them to be sensitive to it?"

Continuing to speak on the subject of spirituality, George expresses caution about the growing re-interest in embracing spirituality in Indigenous cultures. He is sceptical of exploitation because, he says "once we start sharing this knowledge it is going to be used against us." George is committed to such practices as the Sundance, and concludes that once you get in touch with it, it becomes something beyond just spirituality. And yet it is something that George wants to keep sacred.

From his perspective, George believes that Indigenous people have "always been advanced in social work practice." The type of social work practice which George is referring to is a practice which is best seen "through their intimate relations with the land, with each other, and with the environment." George feels that social work education can learn from this and should be teaching it in the classrooms.

4. Kayla: 'We need more opportunities to use our medicines.'

Kayla views Indigeneity as "a representation of who we are as Indigenous people, our cultures, our languages, our traditions and our customs." What Kayla would like to see in social work educations is more of the following:

> I would like to see more teachings and learnings on the traditional practices and how they benefit the healing process. Indigenized approaches to healing can be incorporated into everyday mainstream learning yet taught through social work education. Unfortunately, however, much of that teaching follows a Western format. Kayla also expressed concern that at her school there is "no provision to include the teaching of Indigenous languages in the social work programming."

She believes that this is due to the fact that most of the instructors are non-Indigenous. The issue is upsetting for her because Kayla intends to return to her community as an Indigenous social worker once she has completed her degree, and she is committed to addressing what she sees as pervading trauma issues in her community. It is important for Kayla to be able to work in her own language because, she explains, "many of the Elders don't speak English." Kayla is aware that it will be difficult to work with people if and in the community don't speak fluent English. Despite the challenge, an important piece of her plan is to take a lead role in the healing journey and to communicate with the Elders.

Kayla expounded on examples of how she has experienced first-hand racist and colonialist comments and actions while in her program of study, and reported that every day Indigenous people in her community have to face it. To back this up she offers the following example:

> In the Indigenous communities, people were always taught to share. But because of colonization many people have developed the practice of now expecting something in return for every gift that is given.

To counter this Kayla contends that social work education needs to attract Indigenous faculty and Elders into the classrooms and to provide more opportunities for Indigenous students to use the medicines of her people. She adds that "the beginning stage of decolonization is to reconnect with our spirituality and of who we are as Indigenous people."

While she remains aware that colonialism is pervasive in the academy, however, Kayla reminds that many of her instructors are respectful and understanding.

5. Sam: 'Faculty in my school have been Indigenized by the academy.'

Sam noted that in his school of social work there was a need to build an Indigenous pillar which was recognized in the classroom and existed so that papers and exams were not solely judged against the Eurocentric pillar. Sam also believed that both his Indigenous and non-Indigenous instructors were Indigenized by the academy in that they no longer appeared "to have any connection to their traditional ways of knowing, thinking and understanding." He went on to state that one instructor told him that he "wrote in too much of a storytelling style", and that this "was not acceptable in an academic program". Sam expressed dismay with this reprimand and stated that: *"*I am shocked by this because storytelling is the most common way of sharing knowledge in Indigenous cultures, and it should be used as a teaching method.*"*

Sam did not believe that his school of social work was Indigenized, and said that it was the opposite. To support this contention, Sam related the following:

> I think this school of social work is very Eurocentric and it's to the point where Indigenous students are left to hang by non-Indigenous students. There is a lot of bullying that's done by these Eurocentric students who feel guilty about their past and about their ancestry, and who don't want to hear about it. And the instructors don't shut it down, they just let it happen.

Sam was also concerned about how Indigenous students were not permitted to use traditional medicines at his school of social work. He explained it as follows:

> They say that they're recognizing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, but our medicines are too dirty to bring into the university. They have a couple of places where you can smudge, but they have fans to suck the smoke out, so isn't that like a shredder for your prayers, when the smoke is going through it? In places out West they have chimneys and they have canopies that come down so when they do the ceremony the smoke from the chimney is able to rise intact through the roof of the building and go up to the Creator in a good way.

Sam is a traditional person who expressed concern about how many of the Indigenous people who have been colonized were becoming more rigid in their ways, and were reluctant to follow the traditional ways. While he did not think "that social work education can or should be a canned experience." Sam worried that:

> Indigenous students who have a strict Christian upbringing and who were raised and schooled within a Eurocentric system will be harmed by the university experience. I don't think there is a willingness to understand this, from the professors' point of view.

Sam wondered whether or not efforts to Indigenize the social work profession in his school were taken seriously. In his view the school was doing little beyond "paying it lip service," and that "some faculty say they want to do it and they recognize that there are treaties and they want their university to be a good one and all, but remain firm that Indigenous medicines are too dirty to bring into the classroom."

Sam sees himself as a spiritual person and believed that Indigenization and social work cannot be separated. For Sam, "spirituality is who we are and what we are. It is how we live our lives and how we exist in the world." He agreed that the infusion of spirituality was needed in social work education as a part of the decolonizing process, but expressed frustration because of, "what he sees are barriers erected to keep spirituality out of the social work classroom."

6. Katie: 'The only cultural teachings offered at my school were what I brought.'

Katie is in her late teens, fresh out high school, and now enrolled in a social work program. She thinks of Indigeneity in terms of how she identifies herself in her culture and when asked about how Indigeneity may be reflected in her studies, Katie expressed frustration about the apparent absence of any Indigenous cultural content in her program. and programming at her school. While she confirmed that efforts were being made to teach about Indigenous people in her province and elsewhere in Canada, she felt it was largely tokenistic and a gloss over. Katie generalized that despite efforts towards change, when certain topics relating to Indigenous people were brought up:

> It almost feels like it's a mandatory thing that they [faculty members] have to do, and then that's it. I feel like more should be done to get students interested and to

understand more about Indigenous culture, and then maybe it will be appreciated more.

Katie continued: “I also think that I was the only one in my class who brought cultural material into the class.” Intuitively Katie wondered aloud: “Perhaps there are other students who don’t self-identify because it could risk being singled out.” She explained that some Indigenous students feared being singled out because “it is already recognized that in university classrooms many Indigenous students are expected to educate their classmates.”

In addition to the lack of Indigenous cultural content in her coursework, Katie talked about the small numbers of Indigenous students in her social work program adding that “as far as I know there’s only been one other Indigenous student in my program.” Katie also noted that her social work classrooms were very White. She suggested further that: “My fellow students and faculty don’t seem to be aware of their White privilege.”

When asked about her experience in the social work program so far, Katie said the following: “It is interesting to observe how some White students and faculty members seem to have an image of what Indigenous people are.” By “image” Katie was inferring how Indigenous people were often labelled as lazy and as having addiction issues. Katie did not fit either of these categories and considered herself to be a “normal student” working to obtain her degree. Rather than re-enforcing this type of negative imagery, Katie preferred to have non-Indigenous students learning more about the richness of Indigenous cultures.

Katie did not hesitate to respond to queries about the existence of colonialism and Whiteness at her university. She stated forthrightly that “colonialism and Whiteness is alive and well in this university.” She went on to explain in detail:

Both the faculty and staff were reluctant to probe into deeper understandings of what

lies beneath the issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls in this country. When I asked my classmates what their reactions would be if it were White women and girls who were disappearing and/or being murdered, my words were met with silence.

In order to attract more Indigenous students to social work, Katie recommended that there needed to be more of a promotion blitz to attract Indigenous students, as well, "there also needs to be a more concerted effort to include placements for students within Indigenous community organizations."

7. Renee: 'Spirituality helps us to heal.'

Rene presented herself as a spiritual Indigenous student who believed that Indigeneity simply meant what it was to be an Indigenous person. Speaking softly, Rene proceeded to address Indigenization in the following way:

> The social work curriculum needs to be created and delivered by Indigenous people, so that it more accurately reflects and incorporates traditional practices. Unfortunately, there are no Indigenous instructors in my social work program.

Identifying herself as an Indigenous person, Rene talked about the challenges she has faced through her upbringing. Her family embraced Christianity many years ago, refused to speak their Indigenous language at home and willingly adopted Western ways. In more recent years, Rene has been rediscovering her Indigeneity and, in the process, has been uncovering the legacy of the intergenerational trauma her family has been living. The rediscovery and attendant recovery process had not been going well for her. While she took pride in being a woman, Rene constantly compared her upbringing to that of her peers. She recognized how some of her

Indigenous classmates had "been raised in Indigenous communities and have very strong familial and community support systems." Rene spoke at length on the subject of how her family had been caught up in the colonial struggle to rediscover their identities. She dwelled on the subject and kept bringing the discussion back to this subject throughout the interview process. Rene continued to compare her familial situation with those of her classmates. She pointed to the colonial pressures she and her family endured as they were pressured to be more like the mainstream Canadian settler population. She expressed this for example as follows:

> It's something that I've grown up with, that my mom has grown up with, and that my grandmother has grown up with. Now I'm in the process of decolonizing myself and it's difficult in the ways of seeing how racism is perpetuated.

Renee was also angry that her social work program was failing because it was not addressing how "the residential schools and the atrocities of the churches and government, and of the murder and genocide perpetrated on our ancestors." Following up on her critical observation, she of her social work program, Rene also considered colonialism, racism and White privilege to be interconnected. She declared: "it is not possible for me to speak to one without the other."

Rene would like to see Elders come into social work classrooms and share traditional teachings. She stated that students needed opportunities to actively participate as follows:

> As indigenous students we need to work with the Elders, to reconnect with our spirituality, and to learn the traditional teachings and ways with the skirts, smudging, the sweat lodge and its teachings, and to learn about the potlatch.

Rene would like for her social work program to also include Indigenous instructors and the establishment of a clear link to the communities and to the people who live there.

After saying that she considered herself to be a spiritual person, Rene described what this meant to her. She continued that:

> It's within all of us and it's amongst all of us in every shape and form, and it's beautiful, and it's scary. It's in the air that we breathe, in the grass that we walk on, and in the rocks that are on our path.

Rene went on to explain her view of teaching and learning, stating the following:

> There is a connection between Indigenous knowledge and student learning. And when it [Indigenous knowledge] is brought into the social work classroom it will help students to understand and to share their learnings and teachings with others, and to help everyone to heal.

Finally, Rene disclosed that in her healing journey she still had the following left to complete:

> I need to decolonize myself, and it brings up anger and a lot of resentment and frustration, but I'm able to work through that with my smudging, with using the medicines that I have in my basket, and attending ceremonies to help me heal on my learning journey.

8. Mary: 'I shouldn't be teaching social work when I am not yet a social worker.'

Mary is a mature Indigenous student who sensed from an early age that she wanted to work with her own Indigenous people. For Mary, Indigeneity meant a way of life. She does not believe that "a piece of paper defines who somebody is [for her] Indigeneity is how you self-identify as a person."

Given that there was such a large population of Indigenous people in the Atlantic Provinces Mary expressed disappointment that her social work program did not offer any courses

that were designed specifically for Indigenous people. She further believed that since social work graduates were inevitably going to be working with and in Indigenous communities: “They should be provided with access to coursework specific to the ways of thinking and being of the different Indigenous groups.” Through her involvement in social work education so far, Mary noticed that:

> The social work method of teaching includes only one small section on Indigenous people. There is no connection to the people, there are no Indigenous people (such as Elders) coming into the classroom, and there is nobody from the communities coming in to talk about what’s needed by the people.

On top of these issues, Mary stated that, “in my social work classes a lot of the things having to do with Indigenous people were taught by me.” Mary’s claim here speaks to the need to Indigenize course content and teaching, the absence of which was something especially painful for her. She described her personal experience in the social work education in the following way:

> I do enjoy teaching other people about my culture and about my people, but a lot of the times I felt like it’s kind of expected of me as an Indigenous student to teach the other students and faculty. But it shouldn’t be like that. I understand it’s my responsibility as an Indigenous person to teach about my culture, but I shouldn’t be teaching about Indigenous social work when I’m not a social worker yet.

Continuing along this line of thinking, Mary declared: “The social work curriculum in her school of social work in taught through a White lens.” Mary argued further that “we can’t take Indigenous students and turn them into White social workers.” She explained that this is so

because Indigenous students view issues differently than their White counterparts. She expressed her frustration as follows:

> Many of my social work instructors have told me that I am good at fighting for Indigenous rights, but I personally don't see myself as being just a person who is fighting for Indigenous rights. I see myself as being more than that.

Mary viewed herself as someone who was grounded in her Indigenous culture and as someone who wanted to see Indigenous knowledge embedded in the social work curriculum. Being an outspoken person, Mary illustrated the context for the way in which Indigenous people were positioned historically by the Canadian state. She explained that, in Canada, "Indigenous people got thrown in the background and we're this problem that won't go away."

Driving her point home about earlier discussions on the need for Indigenous courses and community relationships and so on, Mary returned to the points she made earlier and made the following suggestion:

> The school needs to hire more Indigenous faculty because the teaching needs to go beyond presenting Indigenous issues merely on a surface level. Instead of simply talking about the sweat lodge, for example, (social work education needs to consult knowledgeable people who can teach about the sweat lodge ceremony as a procedure, and how those procedures involve healing practices, which are similar to that of a counselling session.

In a final statement on the issue, Mary added:

> One thing that instructors struggle with is the boundary between social work and Indigenous culture, and you can't teach that history. It's a shared history but they can't teach our culture because it's our culture, so that is where they kind of need to

manoeuvre around that. It's a risk of crossing that boundary and a risk of breaking those relationships and of respecting those communities and those people.

9. *Tom: 'The social work classroom doesn't embrace the Indigenous sense of collectivity.'*

For Tom Indigeneity meant: "incorporating traditional Indigenous practices and being informed of the culture." He argued that the curriculum in his school of social work does not incorporate enough of the oral tradition common in his culture. Tom proclaimed that:

> In order to have a truly Indigenous curriculum it would be best to have that shared experience you know, to be able to have that storytelling, but also to be learning from it, and to have that type of information from it.

Tom added that it was important to have non-Indigenous students learning in this way because, it will "inform them of the histories and traumas, and the colonization and discrimination endured by Indigenous people." He elaborated as follows:

> It's not just to be culturally sensitive or culturally tolerant but to be sure to embrace their values, their beliefs, and their thoughts, and to make sure to understand that they might come from a sense of privilege. They need to stay aware of that and to make sure, whether it's Indigenous or non-Indigenous people, that they're working *for* them, not just telling them what is best for them.

Perhaps the most important issue for Tom and one that he brought forward clearly in our interview was the need to break down what he perceived to be a hierarchy within social work classrooms. He described his concern in the following way:

> I believe it's very important to embrace a sense of collectively within the classroom because of the gap between the students and the expert, the instructor, or the professor.

> It is important to have this so that there are no decisions made on a higher level, but the decisions are made on a collective process and through a collective sense, so that if there were any conflicts it would be best to have that traditional sense of knowledge, where everybody would come together, decide on something, and then move forward in a good way.

Building from this, Tom insisted that decisions made in social work classrooms were not made in a collective way:

> As an Indigenous person I don't feel that sense of collectively, that sense of belonging. I don't think that sense of togetherness is embraced as much as it should be in social work, especially when it's in a program supposedly designed for that.

Moving on, Tom informed me that colonialism and racism existed indirectly. He argued that even though many believe that colonialism and racism were not much of a problem for Indigenous people today, this was not true; they still remain a problem. Tom continued that the state was still trying to control Indigenous laws and the way Indigenous people live. He further believed that the education system must help people to better understand how this was happening, and to question whether White people play a role in the overall outcomes.

Tom continues on to explain how many faculty members need to more fully understand that they their ancestors were themselves oppressors:

> A lot of instructors and professors tend to be non-Indigenous, so there is always a potential bias to the way they have to check their own biases, and to understand that the group that they belong to were those who oppressed Indigenous people.

Tom also described himself as a spiritual person and defines spirituality as follows:

> It is a sense of belonging, of grounding and of being able to embrace yourself within the environment you're within. It is being one with nature, with wildlife, with the Creator, with those surrounding you, and with your community.

Delving deeper into the subject, Tom was explicit in his formulation of why spirituality and the Indigenization of social work education was important:

> The sense of Indigenous spirituality is the sense of connectiveness. Traditionally Indigenous communities came together, they had these discussions, and there was no sense of hierarchy and no sense of individualism. Making decisions was done collectively and by consensus. In that sense, spirituality and social work should go hand in hand.

To promote Indigenization in schools of social work, Tom suggested:

> The faculty and students need to work collectively and we need to come back to having discussion circles, and talking circles. We need to increase our use of oral tradition and inserting it into the curriculum, because they are important in Indigenous cultures and traditions.

10. Julie: 'There is no Indigenous education in social work.'

Julie said that her mom was adopted when she was a child and, in the process, nearly lost her native language and culture. She stated that both her mom's and her own upbringing were subjected to racism and micro-aggression. Even though the concept of Indigeneity overall confused Julie, she insisted that she was 'relearning her roots'—what she understood as an evolving process. Julie suggested the following:

> I would like to see whole courses dedicated to Indigenous studies but these were never offered during my time in the social work program, and for me, this was a missed opportunity in life. It is sad that there are no Indigenous courses in my school of social work. But there was one instance when a faculty member wanted to start bringing an Indigenous focus into one of my courses and kind of tried to, but it didn't really relate to the course she was teaching.

Julie credited the instructors with at least trying, even though, she says, they still have a long way to go. She further indicated that many of her non-Indigenous classmates "don't feel they've been given much education on how to work with . . . Indigenous people." Julie also asserted that her instructors seem to be uncomfortable with Indigenous material, or else they are not informed. She broached this subject in the following statement:

> I always tried to share something about Indigenous people because maybe I could expose my classmates to it. I was secretly hoping that by doing this my instructor might build on it, but that didn't happen. It is unfortunate that my instructors just don't know how to integrate it [Indigeneity] into their teaching. There was one point where my instructor lifted words from a paper I had submitted and used it to educate the class.

When asked about colonialism and racism, Julie stated that in her opinion they are both still in existence but are "dyed, and coloured." She continued on to state:

I can tell you that there is no Indigenous education in social work, and we don't have any Indigenous faculty. There are resources available, but I don't feel like the school uses them.

11. Winona: 'I don't have the time to educate the faculty.'

Winona is openly entrenched in her Indigenous heritage. For her, Indigeneity meant a way of life. She describes Indigeneity as follows:

> It is how you live in the world, how you exist in the world, how you understand things, how you see things, and how things shape your perspective. It's a way of existing that is very different from the Eurocentric way of doing things. Your lived experiences are more than book experiences.

Winona is opinionated and argued that her school of social work oppresses Indigenous students. She conveyed this point clearly when she discussed her instructors:

> Instead of acknowledging Indigenous history, culture, knowledge and experience, the instructors at my school of social work do little more than give it lip service. They try, they attempt to, but they don't know anything about what real reconciliation means. . . . I am trying to educate them, but I shouldn't have to educate them . . . they need to educate themselves. They need to recognize that they have to work. A lot of work needs to be done to bring the standards up so that Indigenous students have a safe experience on campus.

Winona also thought that "because the eastern shore of North America was the first point of contact with Europeans, colonialism was more entrenched here". And, she continues, currently, colonialism, racism and White privilege all profoundly affect the structure of her school of social work. She insisted that some faculty were blatantly racist—and to make matters even worse, do not recognize it. Expanding on the issue of racism, Winona spoke to the challenges and risks faced by Indigenous students in her school of social work:

> The risks include having non-Indigenous students being racist, bullying from the White students, and confrontations with the professors. And that all comes from speaking and demonstrating how I see things differently from the White world. If it's not the polite kind of education which doesn't make the White people feel bad, then they get pissed. Academia, and academic violence, is a real risk for Indigenous students.

Moving from offering her opinion on racism and White privilege, Winona next addressed spirituality. It is to be noted that my respondents offered their opinions on subjects such as spirituality spontaneously. Very little prompting was required and it became evident that many of these youth lived their lives in this way. Winona viewed herself as a spiritual person, for example, and described spirituality as follows:

> First of all, it's my life. It's part of my existence. It's how I see myself existing in the world. It's different for everybody based on their family and the type of connection the family has. If your family is more traditional, or if your family has been impacted by the residential school system, your family may or may not participate in ceremonies and live the good life, and try to see things through an Indigenous lens.

But Winona also believed that there was a clear connection between spirituality and indigenizing social work education. Here is how she described it:

> I would include spirituality, but it needs to be seen as a way to decolonize the education program. We can't decolonize the classroom. You have to go outside of the classroom to do it. It has to be built-in, and you have to go to the community. They are always trying to bring the community in, or bring people in, but they only give them an hour or two to teach others, and that's not enough. You have to go to the

> community and you have to experience it. You have to have something that takes you out of the Eurocentric classroom and out of that comfort zone cause a lot of those social workers and academics, all they have is Eurocentric knowledge. That's all they know, they know books, they know writing, they know the written work, they don't know, they're kind of stuck.

In order to Indigenize the social work programs, Winona argued, administrators and faculty are going to have to make a lot of mistakes:

> And they're going to have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable and with being wrong, and with being challenged. And they're going to have to learn that you can't react negatively. They can't threaten people, they can't get in students' faces just because it hurts them, because their parents have been involved in putting people in residential schools or in the child welfare system. Your personal feelings don't matter. Their worst issue is bringing colonialism, and genocide, and assimilation, and harmful practices into our futures so they can't get worked up and defend themselves, they can't get defensive, they have to understand it and they have to move through it.

Finally, to improve the social work education at her school of social work and to address issues of Indigeneity, Winona offered the following advice:

> They need to go ask and the communities. They need to involve the Elders Council. They need to get community members on board. They need to pay the community. They need to talk to all of the education directors. They need to ask, what are the issues that your students face at our school, and why were they unsuccessful? They need to look at the social work program and look at why Indigenous students are not all doing well in the social work programs.

12. Lydia: 'Social work education exists within a colonial model.'

When asked, Lydia stated that she considers Indigeneity to involve an intimate connection between Indigenous people and the land. She was critical of past efforts to Indigenize the schools of social work, voicing her contention that:

> Social work exits within a colonial model and Indigenizing it has to occur outside of that model. This is compounded by the fact that Indigenous knowledge is not considered to be a part of the core curriculum.

And while Lydia admits that her social work classes have covered some Indigenous material, she would like to see more. She considered the whole notion of Indigenizing social work education to be an ongoing challenge because:

> We've had some instructors who are very passionate and very dedicated so it's hurtful that the barrier between acceptance and rejection of Indigenous content exists. It means that the teaching of Indigenous material and our learning is forced, and we don't have time to contextualize what it is that we are learning. In this sense, we're doing it for the grade, not for the understanding.

On consideration of learning spaces, Lydia indicated that, when Indigenous students enter the school of social work, they "discover" each other:

> We gravitate towards each other, and eventually form our own collective in a way that causes me to question whether we are seeking each other out for support, or to find a safe space to relax in. We have created our own little micro-environment where there's so much laughter, care and support. I think we need to be around each other.

Lydia acknowledges that social work education is more sensitive to Indigenous ways of knowing and. She points to the Code of Ethics as resembling the Seven Teachings used in some Indigenous cultures. And yet Lydia notes that even although this mentality and image is important, she speaks to the following: “I don’t feel that the curriculum really speaks to my history, culture or the knowledge which I experience.” She also pointed out that her non-Indigenous classrooms were resistant to including Indigenous cultural practices, such as drumming in the classroom.” Not only are we not permitted to smudge in the classroom, we are also shut down when we attempt to explain other ways of knowing and being.”

In order to improve on how social work education could better address issues of Indigeneity in her school, Lydia suggested that social work education would benefit from incorporating more experiential learning and Indigenous methods into the curriculum. She explained how the smudging ceremony is practiced by Indigenous people to purify the body and to remove negative energy, for example, as well as for centering and healing.

Lydia also recommended the adoption of talking and healing circles as effective teaching methods. Talking circles are a process which establishes a safe non-hierarchical space in which all participants have an opportunity to speak without interruption, share ideas and opinions, and to work towards consensus. Because of the non-interruption, the talking circle prevents responsive or reactive communication, and helps people focus more on deep listening and reflection (Mehl-Madrona, 2010; Umbreit, 2003). Healing circles are similar to talking circles, but they serve the purpose of bringing victims and offenders together with community members to share experiences, and to learn from collective wisdom.

Lydia suggested that drumming can be helpful for Indigenous learners because: "It represents the heartbeat and spirit of mother earth and of Indigenous people.” In addition, Lydia

agrees that sweat lodges should be made available for Indigenous students because they are a place of teaching, planning, singing and creating community with others (Laframboise, 2014). The spiritual nature of engaging in sweat lodge ceremonies helps to cleanse undesirable toxins from the body, enhances self and identity, creates social bonds with others, removes any feelings of isolation, and relieves both tension and stress. Lydia insisted that in social work classrooms "faculty should talk more about how the environment influences our well-being."

The Faculty

1. Eva: 'We need to learn how to Indigenize without being violent.'

Eva is a faculty member who has been teaching at her school of social work for nearly 10 years. She was conscious of her White upbringing and its influence. Eva was concerned that Indigenizing the university was moving too slowly and that many faculty members did not understand the process and often, were not prepared to commit to it. For Eva, Indigeneity was:

> Something that invokes emotions that are complicated and a bit frightening. I agree that Indigenizing the academy is something that needs to happen. I have been trying to decentralize Whiteness and to Indigenize as much as I can in my courses. I don't necessarily do it very well, but it is important to me.

Eva was aware that a couple of other faculty members at her school were engaging in similar efforts to indigenize their social work classrooms, but wondered out loud if the administration was supportive. Eva was also concerned that some faculty members, including herself, may not be as helpful as they thought in their efforts to Indigenize social work education. She suggested the following:

> Many of us may in fact be causing harm for Indigenous students by singling those students out as the experts, those who could teach other students and faculty about Indigenous culture. I think we need to exercise caution in this area because White faculty members are coming from their own value base and perspective.

In terms of the curriculum, Eva suggested that instead of relying only on Euro-American scholarship we need to recognize that:

> There is a huge amount of scholarship that's being done by Indigenous scholars in Canada and around the world, and we should put that in our curriculum and make everybody read it. Indigenous scholarship is not just knowledge for Indigenous people, this is knowledge for all of us and it is widening.

Eva worried that the curriculum was not accommodating Indigenous scholarship in areas such as mental health, and the school needed to widen its focus so as not to lag behind:

> Our curriculum is trapped in a particular lens, because it's all wrapped around the issue of power. I am concerned about how faculty are going to pedagogically teach this material in a way that is inclusive for students who are Indigenous, and that isn't going to centre them out and make them a focus, which can be so painful and wrong. The faculty need help so that they can teach in a way that is non-violent. I remain cognizant of the fact that I'm not so much trying to teach Indigenous students this material, I'm trying to teach the White students who are resistant to hearing it.

Staying with the theme, Eva asked me the following question:

> I don't think faculty have enough support around pedagogical approaches to make this work in a way for us, and for all of our students. I don't see anybody coming here saying this is a pedagogy we can all learn. How can we maybe have Indigenous

> scholars come in and mentor us to do it in this way, a way that's not going to be harmful to the one or two Indigenous students sitting in our classroom?

Eva further argued that: "No matter how hard we try to Indigenize, we need support." She believed that colonialism, racism and discrimination were all present at the university and in social work, but that: "It is denied, or it's White-washed and ignored."

Eva viewed racism and colonization as impacting people in all areas citing: social policy, child protection, mental health, or disabilities. She believed further that a critical analysis should be: "Integrated into everything that we're teaching and learning, not just an add-on." Eva suggested multiple ways to improve and Indigenize social work education in her school:

> We need mentoring, beginning at the most basic level. I would like to see workshops where Indigenizing social work education is both explained, and demonstrated how it can be incorporated into specific courses. The faculty need to be willing to admit that what they have been doing is wrong, and that they have made mistakes. We need to learn about humility from Indigenous cultures, because there is very little humility in the academy. We need to treat it as a social justice issue and understand that good intentions and a benevolent attitude is not enough. We need to learn how to Indigenize social work education in a way that isn't violent. It would be helpful if we brought Indigenous people in to do workshops to help faculty members figure out how to Indigenize without harming people. And finally, we need to admit that we have privilege, not simply on an individual basis but on a systemic basis, and that it runs through all of the structures in the university. To expose and counter privilege we need to examine how it is hidden from ourselves as White people, and we need to unpack it.

2. *Cindy: 'We give privilege to Indigenous work.'*

At her school of social work Cindy is a faculty member who recognized that traditions were different among Indigenous groups and that if social work education were to become Indigenized it must reflect those differences. On a personal level she viewed Indigeneity as "making room for Indigenous ideas and knowledge."

According to Cindy, instructors at her school of social work teach in a way that respects Indigenous peoples' ways of learning and doing, even though there are no specific Indigenous courses offered. Cindy described the situation as follows:

> Because a goal of our school of social work is to see Indigenous graduates eventually working in Indigenous child and family Services, it offers an adult learning model which includes group discussion, and both providing and receiving feedback.

Cindy argued that her social work education program was in Indigenized in a sense when she said: "The courses are designed to bring Indigenous perspectives into the classroom." The idea was to draw on elements of social work theory and have the students help determine whether they are relevant to their communities. She further stated that, "We're constantly helping students to build their own Indigenous social work practice from their perspective, not from ours."

Cindy says that she enjoys working with Indigenous students because they:

> Are already dealing with mental health issues, they're dealing with suicides and other problems in their communities, and they are intimately involved with family members and relatives. In this sense, they come from a place of experience and a place of empathy.

Cindy explained that her students discuss the effects of colonialism in every class as follows:

> They talk about deconstructing colonialism and where to start. How do we do that at the personal, the cultural, and the structural levels? Many of the students have experienced racism first hand, and when they talk about privilege and oppression it's so different because they experience it every day.

According to Cindy, Indigenous students also know what it is like to experience racism, discrimination, and privilege, and faculty members need to be cognizant of this fact. Cindy described her approach to privilege in the following way:

> We address Whiteness in terms of White privilege, but we are all White instructors and we are privileged. We provide information about oppression, and how we are a part of the colonizers. So in almost every course that we teach we have to put on these three lens [privilege, information about oppression, information about the colonizers], and the students won't let us off with not putting it on anyway.

While spirituality for Cindy meant respect for, and the belief in, a higher power, she explained that the students tend to see spirituality more in terms of wholeness: "I see it in every paper that I get from Indigenous students where they speak of the need to always relate back to the land, to everything that exists in the environment."

Cindy believed that social work education would benefit from designing and conducting classes which bring in an Indigenous perspective. She would like to see instructors do the following:

> We need to bring in a residential school survivor to talk about their experience, and we would like to see Indigenous instructors in our program. And we would also like to see spirituality built into social work education programming.

3. *Anne: 'We've brought some Indigenization into it, but there is room for more.'*

As a social work instructor, Anne defined Indigeneity as "a means to honour practices and teachings that support Indigenous cultural awareness, and a timely understanding of the issues. In support of this definition, she attempted to build the following into her teaching: I search for ways to honour the traditions that support learnings from Indigenous practices. I want to ensure that space is made to allow Indigenous students to smudge when difficulties arise in the classroom, and when students need to ground themselves, so that they can continue with their work. Anne also discussed how she made space for Indigenous students:

> In my classroom I use story telling as a learning tool for Indigenous students, as well as encouraging the use of talking circles. In addition, I permit Indigenous songs or anthems to be played in my class, sometimes as an opening, and sometimes as a closing honour.

Anne was aware that her students were impacted by the vagaries of colonization, racism, and White privilege. She was well aware that these oppressive vagaries were part of the everyday lives of her Indigenous students. In an effort to counter these while attempting not to misappropriate Indigenous content, Anne introduces herself to her students in the following way:

> I'm White. I'm not Indigenous. This is my background, this is my experience and this is where I come from, and I'm here to learn more about and understand from you, what impacts you.

Consistent with her efforts to support the learning methods of storytelling and talking circles, she made every effort to include Indigenous cultural practices in her classrooms. Anne offered the following ideas to improve social work education in her school:

> I am interested in including the model of the sweat lodge ceremony as a teaching/learning model in my classroom. This means examining the teaching/counselling function of the ceremony, and whether it can be adapted to classroom teaching.

Anne is also interested in integrating spirituality into her classroom and including it as an integral part of the Indigenization process.

4. Mary: 'We must recognize that as faculty, we are privileged individuals.'

Mary is a non-Indigenous faculty person who considered Indigeneity to be: working from a perspective which acknowledges the way that Indigenous people in Canada see the world. To accomplish this, I attempt to forefront the teaching of Indigenous knowledge in my classroom. Mary expressed regret that her school of social work does not have an "Indigenous program," but suggested also that even though some faculty members say they want to Indigenize, they were just not there yet.

Mary contended that social work educators needed to learn more about Indigenous pedagogy and approaches. To confirm this, she makes the following statement:

> We need to stop using a Western way of teaching and adopt an Indigenous way of teaching, whatever that will look like. Social work takes Western knowledge for granted, which means that we are teaching our students from the Western perspective. This represents a continuance of colonialism, a way of not acknowledging it and of convincing ourselves that it is not there. . . . We don't acknowledge the relationship between the earth, the people and the environment. So, we have this colonial way of thinking about buildings, roads and cars . . . all of these work to destroy nature as

> opposed to helping it. Our colonial mentality does not acknowledge other ways of being. When we are teaching we forget that, and so we are kind of perpetuating that unhealthy relationship with the earth and people.

Mary further declared that racism "is the silence that happens [and even though we teach it in social work] many faculty do not feel comfortable teaching this material." For Mary, "not making it [race and racism] more political perpetuates it in terms of the discrimination against Indigenous people." Mary warned that social workers needed to pay more attention to what they were doing. To support this position, she offered the following:

> I can see that it is social workers in the child welfare system who are taking away children, and so we need to be training those students to think twice before taking those children away. We need to train our students to find alternative ways to work with Indigenous families so that the children stay with their families.

Mary admits that her school of social work was: "A White school . . .and as university professors we are very privileged . . . but if we don't use that privilege to promote social change, then we are contributing to injustice.

Mary considered spirituality to be "about understanding the relationship we have with the environment, and with all living things or beings in our world." In terms of the connection between Indigenizing social work education and spirituality, Mary suggested that "we [social workers] need to understand more about our own spirituality in order to acknowledge Indigenous spirituality." She summarized her position on spirituality in the following way:

> We should make the link between spirituality and Indigenous people because it makes us better human beings. It helps us to become more in touch with our inner selves. If

> we see spirituality only from a Western point of view, we miss making the link between the Indigenous point of view and knowledge.

To improve the social work education in her school, Mary suggested that social workers needed to develop courses that address Indigenous approaches and experiences. To accomplish this Mary offered the following:

> We need to delve deeper and to consider more information on the relationship between the residential schools and modern-day child welfare. Our school here needs more Indigenous faculty, and needs to bring in Elders and Indigenous guest speakers and to have more activities which speak to the students and to provide material related to the Indigenous reality.

Finally, Mary stated her belief that:

> Our school needs to make Indigenous studies a part of the curriculum so that the relationship between Indigenous communities and the school of social work is normalized.

5. 'Susan: It's important for students to speak from their experience.'

Susan is a social work instructor who thought of Indigeneity as "being true to the cultural roots of a person, and being respectful of their identity." For Susan, an Indigenized curriculum needed to:

> Examine the whole history of colonization and its impact on the population. We need to develop a greater understanding of the impacts of colonization and the consequences that occur as a result of that. We need to investigate and work to alleviate the social problems that have occurred. We need to better understand how to

> address that in a way that respects the history and the story of the [Indigenous] people that we're working with. And finally, we need to find methods that are very respectful and that support the culture.

Susan was mindful of different student learning styles, noting that many Indigenous students were visual learners. She pointed out however that there was considerable diversity and that we should not assume that Indigenous students are all the same, nor do they think the same way or have the same views on things, especially in relation to spirituality. To clarify this, Susan explained it as follows:

> I had one Indigenous student who thought that she should not be in my course because she (the student) felt that it would be an insult to her grandfather, if he were to find out that she was taking a course in social work which addresses issues of spirituality. Later, when in her field placement, this same student spoke of how she needed to smudge herself before going into the Child Protection field placement, in order to clear herself in advance.

Addressing the issue of student learning preferences, Susan offered the following:

> Indigenous students like to have Elders and community people come in to speak to them, and they like hearing stories and using the storytelling method as a learning tool.

She further explained that we have an obligation to work with Indigenous students and believed:

> We have been on a learning curve ever since we began thinking about Indigenizing our social work courses, and we are still learning.

Susan said that teaching Indigenous students was challenging for her for the following reasons:

> We are always conscious of our Whiteness. Our Whiteness informs a lot of what we do, and sometimes we don't know much about or pay attention to our Whiteness. This is because there are blind spots.

In order to better improve social work education at her school, Susan recommended that interactions among Indigenous students and their Elders had to be expanded. She suggested "We need to bring Elders into the classrooms and to bring Indigenous social workers in to speak to the students." In her final statement in the interview, she stressed: "We need to listen more to the Indigenous experiences outside of the classroom, and to ask the Indigenous students what they think needs to change in social work practice."

6. Joy: 'We need an Indigenous pedagogy.'

Joy is an Indigenous social work instructor who has been teaching for nearly two decades. A quiet, unassuming individual, Joy saw Indigeneity as "being grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being." In terms of Indigenizing her school of social work Joy suggested the following:

> An Indigenized social work education would need to be embedded in a social work program that has a perspective, a philosophy and a culture which embraces those Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing. An Indigenous program would need to be decolonized, or to be going through a decolonizing process so that it makes space for an Indigenous curriculum. And there needs to be an overall culture that invites in and acknowledges Indigenous students.

Joy calls attention to the fact that even though the Indigenous populations in the Atlantic regions are only a fraction of the wider population, it is important to support the fact that

> Indigenous people need support to be self-sustainable in their communities, and we need to strive for greater Indigenous representation in social work classrooms . . . we want an Indigenous pedagogy . . . so that methods and practices are reflective of Indigenous ways, yet supported by the institution because they [Indigenous knowledge(s)] are not familiar to many [non-Indigenous] students . . . The evolution of an Indigenized social work classroom can be seen to be something that becomes natural within the school environment, so that it isn't an anomaly.

Continuing with this theme Joy later expanded on the subject of Indigenization:

> You can't do Indigenizing work without the decolonizing work first. The decolonizing work entails more critical theoretical perspectives that take into account things like a race analysis and an analysis that accounts for inequality and discriminatory practices. Pedagogical methods and things like instructional methods would need to also incorporate what we understand as good practices from a critical, theoretical race theory.

Joy did not consider her school of social work to be Indigenized, but argued that it is doing preparatory work. In this climate, however, Joy offered the following caution:

> In the pursuit of Indigenization, Indigenous populations are seen to be an equity-seeking group. This further means that there is a tension between a focus on Indigenizing, and at the same time a focus that considers all populations as equity-seeking groups. This is considered to be a hurdle.

On top of this issue, Joy viewed her school of social work in the following way: "This school of social work must be seen as a colonial institution which needs to be decolonized." She worried

that, “If we don’t pay enough attention to the creep of colonialism, racism and White privilege, it will show up in the curriculum.”

In terms of spirituality, Joy suggested the following:

> Spirituality encompasses the physical and spiritual realms, the realm of the creator, the spirit world, and the notion of being healthy and whole in terms of having health from a mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual existence. An Indigenized social work education naturally entails a spiritual essence and includes sacred knowledge which is offered by the Elders. It is a spiritual journey which invokes a ceremonial connection and is an integral part of the decolonizing process.

To improve social work education, Joy suggested the following:

> Schools of social work need to consider adopting a strategic approach to decolonizing which critically examines all elements of our institution and of our policies. Because policies perpetuate colonial values and principles, we need an integrated Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy. We need more Indigenous faculty and a more normalized relationship with the institution and the communities. We need to bring in more Elders, who are the knowledge keepers. And we need to ensure that the burden of the decolonizing work doesn’t just fall on Indigenous people.

7. Adam: ‘Indigenous content is infused throughout the social work courses.’

Adam has been a social work instructor for twenty years and considers Indigeneity to be “something that is about Indigenous people in Canada.” He believed that schools of social work had a long way to go and the most of the problem of the lack of Indigenization was related to the inability of non-Indigenous faculty to come around to understanding Indigenous world views and

issues. Adam stated that in his school of social work, attempts had been made to infuse Indigenous content into the curriculum. He said:

> There is a lot to be said about that [Indigenous content] because the [accreditation review] demonstrated that there were many courses that included some portions of it in terms of Indigenous content. There have been ongoing discussions here at the school about whether or not we should have a course that's specifically related to Indigeneity.

Adam recalled that his school of social work has been thinking of either having one course which covers Indigenous studies specifically, or alternatively:

> To continue with what we have now. I don't think it should be a question of either-or. I think that it can be both. I worry that our school of social work has been dominated by a colonial teaching approach to teaching. Trying to infuse Indigenous studies into the curriculum may be problematic.

Adam mentioned that there were a large number of Indigenous people living in the province and this presented challenges to "creating effective and respectful pedagogy," especially when "we" are coming from a "not knowing stance":

> I don't understand the whole notion of being one with the environment, being one with the earth. As much as I can imagine that must be wonderful, and as much as I might try to do it, I find that I am separate and apart from it and I think that from a pedagogical perspective, that is a limitation. I can understand it on a conceptual level, but I don't experience it as a non-Indigenous person.

While he admitted that social work educators have an ethical responsibility to address Indigeneity, the school's faculty members and administrators struggled to understand the concept of Indigenization more fully because:

> We're looking at the methodology and the teaching and wondering which Indigenous groups use which, and it is a challenge for non-Indigenous instructors to master those understandings.

Although Adam confirmed that he did not engage in this type of practice, he recalled an issue brought forward by a couple of students who complained that: "Because they were Indigenous, they were asked and expected to speak from the Indigenous perspective in terms of the course curriculum." Adam spoke further on this issue, stating that:

> It [the issue brought forward by some students] demonstrates that we can do things with good intentions and we can go on about the good intentions part of it, and the effects it has had on the history of Indigenous populations. [But] it is another of how we need to be sensitive to how we as instructors need to be more competent and understanding, while at the same time recognizing that we are limited as non-Indigenous instructors.

Quite matter-of-factly, Adam stated:

> I don't think that my school of social work can do more to Indigenize the curriculum because if you have the curriculum infused throughout the different courses, it enhances the curriculum in terms of it being Indigenized.

This was a personally troubling statement to hear. Adam believed that the existing curriculum at his school of social work was already sufficiently Indigenized. Adam admitted, however, that more could be done. Adam believed that the faculty in his school of social work understood the

concepts of colonialism, racism, discrimination and oppression because they were all "a part of social justice issues, and that's part of what we do and how we do it." When asked about White privilege, Adam pointed to funding sources and the curriculum and suggested that, "there's a lot of Whiteness that's infused in that way." Taking this line of thinking even further, Adam described Whiteness in the following way:

> I think that as a school within the university, there's sensitivity to Whiteness. In terms of the curriculum, I think that there may be aspects of this that kind of creep in at times and I say that may be because when you look at the larger structures, we are sometimes at the mercy of the university budget and government budgets, and that can influence how we respond and how we react.

To improve social work education in his school, Adam suggested that there was a real need "to have a discussion about how the curriculum looks in terms of Indigenous content", adding further that there needs to be better recruitment of Indigenous students in his school of social work. Finally, Adam wanted to see an increased "focus on research with Indigenous communities."

8. *Sheila: 'We can't teach Indigenous culture and spirituality, but we can teach history and culture'*

Sheila has been teaching in social work for 12 years and has considerable experience learning about and coming to understand Indigenous culture and spirituality. She applauded the call from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to begin the Indigenization process at Canadian universities.

Sheila was concerned that when non-Indigenous faculty attempt to teach about Indigenous issues they may be on shaky ground. To illustrate this, she suggested:

> Non-Indigenous faculty attempting to teach about Indigenous issues straddles issues of appropriation, because otherwise we're teaching something that isn't ours. . . .
>
> It is important to understand that, for example, I can't teach people about smudging because that's not mine. But I can teach that smudging is important, and I can teach why it's important, and I think that distinction is core in terms of the curricula.

Sheila amplifies the discussion to capture the following:

> I think it's really important that as settlers we know our history and our relationship, and that students also have an understanding of Indigenous culture and history and spirituality and values. With the history of colonization, I think that there's an even greater need for Indigenous students to be represented, but I think it's really important that we not look to those students to teach us. That's not their job. I find it highly offensive when that happens, but we can't just open the doors without making sure that Indigenous students get the supports they need before coming into this White community.

Sheila was further concerned that her school of social work and the entire university was dismissing Indigenous knowledge. She made her argument in the following way:

> Our Western way of teaching is so limited and I think that we have many things we can learn from Indigenous people about teaching and learning. But once again, I think we have to be really careful not to appropriate or take what isn't ours. For a long time, social workers have sat in circles, for example. That's not new. But when a settler sits in a circle and smudges, and other things like that, that's not okay. We need to learn

> new ways of working together but we need to not be teaching about Indigenous methods, because I think at times we've say yeah, it's okay to use those methods in a university course, but when it comes to a dissertation defence or thesis submission, I think sometimes Indigenous methods haven't been taken as seriously.

Sheila later suggested:

> I believe that the Indigenous storytelling method of sharing/passing on knowledge is as important as similar methods used in White society . . . In my teaching practice I tell stories because that's how students learn. That's what touches their hearts, and if it touches their hearts, they get it. When we just talk theory, it doesn't resonate the same way.

Finally, Sheila did not believe that her school of social work was Indigenized. To support this claim, she suggested:

> We don't have Indigenous faculty, and we don't have Indigenous staff. Indigenous students coming to our school are not feeling supported, and are not getting their needs met. Perhaps it is because a lot of faculty don't really know much about Indigenous peoples and their histories. And I don't think we've done a very good job of educating ourselves. And I include myself in that. I haven't done things that I need to do just as much as my school of social work hasn't done so. So, I think we have a long ways to go.

Chapter Six: Thematic Analysis

For social work educators who teach about Indigenization, it is important to understand that knowledge production, validation and dissemination are not apolitical acts. There are always profound social and political consequences for ways knowledge is produced, validated, and disseminated in social work classroom. Indigenizing social work education has a politics that envisions a system of education in Indigenous values, worldviews, cultures, and knowledge at par with any knowledge system. The narrative of Indigenous BSW students and their mostly non-Indigenous social work educators can serve to challenge colonial and racist imposition of knowledge on Indigenous learners. Four central themes emerged from the voices and stories of my research participants as presented in the previous chapter. These were:

(1) Unreasonable expectations of Indigenous students to be content experts on Indigeneity;

(2) The social work curricula is taught through a White lens;

(3) Student and faculty support for Indigenization;

(4) Broad support for and attachment to Indigenous spirituality.

Theme 1: Unreasonable expectations of Indigenous students to be content experts on Indigeneity

Heckler and Sillitoe (2009) noted "feminist studies would hold no credibility if it consisted almost exclusively of male scholars writing about the subject in a manner notably different to the few women who could make their voices heard" (p. 2). Heckller and Sillitoes's (2009) comments were legitimate concerns that on-going Indigenization of social work

education must be led by Indigenous people. Every knowledge producer and user must be grounded in their own local modes of thinking in order not to be alienated from their social world. For Indigenous BSW students in the study, the absences of Indigenous social work educators in Atlantic Canadian universities created an ongoing, self-perpetuating problem whereby Indigenous students are unfairly expected to be content experts on any and all matters regarding Indigenization. The students made it clear that they were not comfortable interpreting and explaining how they lived their lives as Indigenous people for their non-Indigenous audiences:

> I was often asked to speak about my experiences as an Indigenous person even though I found it difficult to talk about my personal experiences and to provide what they (social work faculty) wanted, because they expected me to have had more experiences than I actually did. (*Hannah*)

Hannah also spoke about how the faculty expects her to know about historical and contemporary events impacting the lives of Indigenous people. She explained that when they (Indigenous students in social work classrooms) don't have this knowledge, they were penalized for it.

> I can tell you that I was graded poorly on a reflection paper about the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls (MMIWG), because I was expected to have more to say than the rest of my non-Indigenous classmates. (*Hannah*)

A second Indigenous student, Tom, provided a complicated explanation of how many non-Indigenous faculty appear to overlook the fact that it was their own ancestors who oppressed Indigenous people.

> A lot of faculty tend to be non-Indigenous, so there is always a potential bias to the way they have to check their biases, and the need to understand that the group they belong to were those who oppressed Indigenous people. (*Tom*)

Another Indigenous student, George, called attention to the fact that many faculty appeared to be uncomfortable teaching about colonization.

> When faculty are teaching about Indigenous people they fly by the subject. When it's time to talk about colonization not everyone in the schools of social work wants to talk about it. It's like they know what it means, but when I speak to them about some of the things that happened, they say they want to, but they don't want to know the early part (how Indigenous people were forced to endure the colonizing experience). (*George*)

Yet another Indigenous student, Winona, was even more critical of faculty, arguing that when they dismiss Indigenous ways of doing and being, it often creates an unsafe environment for Indigenous students in social work classrooms.

> Instead of acknowledging Indigenous history, culture, knowledge and lived experiences, the faculty at my school of social work do little more than give it lip service. They try, they attempt to, but they don't know anything about what real reconciliation means. I am trying to educate them, but I shouldn't have to educate them, they need to educate themselves. They need to recognize that they have to work. A lot of work needs to be done to bring the standards up so that Indigenous students have a safe place experience on campus. (*Winona*)

Many of the faculty members who participated in this research initiative appeared to want to demonstrate that they are allies to Indigenous students. For example, faculty member Eva made

it clear that there is violence associated with expecting Indigenous students to demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of Indigenous issues and to also be expected to educate the faculty and their fellow students about that knowledge.

> Many of us may be causing harm for Indigenous students by singling them out as the experts, those who could teach their fellow students and faculty about Indigenous culture. I think we need to exercise caution in this area because faculty are coming from their own value base and perspectives. (*Eva*)

A second faculty member, Sheila, went a step further, suggesting that social work education must understand that issues of coloniality are an everyday experience in social work classrooms.

> I think it's really important that as settlers we know our history and our relationship with Indigenous people, and that students have an understanding of Indigenous cultural histories, spirituality and values. With the history of colonization, I think there's an even greater need for Indigenous students to be represented, but I think that it's really important that we not look to those students to teach us. That's not their job. I find it highly offensive when that happens. And we can't just open doors without making sure that Indigenous students get the supports they need before coming into this White community. (*Sheila*)

Jane, a faculty member who acknowledged the close relationship that Indigenous people have with their environment, suggested that in a decolonized classroom, instruction must honour that reality.

> In social work education we don't acknowledge the relationship between the earth, the people, and the environment. So, we have this colonial way of thinking about buildings, roads and cars. All of these work to destroy nature, as opposed to helping it.

> Our colonial mentality does not acknowledge other ways of being. When we are teaching, we forget that, and so we are kind of perpetuating that unhealthy relationship with the earth and the people. (*Jane*)

Finally, another faculty member, Cathy, expressed concern that if we continue to teach in the manner that we do, positive change will be slow in coming. She explained that if faculty continue to rely on Indigenous students to act as classroom resources, and expect them to have knowledge about Indigenous lived experiences, faculty will simply be endorsing the status quo.

> We need to stop using a Western way of teaching and adopt an Indigenous way of teaching, whatever that looks like. Social work takes Western knowledge for granted, which means that we are teaching our students from a Western perspective. This represents a continuance of colonialism, a way of not acknowledging it and of convincing ourselves that it is not there. (*Cathy*)

While I agree with Berenstain (2016), who argued that Western education used privilege to force Indigenous students to educate them about the nature of their own oppression, I believe that we need to take it a step further and ask ourselves, whose responsibility is it to teach such knowledge? Is it the Indigenous students or faculty members? When social work education fails to teach such content knowledge about Indigeneity, it is unreasonable to expect the Indigenous students to know such knowledge.

Second, it speaks to the racism in the education system where there is some expectation of what the Indigenous learner is supposed to be and know. Do social work educators penalize White students for not knowing European knowledge? Why should it be different for Indigenous students? At present, the racist logic in social work education dictates that Indigenous learners must have such knowledge even though there has not been a concerted effort in the colonial

education system to expose Indigenous learners to such knowledge. Put differently, social work education is blaming Indigenous students for not knowing something they have not been taught, rather than seeing the lack of such knowledge as the failure of the education system.

The true nature of colonization and its impacts on communities show that no person is immune from colonization. It follows, therefore, that it is possible for somebody to be Indigenous, yet may not have sufficient knowledge about Indigeneity. What this teaches us is that we should be careful not to presume that an embodied connection to Indigenous culture necessarily translates into expert knowledge in Indigeneity.

Theme 2: The social work curricula is taught through a White lens

An Indigenous student, Tom, took exception to the way in which social work classrooms are structured, with the faculty lecturing down to the class. Tom argues that in the classroom setting, many Indigenous students don't experience the sense of collectivity, or belonging, which exists in their Indigenous social gatherings.

> As an Indigenous student, I don't feel that sense of collectivity, that sense of belonging. I don't think that sense of togetherness is embraced as much as it should be in social work, especially when it's a program that is designed for that. There is a difference between Indigenizing and decolonizing. (*Tom*)

Continuing his train of thought, Tom reminded that many Indigenous students believe that decision making in the social work classroom should resemble how decisions are made within the wider Indigenous community. He went on to explain what the social work classroom should look like.

> I believe it's very important to embrace a sense of collectivity within the classroom because of the gap between students and the expert, the professor. It is important to have this so that there are no decisions made on a higher level. The decisions need to be made through a collective process and in a collective sense, so that if there are any conflicts it would be best to have that traditional sense of knowledge, where everybody would come together decide on something, and then move forward in a good way. (*Tom*)

Another area of concern for Indigenous students has to do with the presence of White privilege. An Indigenous student, Katie, drew attention to the fact that White faculty did not appear to be aware of their White privilege. She made her observation as follows: "The faculty in my school of social work don't seem to be aware of their White privilege."

Another Indigenous student, Tom, warned that if faculty don't pay attention to their teaching pedagogy, there is a risk that they may not be aware of the impact their privilege may have on the Indigenous students in the classroom.

> It's not just to be culturally tolerant, but to be sure to embrace their Indigenous peoples' values, beliefs and thoughts, and to make sure to understand that they (White faculty) come from a position of privilege. They (White faculty) need to stay aware of that and to make sure they're working *for* Indigenous students and not just telling them what is best for them. (*Tom*)

Jane, a faculty member, also expressed her opinion on the issue. She expressed concern that White privilege can be misused in the social work classroom.

> My school of social work is a White school and as university professors we are very privileged. But if we don't use that privilege to promote social change, then we are contributing to injustice. (*Jane*)

Another Indigenous student, Lydia, introduced a different dynamic, the need to establish a pedagogy which encourages in-class teaching and learning of Indigenous material.

> We've had some faculty members who are very passionate and very dedicated, so it's hurtful that the barrier between acceptance and rejection of Indigenous content exists within classrooms. It means that the teaching of Indigenous material and our learning is forced, and we don't have time to contextualize what it is that we are learning. In this sense we're doing it for the grade, not the understanding. (*Lydia*)

Here Lydia is implying that when faculty are asked to include Indigenous content in social work classrooms, the instruction and learning is often forced. When this happens, the students find it difficult to contextualize the teaching.

This is the year 2022, and it is implausible that Canadian university faculties are not all teaching courses which reflect Indigenous knowledge and lived experiences. Future research must be designed to probe the issue and to question why our institutions of higher learning continue to deny classroom teaching and learning which reflects that Indigenous content.

Theme 3: Student and Faculty Support for Indigenization

There is an urgency for an intellectual politics of disengaging from a colonial educational legacy. The colonial paradigm of the production, interrogation, validation and dissemination of knowledge needs to be subverted. The focus on Indigenous knowledge has a politics that envisions a system of education in Indigenous traditions and philosophies at par with mainstream

education. Indigenous knowledges are founded upon and express thoughts about the ways of life, traditions and cultures of Indigenous peoples, which all learners can, and do, benefit from such knowledge.

This theme emerged from the stories which my participants shared regarding the composition of social work curricula. Some Indigenous students used strong language to challenge faculty to listen to the voices of their students. Here is how the Indigenous student Winona articulated her frustration:

> They (faculty) are just going to have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable and with being wrong, and with being challenged. And they're going to have to learn that they can't react negatively. They can't threaten students, they can't get in students' faces just because their parents have been involved in putting children in residential schools or in the child welfare system. Their personal feelings don't matter. Their worst issue is bringing colonialism, genocide, assimilation, and harmful practices into our futures, so they can't get worked up and defend themselves. They have to understand it and move through it. (*Winona*)

Another Indigenous student, Polly, stated that social work instruction would be enhanced if the administration invited Indigenous scholars, Elders and knowledge keeps into the classroom to speak about Indigenous ways of teaching and learning. The school of social work needs to have Indigenous people on staff, and the faculty needs to make more of an effort to invite Indigenous social workers into the classrooms to speak to my class. I would like to see Indigenous professors teaching our own teachings, and to have Indigenous guest speakers who could give a better understanding of the lived experiences of Indigenous life, and of how to live the good life.

Following upon the words of Polly, Indigenous student Kayla explained how Indigenous teaching and learning can contribute to the healing process. She was careful to add, however, that this was not happening in social work classrooms at present.

> I would like to see more teachings on the traditional practices and how they benefit the healing process. Indigenized approaches to healing can be incorporated into everyday mainstream learning, yet taught through work education. Unfortunately, however, much of that teaching follows a Western format. (*Kayla*)

Another Indigenous student added that she would like to see a social work curriculum which speaks to the history, culture and knowledge which Indigenous faculty bring to the classroom.

> The social work curricula needs to be created and delivered by Indigenous people so that it more accurately reflects and incorporates traditional practices. Unfortunately, there are no Indigenous faculty in my school of social work. (*Lydia*)

Seeking to clarify how the university can better address the decolonization of social work education at her school of social work, a faculty member, Eva, expressed that concern as follows:

> Our curriculum (at her school of social work) is trapped in a particular lens because it's all wrapped around the issue of power. I am concerned about how faculty are going to pedagogically teach this material in a way that is inclusive for all students who are Indigenous and that isn't going to center them out and make them the focus, which can be so painful and wrong. The faculty need help so they can teach in a way that is non-violent. I remain cognizant of the fact that I'm not so much trying to teach Indigenous students this material. I'm trying to teach the White students who are resistant to it. (*Eva*)

Following Eva's words on this particular theme, Polly went on to include her understanding of how social work instruction could be improved.

> They (her school of social work) do not have any Indigenous faculty members, and the faculty doesn't make enough of an effort to invite Indigenous social workers into the classrooms to speak to my class. I would like to see Indigenous faculty teaching our teachings, and to have Indigenous speakers who could give us a better understanding of Indigenous life, and how to live the good life. (*Polly*)

Indigenizing social work education must begin with an awareness and recognition that all learners have their own active knowledge base, rooted in their local histories, culture, cultural memories, identity, language, cosmologies, and epistemologies which actively nourishes and informs their awareness, processes of knowledge creation and application. This calls for a re-conceptualization of social work education that allows all learners the means to maintain, deepen, renew and expand the frontiers of their own knowledge rooted in their history, languages, culture identities and worldviews. The awareness and consciousness one's own people's language and knowledge is the key to understanding and reading the world. It is also a means to accessing and making strategic sense of other people's languages and knowledges. Such collective sense of knowledge can allow multiple learners to appreciate other peoples' languages and knowledges and to utilize as a tool for the development of one's own people and communities. Indigenizing social work education is a search of different World; particularly, a world founded on the appreciation of all peoples and their knowledges and a recognition of the cognitive autonomy and security of all communities. Such approach to social work education, as Smith (2009) rightly notes, is important to create a truly transformative educational process aimed at developing the experiences of being Indigenous of a place for more learners. Put it

differently, Indigenizing social work education is a way of pushing back on the concept of placelessness and alienation that sometimes breeds a sense of environmental carelessness in our society.

Theme 4: Indigenous Spirituality

Every learner is an embodied spirit/soul. There is an inseparable relation between the material and the spiritual worlds of Indigenous peoples. As Gueye (1995) notes in the context of Africa, there is a specific cultural understanding in African communities that is "centred around a particular conception of the world which assigns the human being a specific role, around a certain representation of time and space which structures mentalities and behaviours" (p. 11). Such knowledge is central to effective development practice. Social Work education must therefore be presented as an emotionally felt experience for Indigenous learners. Rather than being estranged from one's surrounding environment, the student must instead be engrossed in it. Social work education must affirm rather than devalue the spiritual knowledge of Indigenous learners. Spirituality is about a relation to the Land and Mother Earth. It is about an awareness of the inner environment, the power of the cosmos, and the connections of the outer world and inner self. It became evident to me that there is a discernable spirituality-in-common among my students. While this suggests that may be evidence of their ongoing resistance to colonialism/Christian indoctrination, I suspect it may have more to do with longing for community, a sense of belonging, revitalized identities, and feelings of nostalgia. One of the participants in my study highlighted the role of spirituality in social work classrooms in the following way:

> I believe that there is a connection between Spirituality and Indigenizing social work education but it needs to be seen as a way to decolonize the education program. We can't decolonize the classroom. We have to go outside the classroom to do it. It has to be built in, and we have to go to the community. They (social work administration and faculty) are always trying to bring the community in, but they only give them an hour or two to teach and that isn't enough. You have to have something that takes you out of the Eurocentric classroom and out of that comfort zone, because a lot of those social workers and academics, all they know is academic knowledge. That's all they know. They know writing, they know the written work, but they don't know, they're kind of stuck (Winona – Indigenous student).

While many Indigenous students called attention to the fact that social work classrooms are hierarchically structured, something that is contrary to their revitalized experiences of collective decision-making, they feel uncomfortable in such a learning environment. As mentioned earlier, participants noted that many White instructors are competitive by nature and strive to reach for higher learning. This frequently shows up in their teaching methods and Indigenous students become uncomfortable with this type of teaching pedagogy. An Indigenous student interpreted the matter in the following way:

> I believe it's very important to embrace a sense of collectivity within the classroom because of the gap between the students and the expert, the professor. It is important to have this so that there are no decisions made on a higher level. The decisions need to be made through a collective process and in a collective sense, so that if there were any conflicts it would be best to have that traditional sense of knowledge, where

> everybody would come together, decide on something, and then move forward in a good way (Tom – Indigenous student).

This Indigenous method of learning and decision-making calls for a profound departure from the Western model, and that is what the Indigenous students in this study are suggesting needs to happen. An Indigenous student uses a nostalgic reminiscence:

> The sense of Indigenous spirituality is the sense of connectivity. Traditionally Indigenous communities came together, they had these discussions, and there was no sense of individualism. Making decisions was done collectively, and by consensus. In that sense, spirituality and social work go hand in hand (Tom – Indigenous student).

Another Indigenous student expressed frustration with the restrictions which universities impose on the practice of smudging on campuses. Since Indigenous people are spiritual in nature, it is not surprising that the use of medicines is carried into the classroom setting:

> They say they're recognizing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), but our medicines are too dirty to bring into the university. They have a couple of places where you can smudge, but they have fans to suck the smoke out, so isn't that like a shredder for your prayers, where the smoke is going through it? We need chimneys and canopies that come down so that when we do the ceremony, the smoke is able to rise intact through the roof of the building and up to the Creator in a good way (Sam – Indigenous student).

Spiritual practices include respectful ceremony, and this was also reflected in the story telling from several Indigenous students, who longs for a sense of belonging:

> We need to have Indigenous educators and Indigenous guest lecturers invited to speak to our social work classrooms. We need to include ceremony and to have Indigenous

> Elders bring in the spiritual and cultural elements central to Indigenous knowledge. This is the way to make social work classrooms safer for Indigenous students (Hannah – Indigenous student).

Introducing a version of classroom learning that follows an Indigenous approach to decision-making and reflecting a nostalgic return to tradition calls for a profound departure from teacher-centric pedagogies within the dominant Western tradition. But this is precisely what many Indigenous students are calling for. Tom would like to see this approach integrated into social work classrooms.

> The sense of Indigenous spirituality is the sense of connectivity. Traditionally, Indigenous communities came together, they had these discussions, and there was no sense of individualism. Making decisions was done collectively, and by consensus. In that sense, spirituality and social work go hand in hand. (*Tom*)

Responding to the question of spirituality and of revitalizing identity in social work classrooms, Jane, a faculty member, suggested that a focus on spirituality seems to help students and faculty get in touch with their own understandings.

> We should be respectful of the relationship between spirituality and social work education because it makes us better human beings. It helps us to become more in touch with our inner selves. If we see spirituality only from a Western point of view, we miss the link between the Indigenous point of view and knowledge. (*Jane*)

Sam, an Indigenous student, expressed frustration with the restrictions that universities impose on the practice of smudging on campuses. Since Indigenous people are spiritual people, it is not surprising that the use of medicines are carried into and used in the classroom setting.

> They say they are recognizing the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), but our medicines are too dirty to bring into the university. They have a couple of places where you can smudge, but they have fans to suck the smoke out, so isn't that like a shredder for your prayers? We need chimneys and canopies that come down so that when we do the ceremony, the smoke is able to rise intact through the roof of the building and up to the Creator in a good way. (*Sam*)

Spiritual practices also includes a return to engaging in respectful ceremony. An Indigenous student, Hannah, reflects the voices of many other Indigenous students when she spoke about the longing to engage in ceremony and to have it led by Elders who are invited into the classroom settings.

> We need to have Indigenous educators and Indigenous guest lecturers invited to speak to our social work classrooms. We need to include ceremony and to have Indigenous Elders bring in the Spiritual elements central to Indigenous knowledge. This is the way to make social work classrooms safe for Indigenous students (*Hannah* – Indigenous student).

In rethinking Indigenization in social work education, there are some ontological questions regarding the interface of society, nature and culture. A notion of 'spiritual praxis' is informed by an action-oriented spirituality. Evoking spirituality as a form of 'Indigeneity' can also be a political and intellectual strategy to resist the dominance of hegemonic Eurocentric intellectual – and more specifically epistemologically – traditions that tend to masquerade as universal knowledge. In challenging the claims to know the 'Other', spirituality and spiritual knowledge is presented as a legitimate way of knowing, highlighting significant epistemologies and philosophies of Indigenous and colonized peoples. The spiritual reveals the inner strength,

confidence and internal resistance of a colonized people that defeats colonial and imperial education. In fact, the colonizing experience has consequences for understanding human spirituality. As Fanon (1967) long argued in *Black Skin, White Masks*, to say no to oppression, colonization, and racism is to contribute to "the victory of the dignity of the spirit" (p. 226).

Chapter Seven: Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The academic project is primarily to critically examine how Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students and their (mostly) non-Indigenous social work instructors experience, understand, and speak about Indigenization of social work education in Atlantic Canada. Specifically, I focused on these questions:

a. *How do Social Work students in the Bachelor of Social Work programs in Atlantic Canada's universities and their professors understand and actionize indigenization in social work education?*
b. *What are the experiences of Indigenous Social Work students in the current Bachelor of Social Work programs in Atlantic Canada's universities?*
c. *What do Indigenous Social Work students in the current Bachelor of Social Work programs in Atlantic Canada's universities and their professors consider to be the challenges and opportunities of Indigenizing social work education?*

My goal in this section of the dissertation is to help readers understand the stories of Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work students and their (mostly) non-Indigenous instructors, and how their stories help to answer these three specific questions. Examining these questions and making sense of the stories of participants was challenging for me as it brought home my own experience going through the Bachelor of Social Work programs years ago in Newfoundland. As a survivor of a Residential School, I have always operated with hope and possibilities. After my violent experiences with Residential School, colonial classroom should be the last place to be. Yet I have somehow held hope that tomorrow will be better than today or previous days. This explains how I have continued my education in formal school to this level of pursuing my doctoral degree in social work. Based on this seemingly unwavering faith in tomorrow being

better than today or previous days that I set out in my doctoral dissertation to investigate how the present Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work students of Atlantic Canada Universities understand and experience Indigenization in the University education. Yet listening to participants' stories about their experiences in the Bachelor of Social Work programs in Atlantic Social Work schools, I am surprised how much remain the same despite the long-talk and all the fanfares about Indigenizing social work education.

Although participants (Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work students and mostly non-Indigenous instructors) understand and recognize Indigenization *as a process* and may require time to reach the desirable levels, the Indigenous students and some of their instructors expressed concerns over what they described as slow efforts to detoxify the harmful racist and colonial learning environment for Indigenous learners within social work education. The Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work students describe most of the course contents and pedagogical practices in Atlantic Social Work schools as heavily invested in Whiteness with little to no room for maneuvering. The parameters of defining competent and professional suitability within social work education has by far privileged Whiteness. Meanwhile, Indigenous knowledges, languages, cultures, and worldviews continue to receive little to no attention despite the open claim that Atlantic Universities are embracing Indigenization. In fact, the efforts seen so far towards Indigenization have been nothing more than symbolism and attempt to eroticize Indigenous knowledge; what George described as "*pow vows* and sweat lodges." Smith (1999), writing in general about colonial education, notes that knowledge production has become a monopolized industry that excludes the ordinary people (p.2). She further asserts that for centuries, the privileged few, which in the case of social work education would be White men and women, have formed a circle of professionals that have been writing and talking among themselves about

issues deemed significance to them. These individuals, in the views of Joshua Gregory, have high-jacked the social work profession that any attempt to examine the grips of Whiteness over the profession will be an undertaking that "threatens the integrity of social work in a different way than it does any other profession or discipline" (2021, p.17). What remains concerning, which was repeated in participants' stories, is the feeling that there is nothing wrong with the present arrangement in social work education. It is like Indigenous learners are expected to accept the status quo—social work is White. After all, what is the point of trying to dig up evidence of Whiteness in social work education if no one is making the accusation (Gregory, 2021)? Students find themselves stuck in what they see as a non-Indigenized and despiritualized social work learning environment. This environment is experienced directly in the classroom where it gives rise to student feelings of being violated and being subjected to racism. Students have to cope with a learning environment where subtle racism and White privilege prevail. Course offerings only vaguely speak to their histories, culture, knowledge, and lived experiences. And, at the same time, many of the faculty members are frustrated for several interrelated reasons.

With social work education fixated on maintaining Whiteness, Indigenization is deployed superficially to achieve the exact opposite: to maintain whiteness in the profession of social work while pretending to do something seriously about indigenization. Those not content with the present arrangement and seeking more to be done about Indigenization are deemed to be bringing disharmony to an obvious harmonious structure. It also provides sense of comfort and complacency for the dominant discourse to continue the recolonization agenda within social work education. In such environment, the culture and traditional ways of Indigenous social work students are treated, to use the words of George, as "primitive," unprogressive, and not "clinical

social work" while Whiteness is made to represent what real social work profession is all about. Battiste (1987; 2000) describes such process of education as "cognitive imperialism", that which seeks to whitewash the Indigenous minds and souls as well as to create doubts about the validity of Indigenous culture and values and its contribution to human progress and development. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) writing about coloniality of research noted that "imperialism provided a means through which concepts of what counts as human could be applied systematically as forms of classification" (p.25). In such violent racist and colonial environment, Indigenous people are not deemed fully human nor human at all. In fact, Indigenous knowledge, culture, values, and worldview are equally dismissed as something viable and relevant for social work education. Most Indigenous students and their instructors argued that the current Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) curricula did not adequately address issues of Indigenization. While the situation may be different in other parts of Canada, the social work schools in Atlantic Canada have a lot do about Indigenization. For Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work students, such violent education, when internalized, can strip off one's cultural and Indigenous identity, spiritual worldviews, and wellbeing and leave the learner empty and fragmented.

Therefore, the conceptualization of Indigenization, as participants articulate in their stories, must begin with realization that social work education accede a false status to Indigenous learners through the authority of Whiteness as Indigenous knowledges are deprivileged, negated, and devalued in social work education. Further, Indigenization must include the examination of Whiteness and its colonial histories; in particular, its ability to cause harm and injuries to the Indigenous learners. In addition, Indigenization implies the Bachelor of Social Work classroom must always be a decolonizing space, where curricula and pedagogical practices offer counter hegemonic knowledge against the Europeanization of learners' minds. bell hooks (2015)

conceptualizes decolonization as breaking with ways Indigenous people's reality is defined and shaped by Whiteness and re-asserting Indigenous learners' collective sense of identity and histories in the face of ongoing dominating institutionalized relations of power.

Related to the project of Indigenization, some of the participants were of the view that Indigenization must include receiving social work education in Indigenous languages instead of the colonial language of English. These participants held the view that the social work profession is partly responsible for the forceful removal of Indigenous children from their homes into residential schools, where Indigenous children were forced to abandon their Indigenous languages in favour of the English language. Consequently, some of the present-day Indigenous Bachelor of Social Work students, who are children of the survivors of residential schools, desire a social work education where the course content and general instruction is in an Indigenous language.

Language in all cases, is indispensable to the psychological, intellectual, and emotional equilibrium among members of a community (Glissant, 1989; Bartolomé & Macedo, 1998). According to the *Essential Guidebook of Toronto District School Board* (2001), language is the most powerful tool learners need to develop ideas, shape experiences, and to make sense of the world. A strong advocate of Indigenous languages in Canada, Kirkness (1997) has asked: *what do Indigenous people lose when they lose their languages*? The short answer is they lose their culture, values, worldviews and identity. An Indigenous Elder, Fisherman (1972) agreed and further asserted that culture is rooted in – and expressed through – language. Take away a people's language and you have succeeded in taking away their ways of greeting, praising, cursing, laughing, and crying. Without language, individuals are without stories, legends, proverbs, wisdoms, prayers, and songs. In fact, without language, individuals have lost those

things that make them human. Conversely, learning social work education through one's Indigenous language could be away of empowering learners as they dis(re)cover their physical, emotional and spiritual self.

Finally, Indigenizing social work education also implies restructuring social work education to make room for Indigenous cultures, values, traditions, and worldviews. Addressing African universities, several Indigenous African scholars have called for educational policies that are in tune with the needs of ordinary Africans (Copans, 1990; 1993; Zeleza & Olukoshi, 2004). Mamdani (1993) refers to such educational initiatives as an exercise in beginning to conceptiualze how to "root African Universities in African soil" (p.19); and Mafeje (1988) calls it moving away from "received theory or contrived universalism to an intimate knowledge of the dynamics of African cultures in contemporary setting" (p.8). The voices of Indigenous BSW students and their mostly non-Indigenous faculty members at Atlantic Canada Universities echo the expressed sentiments of Indigenous African scholars. They too argue that Indigenizing social work education will require an insightful scrutiny of the current curricular and pedagogical practices in particular their origins, forms, contents, assumptions and most importantly their practicability to Indigenous needs, values, and worldview, then making a decision whether to accept, reject or modify them to suit Indigenous learners. Indigenization envisions a system of social work education in which Indigenous traditions, values, worldview, and philosophies are at par with mainstream social work curricula. Such education focuses on holistic development of learners. It seeks to validate the experiences, intuitions, spirituality, and the physical and emotional wellbeing of all learners.

The challenges of Indigenization

In Indigenizing social work education, there are specific challenges of staffing, administration, curriculum, and resources. How these challenges are addressed are equally part of Indigenization. According to Spivak (1990), as "one begins to take a whack at shaking the structure up, one sees how much more consolidated the opposition is" (p.6). Gayatri Spivak's comments encapsulate the expression of frustration and disappointments as participants shared stories about the challenges of Indigenizing social work education. Indigenization recognizes the sacredness of activities. It acknowledges the communication that exists with the living, the dead and even the unborn. It accepts the limitations of human sense to comprehend everything. Such belief is embedded on the notion that there exist mysterious forces beyond human capacity and a sense, which have direct control over the living.

The challenge is how one could place such Indigenous knowledges into a Eurocentric social work education system, without necessarily slipping into modes and norms of colonial education. As participants noted in their stories, some of the social work professors teach through the lens of Whiteness and even the best intended efforts to incorporate Indigenous contents into the social work curricula have resulted in occasional violence against Indigenous BSW students. In fact, some of the social work professors have unreasonable expectations that Indigenous students should be course-content experts on Indigenization. This finding is consistent with other stories among Indigenous students in post-secondary institutions. In July-August 2018, *Indspire*, a nationally registered Canadian charity explicitly devoted to improving educational access among Indigenous youth, conducted a study to examine the post-secondary experiences of students of First Nation, Inuit and Metis background following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report. The study findings suggest that many Indigenous

students feel marginalized and unwelcomed in many post-secondary institutions across Canada (Indspire, 2018). Indigenous students in the study also talked about their violent experiences especially having to endure the pains and frustrations of having their Indigenous culture, knowledge, and worldview being misrepresented in course content by non-Indigenous faculty members. In some cases, Indigenous students are given the responsibility of being the "Indigenous point of view" in the course content as their professors expected them to be experts to teach other students about Indigenous knowledges (Indspire, 2018, p.2). Indigenous students suggested in the study that more efforts are still needed to make academic programming conductive for Indigenous students.

One of the reason why Indigenization of social work education remains a challenging task is because social work education has limited representation of self-identified Indigenous faculty members. According to Dei (2000), there are broader implications in having education system that accommodates Indigenous knowledges. Who teaches such knowledge is equally important. The absences of Indigenous social work educators in the Atlantic Social Work schools makes the task of Indigenizing very difficult. Equally important, most non-Indigenous faculty members do not have expert knowledge on Indigenous knowledge and therefore struggle to deliver Indigenous content in their courses. This situation may help explain why faculty over rely on Indigenous students to fill their knowledge gap. These instructors call on Indigenous students to speak on every conceivable Indigenous issue and/or have high expectations of their written work. Such expectations lead to tension and feelings of indignation among Indigenous students as they are not taught about the many Indigenous issues and, like other students in the class, often do not know anything about them. This is consistent with other studies done about postsecondary education in Canada. Studies conducted by Henry et al. (2017), Henry and Tator

(2012) and Henry (2012) suggest that the composition of faculty and leadership in most postsecondary institutions in Canada is overwhelmingly White. This puts Indigenous students at the risk of getting mentors and support needed to succeed in their professional and academic career.

Although some of the non-Indigenous faculty members have asked for mentorship and helpers to educate themselves so that they may improve their understanding of Indigeneity and critical pedagogies more suited to Indigenous students. Yet they found that such support was too often not forthcoming or was inadequate or piecemeal. The question remains whose responsibility is it to provide such mentorship for non-Indigenous faculty to teach Indigenization. In examining the role of Elders in child and youth education, Cooke-Dallin, Rosborough, and Underwood (2000) argue that many of the educational needs of Indigenous learners cannot be met through educational programs that take place far away from the home areas of learners, and the necessary prerequisite to accomplishing this objective is proximity to those who hold, convey, pass down and embody culturally-specific Indigenous forms of knowledge such as Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Cooke-Dallin, Rosborough and Underwood (2000) further note that educational programming that attempts to Indigenize but fail to include Elders and Knowledge Keepers were unsuccessful in their approaches. Following Cooke-Dallin, Rosborough and Underwood's (2000) observation, one would have thought that Elders and Knowledge Keepers will be used to fill the gaps in the Indigenization agenda of Atlantic Canada universities. Unfortunately, that is not the case. In fact, only Memorial University social work program instituted a *pilot* Indigenous Elders project to invite Elders from the various Indigenous communities specific to the province of NL to support Indigenization efforts at the University.

Even in that case, the project was experimented for two years and despite a recommendation that it should be made permanent, no meaningful efforts have been made to make it permanent.

The question of how Elders and Knowledge Keepers should be engaged in Indigenization agenda of Atlantic Canadian Universities is very vital. In the case of the *Visiting Elders Pilot* project, the Elders and/or Knowledge Keepers were paid a honorarium of $500 per presention, to a maximum of 3 days. Given that the Visiting Elders Pilot project wanted as many Elders as possible to participate in the project, it means each Elder received a maximum of $1000 to $1500 over the course of the two-year project. This money pales in comparison to the salaries of even entry-level tenure-track academics who invited the Elders and Knowledge Keepers to be guest speakers. The central questions are what is the academic value or worth of Elders and Knowledge Keepers to social work education? If Elders and Knowledge Keepers are good enough to be guest speakers, should they not be good enough to be hired permanently as lecturers and professors? After all, the university is about recruiting people with specialized knowledge to teach courses at the university. If Elders and Knowledge Keepers are experts in Indigenization, then should they not be hired to teach such knowledge? Unfortunately, the University is quick to remind us about the importance of hiring people with the right credentials (PhD degrees or at least MSW degrees) to be professors. The academic reality is that Indigenizing social work education requires doing something drastically different. From recruiting academic staffs to who is allowed to teach Indigenous content in social work courses need fundamental changes. The social work programs in Atlantic Canada universities cannot continue business as usual and expect different outcomes. The question is whether the social work schools are willing to do something drastic; something outside the usual practice of

university hiring. Without such a move, Indigenization will be another representing all talk but little tangible action.

Possibilities for Indigenizing Social Work Education

The power and efficacy of Indigenizing social work education is anchored in Indigenous students' aspirations, concerns and needs. The Indigenous BSW students argue that Indigenous knowledge, cultures, values, and worldviews that they identify with, and they are based on the philosophical understanding that they are engaging social work education on their own terms. Writing in African context, Richard Sklar (1993) notes that those who seek to interpret Africa must have a sympathetic understanding of African thoughts, values, worldviews and knowledge system as well as acknowledge that Africa's history cannot be unproblematically periodized. In fact, Africa's history encapsulates the totality of lived African experiences. I believe Richard Sklar's (1993) call in equally applicable to the Indigenization of Atlantic Canada's universities.

Educational practices involving Indigenization need to create relevant Indigenous knowledge, culture, values and worldview outside Euro-American ideology and hegemonic epistemological dominance. This requires developing a particular prism, one that frames issues and questions within Indigenous cultural norms and worldviews and should often be guided by the central question: Is this in the best interests of Indigenous peoples? This must begin by identifying, generating, and articulating a pedagogic approaches that are grounded on the lived experiences of Indigenous learners. Without doubt, there are genuine concerns about Indigenizing social work education; some of which have been outlined in the dissertation. However, beyond these challenges, there are possibilities and success stories that not many hear about them. For instance, some Social Work schools in Canada have successfully created an

Indigenous BSW programs. One can cite First Nations University of Canada, University of Regina, Wilfrid Laurier, and University of Manitoba. These Universities have demonstrated that Indigenizing social work education is not only possible but also doable. The success stories of these schools can guide Social Work schools in Atlantic Canada.

Relatedly, and as already mentioned, the Memorial University' School of Social Work was able to pilot Indigenous Elders' program in which many Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers were invited to support social work students, faculty members, and staffs about ways to Indigenize social work education. Similarly, the same Memorial University social work school has partnered with Nunavut Arctic College to start a BSW program taught with Indigenous values, beliefs, and worldviews. In fact, I am one of the instructors in this program. This clearly is an indication that there are best practices to draw from if Atlantic Universities are committed to Indigenizing social work education. There are broader implications for Indigenizing social work education in Atlantic Canada universities' contexts.

An examination of ways teaching and learning are understood and pursued within Indigenous contexts imply some educational changes are needed in social work programs at the Atlantic Canada Universities. The participants call for a full-scale re-thinking of how faculty are teaching and delivering the existing social work curriculum and changing the colonial mentality which ignores the Indigenous connection to *the land*. Some of my participants challenge the nature of existing teaching practices, arguing that social work classrooms fail to honour Indigenous concepts of the collectivity. Indigenous students feel that the longing they had for a sense of togetherness and having a common cause and purpose is actively being disregarded and they feel disrespect.

Also, Indigenous students feel more at home with collective decision-making. Thus, the gap or hierarchy they feel between the students and the faculty is experienced as culturally alien and also gives rise to feelings of discomfort. In traditional practice, everyone would gather together, make a collective decision, and then move forward in a good way. My participants would prefer to follow Indigenous practices of teaching which have of a more collective orientation, exclude Western individualism and hierarchical ways of learning and sharing knowledge. Some of my Indigenous student participants also express concern about being identified by their professors as Indigenous. As they know this leads to being called upon by the professor to help educate their non-Indigenous classmates—and their professors—about Indigeneity. Hence, social work professors will have to desist from such expectations that put Indigenous students *on the spot.*

By skimming over Indigenous history, culture, knowledge and experience, many social work professors are not teaching from an Indigenous perspective where such themes would be central. Professors therefore must find ways to bring the past, present and future of coloniality into the mainstream of their curricula and pedagogy. Finding ways to reflect Indigenous experience more accurately and to incorporate traditional and/or spiritual practices into the social work curriculum are necessary. As the process of Indigenization accelerates, it will become even more essential that non-Indigenous faculty find ways of adopting Indigenous practices that are not recklessly inconsiderate and self-serving. White appropriation of Indigenous ways will be unavoidable, however it must occur in the positive, good-faith sense, where appropriation occurs not as a practice of *stealing* but as a practice of *honouring*—where appropriation occurs reflectively and with proper acknowledgement and due respect.

A growing international literature is amplifying pressure on universities worldwide to increase pressure to decolonize and to Indigenize our universities. My review of this diverse literature revealed a growing call for change and acceptance within the University of other (Indigenous) forms of knowledge. The findings from my study adds voice to those calling for the Indigenization of the academy.

Recommendations: What needs to be done?

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) curriculum in Atlantic Canada should be redeveloped in accordance with the four themes that emerged from the voices of the participants in this study. Further to this, students, professors, social work and university department heads in Atlantic Canadian universities must immediately move to decolonize and further Indigenize the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) curricula. University boards of governors or regents and government ministers responsible for postsecondary education, as well, Universities Canada must all be pressured to act accordingly. BSW programs must be decolonized and more serious attempts to Indigenize Atlantic Canadian universities, and all Canadian university schools of social work must occur. It would go a long way if the provincial Social Work organizations such as the Newfoundland and Labrador College of Social Workers could develop and offer training for faculty and staff in preparation for furthering the processes of decolonization and Indigenization of the BSW curriculum.

The results of my study will stimulate discussion and help to raise voices in support of furthering the project of Indigenization in theory, practice, *and* praxis based contexts. Whatever traction is made towards decolonizing and Indigenizing social work curricula and pedagogy within Canadian social work programs and universities overall, Canadian society itself will be

enriched in the process of attempting to achieve Indigenization, having immeasurable benefit for all Canadians. this undoubtedly will be a benefit for all our relations.

Limitations of the study

As I delimited the study to twenty participants across three schools of social work in Atlantic Canada and as participant selection was primarily purposive, I make no claims to the generalizability and representatively of my data for the Atlantic provinces and especially for other provinces. However, I would assert that the particular range of opinions and attitudes that were captured in my selection of participants would be expressed among other faculty members and Indigenous students throughout Atlantic Canada. Furthermore, from what I can tell from listening to the stories of participants and from what I know of the state of Indigenization in western provinces, my regional focus appears to have uncovered the inconvenient fact that Atlantic Canada has some serious catching up to do.

Although I believe that I made the right choice to use a qualitative research methodology in my study, my research may have been enriched if I had used a more mixed-method design and had employed use of probability sampling. Thus, if surveys, questionnaires, statistical analysis and use of probability sampling methods with a larger sample size had been used in addition to interviews, literature review and participant observation methods, this would have strengthened the data and allowed me to make more inferences as to the social differences among participants (such as gender), as well, to capture more and broader evidence in support of my claims.

Future research

An area of research emerging from this study has to do with the repeated question posed by my research participants about the lack of Indigenous instructors within Canadian universities. Hence, there is an obvious need for research, in particular action research, on how

social work faculty and administrators within Atlantic Canadian universities can recruit Indigenous people into graduate programs.

A second area of research emerging from this study is the university environment in terms of recruitment of prospective Indigenous students and their retention. This research would involve examining how Indigenous students (and the faculty who teach them) can make postsecondary education a more welcoming environment.

A third area of research are the consequences of historic trauma and intergenerational grief for Indigenous students in Canada. How does the physical, economic, cultural, social psychological and spiritual damage to Indigenous social work students impact them and their success in postsecondary education?

A fourth area of research is to design a means for evaluating and/or measuring the effectiveness of a teaching/learning style that incorporates Indigeneity into Bachelor of Social Work curricula.

A fifth area of research is to get a better understanding of the perspectives of non-Indigenous faculty members. In spite of all their good will, not all faculty members I spoke to seemed fully educated about Indigenous people and Indigenization. One faculty member stated that he understood the BSW curriculum as being Indigenized. Based this I suspect that faculty attitudes and lack of education of Indigenous issues are a significant barrier to further Indigenization.

Finally, research into the inaction on Indigenous affairs in Atlantic Canadian universities is long overdue. This research would require looking at the success of the Mi'kmac/Malisset Bachelor of Social Work program and the ineffective nature of recent attempts to implement and adopt the notion of Indigenization in practice at academic institutions across Canada.

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Appendix A: Plain Language Informed Consent Documentation

May 7, 2018

1 Marshall Drive
Carbonear, NL
A1Y 1A3
fandersen@mun.ca

INFORMED CONSENT FORM – INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Title: "Indigenizing Social Work Education: Pedagogical Implications for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Degree Programs in Atlantic Canadian Universities."

Principal Researcher: Fred Andersen (Phone: 1-709-596-7340; Email: fandersen@mun.ca)

You are invited to take part in a research project entitled: ***Indigenizing Social Work Education: Pedagogical Implications for Bachelor of Social Work Programs in Atlantic Canada.*** This form is a part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. It also describes your right to withdraw from the study. In order to decide whether you wish to participate in this research study, you should understand enough about its risks and benefits to be able to make an informed decision. This is the informed consent process. Take time to read this carefully and to understand the information given to you. Please contact the researcher, Mr. Fred Andersen either by email at fandersen@mun.ca or by phone at 1-709-596-7340, if you have any questions about the study or would like more information before you consent.

It is entirely up to you to decide whether to take part in this research. If you choose to take part in this research or if you decide to withdraw from the research once it has started, there will be no negative consequences for you, now or in the future.

Introduction:

I am a PhD candidate at the School of Social Work at Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Principal Investigator for this study. This is a Human Research Ethics Board Application for General Research initiative that critically examines the ways that Indigenous students and their instructors in Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs at universities in Atlantic Canada understand the Indigenization of social work education, and how they want Indigenization to be reflected in social work curricula and teaching strategies in the classrooms.

Purpose of the Study:

The objectives of this study are to: (1) Examine ways in which Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students and Social Work instructors in Atlantic Canada universities understand and speak about Indigenizing social work education; (2) Identify the potential benefits and limitations (if any) in Indigenizing social work education in Atlantic Canada universities; and (3) Examine how the Indigenization of social work education will form and shape instructional strategies and teaching curricula in social work classrooms in Atlantic Canada universities.

This study is in response to the recent findings from the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* (TRC) *of Canada.* In the report, the TRC asked that post-secondary institutions integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into the classroom. Responding to the TRC report, the Association of Atlantic Universities (AAU) in its report entitled "The principles on Indigenous education: Initiatives at Memorial University" acknowledged that Indigenous knowledges have been excluded from the regular business of university education, and therefore, called on its members to adopt strategies to address Indigenizing university education.

Within social work education across the country similar efforts have been initiated to Indigenize social work education. In fact, the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) in its guiding principles for accreditation of social work programming has called on social work schools to incorporate in their curricula and pedagogical practices knowledge that includes Indigenous People's history, knowledge, culture, worldviews, values, and experience.

Although a lot has been said and written about the urgent need to Indigenize the academy, not much has been written about what the Indigenization of education will mean for Aboriginal students in the BSW program as well as social work instructors, and what Indigenized social work curricula and instructional strategies should look like in social work education. Using the social work education at Memorial, Dalhousie and St. Thomas universities in Atlantic Canada, this study will explore how BSW students and social work instructors both understand and work with the idea of Indigenizing social work education.

What you will be asked to do in this study:

This study involves conducting semi-structured interviews with social work instructors and Indigenous social work students in schools of social work at Memorial, Dalhousie and St. Thomas universities. You are being contacted to participate in individual interviews. With your consent, your interview will be digitally recorded. Interviews will be taken to support data analysis and interpretation. Your interview will be transcribed and you will be given a copy of the transcribed interview for your comments before I proceed with data analysis. I will then disseminate the findings.

Length of time:

Interview will generally take approximately 45-60 minutes, and will be conducted on campus at your university.

Withdrawal from the study:

You may end your participation in the interview at any time without any explanation or possible consequences. Should you withdraw from the study, you may request removal of all recorded information about your participation until January 01, 2019, after which you can no longer remove your data from the study.

Furthermore, you have the right to inform me as to what parts of your individual interview should be recorded or/and any sections that should be excluded from the study findings.

Possible benefits:

This study will reflect the insightful knowledge and in-depth understanding of social work instructors as well as their general reflection about what the Indigenization of social work education means to them, the ways they expect Indigenized social work education will look like,

and what they perceive to be potential benefits and limitations in Indigenized social work education. Your insight will also reflect the fact that Indigenizing social work education is important and crucial to the Association of Atlantic Universities' commitment to Indigenizing university education in Canada.

Further, and as noted by Ed Roberts, a leading figure in the disability movements, "when others speak for you, you lose" (Dreidger, 1989, p. 2). The powerful voice from the HIV and AIDS movement in Canada insists that there be "nothing about us, without us." In the spirit of this mantra, this study will incorporate the voices and opinions of Aboriginal students and social work instructors about the Indigenization of social work education. Fifteen Aboriginal social work students and nine social work instructors will lend their knowledge and understanding of what an Indigenized social work education will look like to them. Their voices will reflect how they see benefits and limitations of Indigenizing social work education in the schools of social work in the three identified universities in Atlantic Canada.

Possible risks:

Although this research will not be collecting personal data from participants, the study will focus on participants' knowledge, understanding, and general reflection about Indigenizing social work education. Further, the Principal Investigator will be open-minded and non-judgemental throughout the interview process. However, given that the study is about the university institution, some participants may fear that they would be targeted if they speak freely and openly about their institutions' supports, or the lack thereof, in the Indigenizing of social work education. In view of that, additional efforts will be taken to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of participation. Participants will be given a pseudonym in the research reporting and any particular details that may give out their identity will be removed or modified to avoid any trace back to them. Furthermore, any direct quotations will only be used with the participants' permission, and I will review each quotation to ensure that it does not give away any participants' anonymity and confidentiality. It is possible that participants may experience emotional or psychological discomfort as a result of talking about some issues. As a trained Aboriginal Social Worker whose area of practice includes clinical counselling, and has counselled many Aboriginal People over the years, I will invite you to talk about your feelings if such an event occurs. Finally, you will be made aware of your right to withdraw from the research at any time and have the right to demand that any or all of the information they have shared in the research be struck out of the research by January 01, 2019.

Data access, uses and interpretation will be restricted to me as a Principal Investigator. Field notes, digitally-recorded individual interviews and transcriptions will be kept in a locked file drawer as required for confidentiality. The data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research.

Anonymity and Confidentiality:

Your name and place of work will not be reported. I will give you a pseudonym or a code throughout the study. In addition, you will have the opportunity to ask me not to record any particular interaction or remark that may give away your identity. You will also have the opportunity to ask me to exclude particular interactions or remarks that have already been recorded when reporting the findings of the study.

Recording of Data:

The digitally-recorded interviews will be transcribed and used as part of the data for analysis and interpretation. Copies of interview transcriptions will be given to you for your comments before I proceed to analyze and interpret it.

Storage of Data:

The audio data of the study will be transferred to my research computer and protected with a password. The audio data on the digitally recording machine will be erased. The transcripts of the recorded interviews will be stored and locked in a cabinet at my home office. Data access, uses and interpretation will be restricted to me as a Principal Investigator. Field notes, digitally-recorded interviews and transcriptions will be kept in a locked file drawer as required for confidentiality. The data will be kept for a minimum of five years, as per Memorial University policy on Integrity in Scholarly Research. After that the audio data on my research computer, field notes, and the transcripts will be erased.

Reporting of Results:

The results of the study will be summarized in my dissertation. The findings from the study may later be published in open-access peer reviewed journals, and/or presented in papers at national conferences. Once completed, my dissertation will be publicly available.

Sharing of Results with Participants:

I will give you a copy of your transcribed interview. Once the findings of the study will be submitted as a Ph.D. dissertation, they may also be submitted for publication in peer reviewed journals or/and book chapters, and the completed dissertation will be made publicly available.

Questions:

You are welcome to ask questions at any time during your participation in this research. If you would like more information about this study, please contact: Mr. Fred Andersen either by email (fandersen@mun.ca) or by phone (1-709-596-7340).

The proposal for the research has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy, and the St. Thomas University Research Ethics Board (REB # 2017 – 18). If you have any ethical concerns about the research, such as the way you have been treated or your rights as a participant, you may contact the Chairperson of the ICEHR at icehr@mun.ca or by telephone at 1-709-864-2561, or Dr. Karla O'Regan at 1-506-452-0647.

Consent:

Your signature on this form means that:

- You have read the information about the research.
- You have been able to ask questions about this study.
- You are satisfied with the answers to all of your questions.
- You understand what the study is about and what you will be doing.

- You understand that you are free to withdraw participation in the study without having to give a reason, and that doing so will not affect you now or in the future.
- You understand that if you choose to end participation **during** data collection, any data collected from you up to that point will be retained by the researcher, unless you indicate otherwise.
- You understand that if you choose to withdraw **after** data collection has ended, your data can be removed from the study up to January 01, 2018.

NOTE: Please check the appropriate boxes below

I agree to be audio-recorded [ ] Yes [ ] No
I agree to the use of direct quotations [ ] Yes [ ] No

By signing this form, you are not giving up your legal rights and not releasing the researcher from their professional responsibilities.

By inserting your signature below, you are confirming that you:

[ ] have read what this study is about, and understand the risks and benefits;
[ ] have had adequate time to think about your participation, pose any questions you may have, and received adequate responses from the researcher;
[ ] agree to participate in the research project understanding the risks and contributions of your participation, which is completely voluntary, and may be ended for any reason;
[ ] have been provided with a copy of this Plain Language Informed Consent Document for your records.

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

Researcher's Signature: _____
Date

I have explained this study to the best of my ability. I invited questions and gave answers. I believe that you fully understand what is involved in being in the study, any potential risks of the study, and that he or she has freely chosen to be in the study.

_____ _____
Signature of Principal Investigator Date

Appendix B: Recruitment Flyer

Indigenizing the Bachelor of Social Work Program in Atlantic Canada: Can the BSW be transformed to include Indigenous voices, critiques and epistemic spaces?

Be part of an important research study

- Are you an Aboriginal student currently in the BSW program, or a faculty member teaching in the BSW program in Atlantic Canada?
- Do you identify as an Aboriginal person or as a faculty member in a School of Social Work in Atlantic Canada?

If you answered YES to these questions, you may be eligible to participate in a research study that examines "Indigenizing the BSW program in Atlantic Canada."

The purpose of this research is to explore in detail how Aboriginal students and faculty who teach in the BSW programs at St. Thomas, Dalhousie and Memorial Universities think about the idea of Indigenizing social work education. Participation will help to identify local experiences about different ways of living and seeing the world, as well as thoughts about how social work education can address the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge as a social justice issue; challenge the status quo which insists that Euro-Canadian knowledge is the only true way to understand the world; as well as inform and inspire new approaches to teaching about Indigenous knowledge and encouraging more Aboriginal students to participate in BSW programs.

The proposed study has been reviewed by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research and found to be in compliance with Memorial University's ethics policy.

Please call Fred Andersen at (709) 596-7340 or email: fandersen@mun.ca for more information

Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The guiding questions for the interviews

The guiding questions are as follows:

Introduction question:

(a) How do you identify yourself?

(b) What is your educational background?

(c) How long have you been in social work education?

(d) Which University do you belong to?

Substantive questions

1. What does Indigeneity mean to you?

2. In your own language, what will entail an Indigenized social work education?
    a. Teaching curricula
    b. Student representation
    c. Instructional and pedagogical methodology and practices

3. Given what you have said in questions (1) and (2), do you consider your current social work program to be Indigenized? (Explain your answer)

4. In what ways does the current social work curricula **speak or not speak** to your history, culture, knowledge, and experience

5. Tell me about your experience going through the BSW as an Aboriginal person? — Specifically for students
    a. Tell me about your experience teaching courses in the BSW — Specifically for faculty members

6. Do you consider colonialism, racism and discrimination to exist in Canada?

7. Do you consider the following to influence, shape, and inform the way social work education is organized and structured in your school, and if so how and why?
    a. Colonialism

b. Racism
c. Whiteness

8. If you are given an opportunity to recommend ideas to improve the social work education in your school to address issues of Indigeneity, what will be some of your suggestions?

9. In your view, what are some of the challenges, risks, and costs (if any) of indigenizing the social work program in your school?

10. What do you understand by the concept spirituality?

11. Do you see any connection between spirituality and Indigenizing social work education?

12. Will you recommend spirituality to be included in social work education as part of the decolonizing process?

13. Is there anything you want to add that I did not ask?

14. Do you have any questions for me?

Thank you.

Appendix D: St. Thomas University Ethics Approval

Office of Research Services | St. Thomas UNIVERSITY

Research Ethics Board

September 15th, 2017

RE: **REB # 2017-18**
Title: **Indigenizing Social Work Education: Pedagogical Implications of Social Work (BSW) Degree Program in Atlantic Canada Universities**
PI: Mr. Fred Anderson (Ph.D. cand., Memorial University, SCWK)

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Thank you for responding so thoroughly to the Research Ethics Board's request for clarification and revision of the above-named proposal for research. The Board met to review your submission and concluded that your file is now in compliance with the Tri Council Policy Statement, *Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans* (2014), and the St. Thomas University Research Ethics Board Senate document. The Board is thus pleased to grant **approval** for the above named research for a period of **one year**.

Please note the following regarding all research that has been granted ethical approval by the REB:

1. If there are any substantial changes to the research plan or research protocol the Chair of the REB must be promptly notified (see Article 6.16, TCPS2). This includes the reporting of unanticipated issues (Article 6.15, TCPS2) or requests for amendment.
2. If the project continues after one year, please file an Annual Renewal form with the REB to renew your ethical approval.
3. When the project has been completed please notify the Chair of the REB by completing the Final Report form.

(These and other resources are available on the St. Thomas University REB website.)

Your REB certificate number should also appear on all public documents associated with this research as well as any documents shared with participants. These documents should also contain the contact information for the REB Chair (Dr. Karla O'Regan, reb@stu.ca), should any of your participants have any questions or concerns about their involvement in the study.

Should there be any further ways the REB can assist your research, please don't hesitate to follow up. I can best be reached via email (oregan@stu.ca) as can Danielle Connell, the REB Coordinator, at: reb@stu.ca (or phone: 452-0647).

Best wishes for a successful research process!

Sincerely,

Karla O'Regan, PhD
Chair, Research Ethics Board

cc: Office of Research Services
Dr. Paul Banahene Adjei (Student supervisor, Memorial University)

Appendix E: Ethics Approval From Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch

CAPE BRETON UNIVERSITY
UNAMA'KI COLLEGE

November 1, 2017

Fred Andersen
fandersen@cbu.ca
(902) 596-7340

Dear Mr. Anderson:

I wish to inform you that the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch committee has reviewed and approved ***"Indigenizing Social Work Education; Pedagogical Implications for the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Programs in Atlantic Canadian Universities."***

As your project moves forward with the approval of the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch, I must note that individual communities have their own perspective on research projects and it is your responsibility to consult them to ensure that you meet any further ethical requirements. Governments, universities, granting agencies, and the like also have ethical processes to which you might have to conform.

When your project is completed, the Mi'kmaq Resource Centre at Unama'ki College would be pleased to accept the results in a form that could be made available to students and other researchers (if it is appropriate to disseminate them). Our common goal is to foster a better understanding of the Indigenous knowledges.

If you have any questions concerning the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch review of your project please do not hesitate to contact me and I will forward them to the committee members.

Sincerely,

Stephen J. Augustine,
Associate Vice-President
Indigenous Affairs and Unama'ki College
Cape Breton University

SJA/dmc

Appendix F: Memorial University ICEHR Ethics Approval

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY

Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR)

St. John's, NL Canada A1C 5S7
Tel: 709 864-2561 icehr@mun.ca
www.mun.ca/research/ethics/humans/icehr

ICEHR Number:	**20180180-SW**
Approval Period:	July 12, 2017 – July 31, 2018
Funding Source:	Not Funded
Responsible Faculty:	Dr. Paul Adjei School of Social Work
Title of Project:	*Indigenizing Social Work Education: Pedagogical Implications for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Degree Program in Atlantic Canada Universities*

July 12, 2017

Mr. Frederick Andersen
School of Social Work
Memorial University of Newfoundland

Dear Mr. Andersen:

Thank you for your correspondence of June 26 and July 11, 2017 addressing the issues raised by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) concerning the above-named research project.

ICEHR has re-examined the proposal with the clarification and revisions submitted, and is satisfied that the concerns raised by the Committee have been adequately addressed. In accordance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2)*, the project has been granted *full ethics clearance* to July 31, 2018. ICEHR approval applies to the ethical acceptability of the research, as per Article 6.3 of the *TCPS2*. Researchers are responsible for adherence to any other relevant University policies and/or funded or non-funded agreements that may be associated with the project. Additionally, as your research involves faculty, students, and/or staff of other universities, you are required to obtain all requisite permissions and approvals from each institution prior to commencement of your research.

If you need to make changes during the project, which may raise ethical concerns, please submit an amendment request with a description of these changes for the Committee's consideration. In addition, the *TCPS2* requires that you submit an annual update to ICEHR before July 31, 2018. If you plan to continue the project, you need to request renewal of your ethics clearance, and include a brief summary on the progress of your research. When the project no longer involves contact with human participants, is completed and/or terminated, you are required to provide the annual update with a final brief summary, and your file will be closed.

Annual updates and amendment requests can be submitted from your Researcher Portal account by clicking the *Applications: Post-Review* link on your Portal homepage.

We wish you success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Kelly Blidook, Ph.D.
Vice-Chair, Interdisciplinary Committee on
Ethics in Human Research

KB/lw

cc: Supervisor – Dr. Paul Adjei, School of Social Work

Appendix G: Dalhousie University Ethics Waiver

Catherine Connors Catherine.Connors@dal.ca via dalu.onmicrosoft.com Jun 30, 2017, 3:33 PM

to Paul, me, Research

Dear Fred,

The Dal REB chair has had a chance to review your ethics submission and has asked me to share with you that this project will not require review and approval by the Dalhousie University research ethics board. If you make changes to the project that increases the role of our university in the project (for example, if you use Dal staff or faculty to help you with recruitment of Dal participants), then please be in touch again and we will reconsider in light of such changes. In the meantime, no REB review at Dal is required at this time.

Good luck with your project.

Sincerely,

Catherine

Catherine Connors | **Director Research Ethics** | Dalhousie University | Room 231, 6299 South Street, PO Box 15000, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 4R2 | phone: 902.494.1462