Jaffray, Jodi-Lyn (2025) *A critical analysis of decolonisation of postsecondary education in Canada.* Ed.D thesis.

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A Critical Analysis of Decolonisation of Postsecondary Education in Canada

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

of the Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD)

School of Education

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September 2024

Abstract

In 2015, Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015b) released a report entitled *Calls to Action*. This report provided clear steps for Canada to follow to atone for the cultural genocide committed against Indigenous Peoples through the Indian Act (1876) and in particular the Residential School system. Several of the calls to action focus on the education system. Since the release of this report, indigenisation has become a focus of Canadian postsecondary education strategic plans. My dissertation sought to better understand what is meant by the term indigenisation, which political, economic, and structural forces are impacting indigenisation, and how indigenisation efforts are or are not meaningfully moving decolonisation forward in Canada. As a settler in Canada who spent my formative years living and going to school alongside Indigenous youth and then lived and raised my children in a remote Inuit community, my goal was to be able to illustrate what the ideal future could look like where indigenisation policies were effectively contributing to decolonisation.

Deconstructing the current state required an examination of past policy and discourse to understand the systemic factors competing with indigenisation. I first explored key theoretical constructs: poststructuralism, postmodernism, critical race theory, colonialism, postcolonialism, decolonisation, whiteness, neoliberalism, and social justice. After discussing my methodology and the postsecondary education system in Canada, I examined the Indian Act (1876), the results of Aboriginal Commissions in the 1990s, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (2015a, 2015b) work, and the impetus to embed indigenisation within public and postsecondary education. After describing the current system of postsecondary education in Canada and the political, economic, and structural drivers for indigenisation, I shared the results of my examination of college websites, as I sought to understand how ingrained the indigenisation efforts were.

The latter part of the dissertation focused on the meaning of indigenisation, what it looks like in its current state, and how it could look in an ideal future. Recognising the clash between neoliberalism and social justice movements, and the human need to categorise leading to "otherness," I suggested that decolonising requires a disruption and dismantling of the current postsecondary education system.

This dissertation contributes to the discussion on how to dismantle colonial institutions such as postsecondary education. It explains the need to move beyond token actions, beyond inclusion practices, beyond hiring some Indigenous staff and professors to carry the workload of indigenising the academy. I argue that creating the third space that Bhabha (1994) referred to requires ceding power and rebuilding a new framework of governance. This requires reimagining and reconstructing the future of education for Canada in which binaries no longer exist and change happens at all levels. Then, and only then, can Canadians say that reconciliation has taken place and decolonisation is underway.

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List of Abbreviations

CICan	Colleges and Institutes Canada
CRT	Critical race theory
EDI	Equity, diversity, and inclusion
MMIWG	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
PCC	Private career college
RCAP	Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
TribalCrit	Tribal critical race theory
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People
US	United States

Author's Declaration

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

Printed Name: Jodi-Lyn Jaffray

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released a report entitled *Calls to Action*, which addressed the need for Canada to move towards truth and reconciliation for Indigenous peoples. This report emphasises the role that all levels of the Canadian education systems have in moving reconciliation forward. Canadian universities and colleges have responded to this call through various initiatives aimed at indigenisation of postsecondary education institutions. As an administrator in a Canadian postsecondary educational setting, over the past 8 years in particular I have observed and experienced, with some scepticism, how this is being implemented. Years prior to the 2015 Truth and Reconciliation Committee's release of the 94 Calls to Action, I was actively engaging Indigenous learners in postsecondary education. As an educator, I was torn between the colonial structure, curriculum, and resources I was working with and the desire of Indigenous students to embrace learning that met them where they were and fit their needs and lifestyle. Owing to my experience of living and working within the Inuit community for almost 15 years, for this dissertation, I aimed to adopt a critical stance on how the Canadian postsecondary education sector is advancing indigenisation. This dissertation was driven by my desire to better understand what is meant by indigenisation in Canadian colleges, to elucidate the desired outcome of current indigenisation efforts, and to explore how indigenisation could contribute to decolonisation. My goal was to contribute to the ongoing debate on indigenisation, and truth and reconciliation efforts in Canada, through the lens of the postsecondary education sector. As such, my primary research question was as follows: How might Canadian colleges meaningfully indigenise in order to advance decolonisation efforts in Canada? I also examined five subquestions:

1. How is indigenisation defined in the postsecondary education sector?
2. What political, economic, and structural forces are driving indigenisation initiatives in the postsecondary education sector?
3. Are current indigenisation initiatives in Canadian colleges meaningfully advancing decolonisation?
4. What changes could enhance the effectiveness of indigenisation efforts in contributing to decolonisation?
5. What does an ideal future of postsecondary education look like in terms of indigenisation?

By answering these questions through a poststructural analysis of policy and drawing on critical race theory, specifically Brayboy's (2005) tribal critical race theory (TribalCrit), I argue systemic racism negatively impacts indigenisation efforts in postsecondary education. Through this research, I first intend to show indigenisation as a concept or policy for the postsecondary education sector is not universally defined. This lack of clear definition, as I will demonstrate, results in unfocused implementation efforts. I then illustrate that the move toward indigenisation of the postsecondary education sector, while being implemented by individuals who may be well-intentioned, is complicated by systemic drivers that reinforce existing power structures. The end result, I argue, is that although indigenisation is starting a shift in Canadians' understanding of reconciliation, it is hampered by a colonial intent on preserving the status quo. Finally, I examine the possibilities of what the future of postsecondary education in Canada could be were indigenisation approached with the perspective of building Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples.

1.1 Focus and Framing

The Canadian postsecondary education sector is currently undergoing what many hope will be an important and overdue transformation. This transformation is driven by a national call for truth and reconciliation in the form of indigenisation. As an academic administrator and an educator, I experience multiple and often competing demands to meet institutional policy objectives and pedagogical challenges. As an academic employee in two different postsecondary institutions, one in British Columbia in Western Canada and one in Ontario in Eastern Canada, one a university and one a college, I have important insight into different provincial and institutional approaches to the development and implementation of indigenisation initiatives. This insight has piqued my interest in exploring how the academic community has reached this point and the direction it is heading by analysing the historical context, including background policies and directives, examining the voices at the policy tables, the language used, and, of course, the implementation of the policies. Historically, I purport the policies have been written by non-Indigenous government and academic policy teams with an overriding paternalistic tone. More recently, the Canadian federal government has sought input from Indigenous Peoples through the creation of commissions empowered to gather data from a variety of sources, including Indigenous people and communities, and to make recommendations to the federal government as an outcome. While these commissions have moved Canada

forward in terms of hearing Indigenous Peoples' voices, the implementation of the recommendations falls to leaders of colonial structures such as colleges and universities, who are primarily non-Indigenous. The depth of this implementation is then complicated by the lack of understanding of what it means to indigenise, the lack of Indigenous employees in the college and university sector in Canada, and perhaps the competing goal to maintain control of a system that was built by and serves the needs and desires of non-Indigenous, White settlers in a colonial nation. In addition to analysing the policies and their practical implementation, a broader conceptual question that needs to be answered is what is meant by *indigenisation*? Is there a common understanding of what indigenisation in the postsecondary educational environment means? As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, there is no common definition.

As previously noted, Brayboy (2005) proposed TribalCrit as a form of critical race theory specific to Indigenous people. Although this theory was developed in the context of the United States (US), it can be applied to Canada as well. Brayboy posited, "Colonialism is endemic to society … [and] policies towards Indigenous peoples are rooted in imperialism, White supremacy, and a desire for material gain" (p. 429). At the same time, I want to note it is a basic human desire to categorise and assign labels to things, including people, as a way of understanding the world. Known as "social categorization" (Liberman et al., 2017, para. 6), this tendency can be helpful, but it can also lead to prejudice and discrimination. The world is shaped by polarities that are human-made. Unfortunately, "these binary oppositions … elevate in status one pole of the opposition … while downgrading the other pole" (Fox, 2014, p. 2). Poststructuralism and postmodernism provide lenses with which to analyse these polarities and the impact they have on our world. From a poststructural approach, it was important for me in this dissertation to critically question the relationship between power, language, and knowledge (Fox, 2014) and how this has shaped the move towards indigenisation in postsecondary education. From a postmodern approach, I struggled with the idea of establishing a "single truth" (Fox, 2014, p. 5), recognising that indigenisation and decolonisation are complex concepts that are not easy to clearly define, articulate, or defend. Examining the larger context and interplay culturally, politically, and socially was important to determine the "wider social and power relations" (Fox, 2014, p. 5) that could be impacting indigenisation in postsecondary education.

It is important to state upfront my positionality in regard to this research. I am a White settler in postcolonial terms. I am a second-generation Canadian with my mother having

immigrated to Canada in her teens from Scotland. However, I have also lived much of my life in Canada's North and have been accepted into an extended Inuit community in the South Baffin Island area. The experience and knowledge I gained while growing up in a remote northern community and again while raising my young family inside the Inuit culture has had a significant impact on how I view indigenisation initiatives. I bring an insider-outsider awareness and voice to my research that I feel is relatively unique. Being closely aligned and most knowledgeable of Inuit culture, I feel a need to raise concerns that initiatives undertaken in the name of indigenisation in postsecondary education are often dominated by the more populous First Nations groups as opposed to the Métis or Inuit traditions and ways of knowing and being. While I embrace the ideas being espoused in the name of indigenisation, I also perceive a lot of "tokenism," or what Carolyn Roberts (n.d.) called "performative allyship" (para. 8) in her blog. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) described three types of indigenization with the earliest form being Indigenous inclusion. They noted that "in practice, [Canadian postsecondary education institutions] remained "stalled" (Stein, 2020, p. 6) at this stage. While this is not always at the exclusion of "other, more transformative, approaches to change" (Stein, 2020, p. 6), it is problematic. "Indigenous inclusion offers the guise of change while largely reaffirming the universal value of Western epidemiologies, ontologies and political economies" (Stein, 2020, p. 6).

Furthermore, I also question the depth of change happening and the drivers for the change. Stein (2022) noted that institutional initiatives aimed to address colonial history and ongoing issues often focus on recognizing Indigenous presence, rights and knowledge. Yet, rather than being disruptive, these benevolent efforts can be viewed as justifying the institution's continued presence on Indigenous lands. She stated further that "such efforts do little to deepen settler responsibilities, enact repair for harms done, or support Indigenous resurgence (Stein, 2022, p. 17).

After more fully situating myself in this research in Chapter 2, in Chapter 3 I present a discussion of several theoretical constructs: poststructuralism, postmodernism, critical race theory, Whiteness, neoliberalism, and social justice theory, before defining key concepts of colonialism, postcolonialism, and indigenisation. Having a shared understanding of these theories and concepts is important to the arguments I present later in Chapters 8, 9, and 10.

In Chapter 4, I explain my methodology, document analysis, but also the need to use a decolonising research framework (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021) to ensure I

consciously avoided perpetuating harm by reinforcing colonial perspectives. In this dissertation, I have questioned if indigenisation is simply another new categorisation reinforcing an existing polarity between the settlers and the Indigenous People. By examining the indigenisation movement through a lens of TribalCrit (Brayboy, 2005), I argue it is possible to bring clarity to the challenges of the shift.

Following the methodology section, I discuss the history and policies that have brought Canada to this place and, specifically, policies and calls to action that have driven indigenisation in the postsecondary educational environment. Using a document analysis approach, I reviewed the Indian Act (1876), the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP, 1996a) report, the *Calls to Action* report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015), and the *Reclaiming Power and Place* report from the National Inquiry Into *Missing and Murdered* Indigenous Women and Girls (2019) to understand where Canada has come from as a country, what has shifted in recent years, and which policies are driving the idea of indigenisation in the postsecondary education sector.

Understanding the context of higher education in Canada and how it is funded and managed at the governmental level is important to my arguments on how indigenisation policy is being implemented in colleges and universities. Examining this structure within the current environment of neoliberalism and globalisation, I delve into the impact of policies such as widening access, internationalisation, and marketisation of postsecondary education to further identify barriers and challenge whose interests are being served by indigenisation initiatives. Canada as a county was birthed by colonialism. It has a history of cultural genocide that has only recently been given space in the historical narrative. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (2015) 94 Calls to Action sparked the drive for indigenisation in education at all levels; however, I am compelled to explore what Moana Jackson (as cited in Swadener & Mutua, 2008) stated when she said, "Colonial leopards rarely change their spots. They just stalk their prey in different ways" (p. 31). As such, I explore whether indigenisation policies could in practice be another form of colonialism, the result of neoliberal interests in education rather than a true reparation of Canada's relationship with Indigenous people.

In Chapter 7, I focus specifically on indigenisation policy in the Canadian postsecondary sector. After discussing fully the terms of reconciliation, decolonisation, and

indigenisation, I discuss a website analysis that I conducted to evaluate the implementation of indigenisation policies in colleges in Alberta and Ontario. To do this, I examined 33 college websites for evidence of commitment and cooperation to implement indigenisation. As such, I adapted the *Reconciliation Action Plan Toolkit* published by Indigenous Works through the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (2021). Using the seven stages noted in this toolkit, which indicate how embedded indigenization is within an organisation, I looked for specific indicators of each stage on college websites in 2022.

Based on these analyses and a review of current literature, I argue indigenisation in the postsecondary education sector in Canada may not be the transformative change that it is being heralded as. Recognising that colleges and universities are colonial institutions where future lawmakers and political leaders are made, I argue indigenisation may be, in fact, a politically acceptable way of appeasing Indigenous peoples while continuing to maintain settler control over the nation. This discussion includes defining what indigenising means in the context of this dissertation, defining colonialism, postcolonialism and decolonisation, discussing Whiteness and what Robin DiAngelo (2011; 2017) referred to as White fragility, and introducing neoliberalism and social justice frameworks. Later in the discussion, I demonstrate the impact of neoliberalism on efforts toward indigenisation in colleges and universities, examining whether commitments to advance social justice are being realised. Further, I consider if institutional efforts to indigenise are, in fact, reinforcing a dichotomy in which there may have been intention to unify at the start.

Most importantly, at the end of this dissertation, I will offer three arguments. The first is that indigenisation is a flawed construct. Secondly, that it is an attempt by colonial power to apply a broad brush stroke across a colonial system to make it appear more appealing to Indigenous peoples. And thirdly, moving beyond the token gestures currently in place is critical if indigenisation is to advance reconciliation and true[1] decolonisation in Canada. I also present opportunities for future research that are needed to explore how academics and educators might create a postcolonial "third space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 55) to help

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[1] Throughout this dissertation, there are references to true reconciliation or true decolonisation. I use this term as it is prevalent in the truth and reconciliation discourse in Canada.

evolve the postsecondary education sector. My research shows, while the academic community is not there yet, there is room for an alternative view of what indigenisation could be if power and control could be relinquished by the colonial government and White settlers, a utopian view perhaps of what it may be like if polarities were reduced and a new third space created in postsecondary education and the country as a whole—a decolonised state in which people's ways of thinking and behaving have been shifted to "produce a more just and equitable relation between the different peoples of the world" (Young, 2020, p. 18).

Before I move to the next chapter, I will explain the use of cultural terms used in this document: Indian, Metis, Inuit, First Nations, Aboriginal, and Indigenous. These terms have all been used at various points in the report reflective of the context being discussed. Indigenous people were first named and referred to by colonisers as Indians. This term fell out of use over time and there was a shift to the use of Aboriginal to describe this population. At that time, more attention was being given to the distinction between First Nations (treaty-people), Métis, and Inuit. In the last 10 years, another shift has occurred and these groups have been lumped together under the term Indigenous. It is important to note that these are not self-naming conventions. These are terms government and non-Indigenous people have introduced to identify, or maintain I would propose, a distinction between White settlers and the original peoples who populated North America. For the purposes of this dissertation, I have chosen to use Indigenous, but I also make specific reference to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit when a cultural distinction needs to be highlighted. The terms Indian and Aboriginal are used only as part of the documents being discussed.

To summarise, the remainder of this dissertation is broken down as follows: In Chapter 2, I describe the lens through which I conducted my research, as someone who has lived experience in the Canadian arctic and has been witness to the fight for the Indigenous right to self-govern. In Chapter 3, I present the theoretical constructs I have drawn on in this research: poststructuralism, postmodernism, critical race theory, TribalCrit, Whiteness and White supremacy in Canada, along with paternalism, definitions and discussion of colonialism, postcolonialism and decolonisation, and, finally, neoliberalism and social justice. With these terms defined, I then move into Chapter 4, in which I explain the methodology of this research—document analysis, the process I used, and ethical considerations and limitations of the research. In Chapter 5, I delve into Canadian views,

policies, and drivers of colonisation and decolonisation through examining documents and events from the late 1800s through to the present. In Chapter 6, I focus on the Canadian postsecondary environment to discuss the context of higher education in Canada, the impact of neoliberalism on policies related to social justice on postsecondary education, the impact of globalisation on education, and the policies on widened access and equity, diversity, and inclusion in postsecondary education. In Chapter 7, I discuss truth, reconciliation, and indigenisation in Canadian colleges by first defining these terms and later examining how they are being evidenced in policy implementation. In Chapter 8, I explore how colleges are rising to meet the call for Indigenisation currently within the context of a framework presented by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018). In Chapter 9, I present some thoughts derived from decolonising postsecondary education through a pedagogy of disruption—an intellectual decolonisation but also what Zembylas (2023) termed an effective decolonisation. Finally, in Chapter 10, I conclude my dissertation by restating my research questions, presenting the answers I have found, and suggesting potential areas for future research.

1.2 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have situated my research within the context of Canada's colonial history and the Truth and Reconciliation Committee's 2015 Calls to Action. These Calls to Action have amplified the drive towards indigenisation of postsecondary education, which is the basis of my research questions discussed in this chapter. I then more fully situated the focus of the research, gave a brief overview of TribalCrit theory and the philosophical foundations of my research, before summarising the layout of the dissertation. In the next chapter, I present a discussion of my background to fully position myself in this research.

Chapter 2: My Position as a Researcher

In this chapter, I use my own narrative to provide valuable perspective on the topic of indigenisation and decolonisation. Growing up and later raising a family in Canada's North has given me deep insight into Indigenous culture, the impact of colonisation, and the movement to decolonise and reclaim space, land, rights, and presence in Canada. I have witnessed firsthand the damage done by colonisers, been part of that legacy as a White person, and have worked hard to learn how to embrace and honour Indigenous culture and ways of knowing and to respect Indigenous Peoples' rights to reclaim what is theirs. I have done this as a child and as an adult, living in northern urban settings and remote Inuit communities, and in non-Indigenous metropolitan areas in southern Canada. As someone who has been accepted into the South Baffin Inuit community but is no longer living in that area, I recognise it is not my story to tell. I also feel my unique insider-outsider perspective can help amplify the voices of those who are working toward truth and reconciliation. My intention is not to assuage my own white settler guilt but rather to "invite myself and others into generative spaces of discomfort and deep learning and unlearning" (Stein, 2022, p. 17) with a view towards disrupting and transforming postsecondary education as it exists today.

2.1. Early Years in Yellowknife

Being raised in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, in the early 1970s was a unique experience that few can attest to. Growing up there as a White settler, born to a recently immigrated mother from Aberdeen, Scotland, and a second-generation Canadian father born and raised on the Canadian prairies, I directly witnessed the systemic racism that pervaded and continues to persist in Canada's North. There were fractures hidden beneath what looked to be a cultural mosaic—a community priding itself on not being uniform, for "*a society which emphasizes uniformity is one which creates intolerance and hate*" (*Trudeau, 1971, as cited in Blake, 2024, p. 166*). These cracks revealed the perception that non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples were living side by side without any prejudices or walls was perhaps not the reality. It may have appeared this way on the surface, but for those who took the time to dig deeper, it became clear that the community was actually segmented. These fractures ensured that colour was a defining factor in all that we did as youth. Yellowknife had distinct neighbourhoods, largely defined by occupation, but also by race. I grew up in Matonabee, a newer neighbourhood made up of

government housing for those families of government employees transplanted from Canada's southern provinces. Some of my classmates lived at Con Mine or Giant Mine, as their fathers worked in the gold mines. My Indigenous classmates lived on Latham Island, in what was known as "Old Town," or in mobile homes in various trailer parks, but not typically up the hill in the newer part of the city. Even the schools experienced this division. The public schools were largely the non-Indigenous children, with the majority of Indigenous children attending Catholic schools. There was also a public territorial high school with the public school students and residential students from across the Northwest Territories, predominantly First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. Over the years, these clear boundaries began to shift, but in my time in Yellowknife, the divisions were strong, ensuring that as a White citizen, I interacted with other White children and did not venture into relationships with the Indigenous population, or did so with deep awareness that I was violating a norm. Lee Maracle (2017), an Indigenous speaker and writer noted, "A cultural mosaic is an agglomeration of equally recognized and utilized cultures coming together to augment the original cultural group known as Canadians" (p. 26). She argued, and I concur, that this has never happened.

I am sad to say, like those around me, racism tainted my perceptions and relationships, continued to shape who I became as an adult and even now influences how I approach the landscape of indigenisation in postsecondary education. What has changed is my understanding of how White settler privilege affects my interactions with others and my commitment to overcoming it in everything I do. This is a large part of why I chose to research indigenisation in my field, reconciling the roles power and economics have in giving an appearance of positive change and restructuring of roles, while remaining deeply rooted in preserving the status and power of the colony. I believe it is imperative to delve deeply into "the wrongs of colonialism, and face up to our ongoing complicity in them" (Stein, 2020, p. 168) in order to shift indigenisation away from being simply a "form of conditional inclusion that serves as an alibi for the continuation of colonial relations" (Stein, 2020, p. 168).

As a child, because my father had a government job with Indian and Northern Affairs in Yellowknife, we were provided with more than adequate housing in the "new town" area. Our neighbours were all non-Indigenous, government employees, possibly working for the federal government in this newest Canadian capital city, or perhaps working for the territorial government. Others were military families or members of the Royal Canadian

Mounted Police who moved to Yellowknife for 2-year postings so as not to become too much a part of the community that they might lose their objectivity. Occasionally, an Indigenous family would move into our area if one of their parents had been perceived at the time to be "fortunate enough" to get a government job. However, much of the Indigenous population of Yellowknife resided in "old town" at the bottom of the hill in what can only be described as ramshackle huts. Most famously, Rainbow Valley, a row of approximately 20 multicolour painted two room ("matchbox") houses with no indoor plumbing housed upwards of 200 residents (MacPherson, 2022; "Ndilǫ," 2024). This was a far cry from the spacious four-bedroom townhouse in "new town" that my family of five resided in. Beyond the "old town" were the two gold mines in the city, each with housing for the miners and their families. These families lived on the mine sites, exposed to the arsenic tailings found in ponds around their homes and to the transient lifestyle of young miners coming north to make their fortune underground. Here, too, were some Indigenous families, mostly young men coming in from outlying communities to seek work to sustain their families back home. A clear hierarchy existed—government employees (privileged White settlers), blue collar and mining employees (often new Canadians), and the Indigenous people—all displaced in some way and resettled in this modern city that offered hope and prosperity. Yet this promise of opportunity was not equally accessible, often defined by the invisible lines drawn by privilege and institutionalised racism.

Central to Yellowknife was the shiny lure of jobs and education for all who came. The government had relocated the nomadic Indigenous peoples of the area to Yellowknife with the promise of education, housing, and financial support. The mines attracted blue collar workers from across the world who were desperate to get the gold out of the ground. Others came to support the infrastructure boom, building new grocery stores, hotels, a movie theatre, restaurants, and bars. The government also needed people to run a city and in fact a territory in Northern Canada. As part of the call to force assimilation through removing Indigenous children from their families and providing education, the federal government set up a system of Residential Schools across Canada, including within the Northwest Territories. While Inuit communities often had schools for young children, junior high and high school education was available only in larger centres with schools staffed with White teachers. Yellowknife was one of these education hubs and had one of the last Residential Schools to close: Akaitcho Hall. In the time I lived in Yellowknife, Akaitcho Hall was home to Indigenous youth from across the Arctic who needed to come to Yellowknife to complete Grades 9–12 because higher grades were not available in their

home community. In 1994–1995 (13 years after I had left Yellowknife), only six of the 14 communities in the Baffin Region of the Northwest Territories had been extended to Grade 12. The other eight communities had a mix of Grades 9, 10, and 11 as the highest grade available (TRC, 2015a, p. 174). With these community grade extensions, Akaitcho Hall was eventually closed in 1994 (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.-a). Living in Yellowknife throughout my elementary and high school years and going to school with these young people brought to Akaitcho Hall from September through June, I witnessed firsthand the effects of removing youth from their family homes and placing them in group care. I attended school with these individuals, learned alongside them, appropriated their culture when it suited and shunned them when it suited. I am ashamed to say I was a part of that—having relationships with Indigenous peers who were a source of fascination but not wanting anyone to know because I could be cast out from my privileged peer group if they thought I was friends with someone at Akaitcho Hall.

Indigenous people were treated as a novelty. While there were many negative attitudes prevailing against the Indigenous population, there was also a curiosity mindset about "these people." Inuit inmates of the Yellowknife Correctional Centre were brought into elementary classrooms to teach us how to write our names in syllabics. A status symbol for teenage girls was an authentic Inuvik parka and mukluks, beaded or embroidered beautifully and adorned with real fur. The annual winter carnival celebrated and showcased traditional Indigenous sports and activities and centred around the crowning of a Caribou Carnival Queen. White privilege allowed my peers and I to have moose hair tufting wall art, Inuit prints, and soapstone carvings to decorate our homes. We "contributed" to the well-being of the artists by purchasing these items from gallery stores, never realising (or maybe we did) that the Indigenous artists only saw a tiny fraction of the actual selling price. By the time an item was priced for retail, it had quadrupled or more in price from what was paid to the artist. Well-intentioned or not, we did not help the Indigenous artists; we contributed only to keeping them in the welfare-supported community lifestyle they had been forced into by missionaries and later by the Canadian government as a way of protecting Canada's sovereignty in the high arctic.

2.2 Living in the Arctic in the 1990s

Returning to the Canadian Arctic as a newlywed in the late 1980s, not much had changed. I chose to live on Baffin Island in what was to become Nunavut during our stay, instead of

in Yellowknife, but colour still very much divided the communities we resided in. Again, as a privileged White settler, my husband and I went north to earn money so that we could afford to pay off university debt and save enough to relocate to a city of our liking in Eastern Canada. He had a job managing the Co-Operative store in an Inuit community of 800 people. He answered to an Inuit Board of Directors but reported to a southern company that owned the Co-operative stores across Canada's North. Housing came with the position and his full- and part-time employees took on the unofficial role all too readily to look after us and ensure we had everything we needed. I could say that we "roughed it" in comparison to some of the other residents, the teachers, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, nurses, and even some Inuit families. Our house had no septic tank, so we had a "honey bucket" for our toilet. We had running water in the sinks but they frequently froze up in the winter. We had frost on the inside of our walls from a lack of insulation and separation in building materials at the corners, but what set us apart is that we could choose to leave. We could go back where we came from and would lose nothing. We were visitors in this community and welcomed as such, and acceptance beyond that was not easily won. Non-Indigenous people came and went; few stayed more than 1 or 2 years, and even fewer took the time to learn the language. Some may have joined Inuit hunters for an adventure or engaged in cultural learnings out of curiosity (e.g., building an igloo, visiting outpost camps, fishing, sealing, and more), but in the end, most left to return to their families and lives in southern Canada, misguidedly thinking they had made some kind of positive impact on the Indigenous people, leaving things better than when they came. But did they?

My husband and I chose to stay in the Arctic for 14 years. We moved to two other communities, settling in the third community of only 400 people for over 9 years. This community was home to us, as much as it could be when we did not truly belong there. We learned the language, we honoured the culture, we raised our five children there, and were invited into the South Baffin community as a whole, but we still lived a life of White privilege that we could never shed. One of the most colonial things I am ashamed to admit to having done is that we adopted two Inuit children at birth. We did not seek these infants out but rather were asked to adopt by their families. Yet we chose to do so, and the thought process for the first one was one distinguished by colour. Again. I remember distinctly discussing with my family of origin and my husband if we were prepared to alter the look of our family tree. I was aware that by adopting an Inuit baby we were not just changing the look of our immediate family but altering it for generations to come. I was not opposed

to this, but the fact that I even considered it is something that bothers me to this day. Then there is the commitment we made to ensure our child did not lose her culture—but how is this even possible? They were being adopted into a White settler home with White settler values, histories, stories, and legacies. While we could surround our children with tokens of the culture, with artefacts and some language, we could not be Inuit. Nonetheless, we made this commitment and strove to maintain and justify its existence. I am proud to say that our adopted daughter does acknowledge we tried, but it was an impossible task that we were naïve enough to think we could accomplish.

After 14 years, when things became too difficult, we did what every other privileged White settler does—we retreated to the safety of our own culture in southern Canada. When exposing our young children to teenage suicide after teenage suicide, addiction, and domestic violence became a threat to their emotional well-being, we chose to move away. When we needed to ensure our youngest had more medical support and the best schools to be able to optimally develop, we left and went south. When we thought our oldest daughter was going to have to be sent away to high school in the south to be able to learn what she needed to in order to enter university and have a career, we left Baffin Island and the community we had been accepted into. Why people have not held that against us, I do not know. We were no different than others—do-gooders who tried to help people and the community and leave it a better place than we came. Even if we convinced ourselves that White privilege did not exist for us and that we were truly part of the community, the reality is that we could never be, for we could always leave.

Having these experiences has provided me with a well-rounded understanding of life for the Indigenous People of the North. I have seen the good and the bad, have been part of the legacy of Residential Schools by attending alongside Indigenous youth, seen the multigenerational fallout from the forced relocations and Residential School experiences, seen the pride, and witnessed the amazing culture and resiliency of Indigenous people and their ability to survive what few others could have. I have the utmost respect now for the legacy that I did not understand growing up when I was scared of the drunk Indians on the Main Street and carefully planned my route home away from where they hung out. I recognise the overrepresentation of Indigenous People incarcerated in the Canadian Justice System and see how they never had a chance. I see the need to move forward and reinstate treaty rights, acknowledge the harm done over the years by our government, bring the Missing and Murdered Indigenous women home, and break down the systemic racism that

continues to plague our child welfare system today. I try to see the movement to welcome more Indigenous postsecondary students as a step towards social justice, but as a more jaded and perhaps wiser White settler, I must question if this is again a colonial attempt to leave the world a better place than it was when we came.

This research is not my story, but it is one that I felt I needed to explore. As a privileged White settler with both an outsider and insider experience (if I may call it that), I felt well-placed to expose the systems that continue to harm Indigenous people in Canada. I wanted to call into question if decolonisation can exist and, if so, what it really looks like. I wanted to question the powers that be, and the policy decisions being made around decolonising postsecondary education and moving beyond decolonising to indigenisation. My hope is that the outcomes of this research will shed some light on the issues involved in indigenisation, who holds the power, who is driving the boat, who is benefitting from the trip, and where the trip could end if the winds were to shift enough. Perhaps, through this examination, I can effect some change in the thinking of my colleagues so that a new, more equitable, and socially just path in postsecondary education, and in fact the nation, can be forged in the years to come.

2.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I described my background and how it has impacted my thoughts and perspectives with regard to indigenisation in postsecondary education and decolonisation in Canada. In the next chapter, I discuss the theoretical underpinnings of my research, including poststructuralism and postmodernism, critical race theory, whiteness and white supremacy in Canada, colonialism, postcolonialism and decolonisation, and neoliberalism and social justice.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Constructs

In Chapters 1 and 2, I outlined some of the challenges with indigenisation as a policy being implemented in postsecondary education institutions in Canada and my positionality as a researcher. I move now to explain the theoretical constructs that provide context to this study. I begin with exploring the literature on poststructuralism and postmodernism as I have used these as the framework for my research. In this study, I have employed a deconstructive approach to analyse indigenisation of postsecondary education. Section 3.1 explores how the works of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault have informed my study. In Section 3.2, I examine critical race theory with an emphasis on Brayboy's (2005) TribalCrit theory which is foundational to this dissertation, and then, in Section 3.3, I discuss Whiteness and paternalism. In Section 3.4, I delve into the crux of this study, looking at colonialism, postcolonialism, and decolonisation. Finally, in Section 3.5, I define neoliberalism and social justice.

3.1. Poststructuralism and Postmodernism

Poststructuralist theory and postmodernism provide an overarching lens for this dissertation in that they can be thought of as ways to deconstruct or analyse assumptions (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016; Young, 1982). According to Agger (1991), poststructuralism, associated with Jacques Derrida, is closely linked with postmodernism, which is often associated with Michel Foucault. Agger stated poststructuralism is primarily concerned with "knowledge and language" (p. 112), whereas postmodernism is involved with "society, culture and history" (p. 112).

Derrida asked researchers to consider both the written text and the sub-text present in documents (Agger, 1991). The subtext are the oft-hidden assumptions that lie below the actual words and relate to the author and their worldview. Readers of any text bring their own worldview to the understanding of the text, filling in the blanks with their interpretations. In this sense, Derrida wrote, there can be no absolute single meaning of text (Agger, 1991). As Agger (1991) noted, "Every definition and clarification needs to be defined and clarified in turn; meaning always lies elusively in the future" (p. 113). In this context, deconstruction is the process of exploring texts and subtexts to uncover alternate meanings that arise as readers with different worldviews interact with the words.

Postmodernism arose in the 1970s and 1980s as a way of disputing "grand narratives that attempt … to explain all measure of disparate social phenomena" (Agger, 1991, p. 116). Foucault (as cited in Agger, 1991), for one, believed "knowledge must be traced to different *discourses/practices* that frame the knowledge formulated from within them" (p. 116). He noted, "Words receive their meaning from their role within the network of social discourse and practices" (Foucault, as cited in Giles, 2022, para. 10). This position is similar to that of Derrida (as cited in Giles, 2022), who posited there is no single meaning of a statement; rather, one needs to look at the layers of meaning and contexts associated with the statement. Foucault (as cited in Giles, 2022) went further and linked all knowledge with power. Giles (2022) concluded:

> Intellectual history is nothing more than a demonstration of the ways in which the conception of truth has been used by power structures to mask the will to power that always operates just beneath the surface. Each society, and each *épistémè*, Foucault said, has its own régime of truth, its "general politics" of discourse which it accepts and makes function as truth. (para. 13)

Foucault, who wrote extensively about discourse, knowledge, and knowledge as power, defined discourse as "a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – i.e., a way of representing – a particular kind of knowledge about a topic …Discourse is about the productions of knowledge through language" (Hall, 2018, p. 201). Hall (2018) noted discourse defines acceptable ways to talk about a topic as well as how not to. Foucault (as cited in Hall, 2018) argued it is discourse that gives meaning to things, and people can only have knowledge of things if they have a meaning. It is through this knowledge that power is obtained. The knowledge produced by discourse can then be "exercised over those who are 'known'… those who are known in a particular way will be subject (i.e., subjected) to it" (Hall, 2018, p. 205). Foucault (1980, as cited in Hall, 2001) suggested power "is deployed and exercised through a net-like organization" (p. 77). Foucault (1977, as cited in Hall, 2001) noted power can be a form of control and can also be "productive" (p. 77) in generating new ways of knowing and understanding. He did not deny that there are state powers, but did suggest "power relations 'go right down to the depth of society'" (Foucault, 1977, as cited in Hall, 2001, p. 77). Thus, at the ground level, each individual is responsible for shaping the discourse that defines everything and everyone around them.

Poststructuralism and postmodernism both suggest the need for scepticism when looking at policy, urging readers to move beyond the words on paper to question what has impacted

the policy development and continues to impact its implementation. Policy is a way of maintaining order through political power (Bacchi & Goodwin, 2016). Based in language, policy creates reality through labelling and categorising; "people are classified, shaped and ordered according to policies" (Shore & Wright, 1997, p. 4). Enforcing self by creating otherness is a highly effective means of fostering cohesion. Unpacking these binaries and allowing for space for the nonbinary is the work of poststructuralism and critical policy analysis. Going beyond the words in policy to understand the context in which it was written, the way it was written, the tone, as well as the writers and their intentions is the basis of critical policy analysis as situated by Foucault (as cited in Hall, 2001).

3.2. Critical Race Theory

Delving into the power dynamics that exist in the Canadian postsecondary education sector and deconstructing calls for truth and reconciliation that are moving indigenisation policies and practices into the forefront at colleges and universities necessitates consideration of critical race theory (CRT). Decolonialising requires a complete reconceptualisation of dominant narratives, conceptual frameworks and social practices (Fúnez-Flores, 2022). As a prerequisite to reconceptualisation, educators must understand the structures that have brought institutions to this point, and those which continue to stall meaningful change.

CRT is shaped by a desire to understand "the relationship among race, racism and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 3). This theory arose in the 1960s and 1970s during the civil rights movement in the US and drew on Derrida and Foucault among other theorists in Europe and the US. Starting in legal studies, with "the idea that not every legal case has one correct outcome … [but rather can be decided] by emphasizing one line of authority over another, or interpreting one fact differently from the way one's adversary does" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011, p. 5), CRT built on the deconstruction and language/power arguments of the poststructural and postmodern theories. Over time, CRT has moved from the field of law to other disciplines as proponents seek to not only try "to understand … [their] social situation … but to transform it for the better" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 7).

McLaughlin and Whatman (2010) stated CRT is more than a product of the civil rights movement in the US; it is actually a move towards critical thinking. Key tenets of CRT asserted by McLaughlin and Whatman (2011) include that race and racism are endemic to

society and as such are engrained and even "normalized" (p. 369). Brayboy (2005) went further, calling racism "invisible" (p. 428). Racism goes beyond discrete acts of discrimination to include "historical, systemic and ideological manifestations of power to serve, maintain and protect White privilege (Delgado, 1989; Harris, 1993)" (Writer, 2008, p. 2). As an analytical lens through which to view equity and diversity in the educational system, CRT enables scholars to expose both the narrative and counternarrative, amplifying a multitude of voices and perspectives, and creating alternate realities (McLaughlin & Whatman, 2011; Writer, 2008). These new perspectives can disrupt beliefs espoused by the dominant society by helping White people "grasp what it is like to be nonwhite" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 39).

TribalCrit is a relatively newer stream of CRT which is focused on Indigenous rights. Brayboy (2005) described TribalCrit as deriving from CRT but serving Indigenous realities in the US. TribalCrit's foundational supposition is that "colonization is endemic to society" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 429) and that this is part of racism as a whole. Furthermore, US policies (and I would suggest Canadian policies for the purpose of this argument) are rooted in "imperialism, White supremacy and a desire for material gain" (Brayboy, 2005, p. 430).

Brayboy (2005) outlined the following tenets of TribalCrit:

- Indigenous people occupy a liminal space that accounts for both the political and racialised natures of [their] identities.
- Indigenous people have a desire to obtain and forge tribal sovereignty, tribal autonomy, self-determination, and self-identification.
- The concepts of culture, knowledge and power take on new meaning when examined through an Indigenous lens.
- Governmental policies and educational policies toward Indigenous peoples are intimately linked around the problematic goal of assimilation.
- Tribal philosophies, beliefs, customs, traditions and visions for the future are central to understanding the lived realities of Indigenous peoples, but they also illustrate the differences and adaptability among individuals and groups.
- Stories are not separate from theory; they make up theory and are, therefore, real and legitimate sources of data and ways of being.

- Theory and practice are connected in deep and explicit ways such that scholars must work towards social change. (pp. 429–430)

In a 2008 article, Writer argued CRT and TribalCrit "offer the possibility of unmasking, exposing, and confronting continued colonization within educational contexts and societal structures, thus transforming those contexts and structures for Indigenous Peoples" (p. 2). Brayboy (2005) further asserted CRT is "activist in nature and inherently must contain a commitment to social justice" (p. 428), making this an important tool to use in indigenising postsecondary educational culture and practice.

Defining what is meant by social justice is not as simple as it first appears (Novak, 2000, para. 2). Lee Anne Bell (1997) wrote,

> Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure…in which individuals are both self determining (able to develop their full capacities), and interdependent (capable of interacting democratically with others)…[it] involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others and the society as a whole. (p. 3)

In terms of education, social justice can then be "both a process and a goal" (L. A. Bell, 1997, p. 3) and CRT is a tool to do and achieve social justice. When viewed in this light, the value of CRT to educational research becomes clear. This process can be initiated within education in an attempt to disrupt systemic oppression. Supported by CRT and TribalCrit, sharing of Indigenous stories and Indigenous ways of being can be legitimised and can help to move society along the path to social justice and decolonisation.

3.3 Whiteness and White Supremacy in Canada

3.3.1 Whiteness

In 2007, American philosopher, David Owen proposed Whiteness as a concept within critical theory and it has since been discussed by academics across a wide range of disciplines. While there are many studies and writings on racism, the problem typically focused on is the "other" race—Black, Indigenous, Asian, and so on (Guess, 2006). It is rare that the camera is turned on the other category in this binary, the measuring stick against which everyone else is measured, the Whites. In his 1997 book *White*, Dyer noted,

"As long as race is something only applied to non-white peoples, as long as white people are not racially seen and named, they/we function as a human norm. Other people are raced, we are just people" (p. 1). In that sense, Whiteness can be thought of as not only "neutral" but actually invisible, allowing White people to perpetuate their feelings of superiority or arrogance while ignoring their privilege.

In 1999, Robin DiAngelo (2011) coined the term "White fragility" (p. 54) to describe the inability of White people to tolerate being challenged by another racial perspective. As defence mechanisms, the response by those experiencing White fragility is an attempt to reinstate the status quo, White supremacy. The concept of White fragility has been central in CRT for years, even if it was not explicitly named as such. In fact, a number of Whiteness conditions can be identified: White supremacy, White privilege, White arrogance, White innocence, and White fragility. These conditions, along with interest convergence and "colour blindness," are the paradigms that need to be challenged and critiqued in order to decolonise.

In order to challenge Whiteness, it first needs to be understood. White supremacy can be viewed as the "an all-encompassing centrality and assumed superiority of people defined and perceived as white, and the practices based on that assumption" (DiAngelo, 2017, para. 5). White supremacy is not based on number but rather on position and the historical attribution of power that "privileges, centralizes, and elevates white people as a group" (DiAngelo, 2017, para. 6). White privilege, then, comes from White supremacy. Peggy McIntosh (as cited in Calgary Anti-Racism Education, n.d.), one of the important voices on White privilege, stated White privilege "refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white" (para. 6). She went further to state that most of the time White people are not aware of this privilege; it is often taken for granted. It is the flip side of thinking of race putting someone at a disadvantage—for White people this means turning the mirror back on oneself to see that Whiteness creates an advantage. White arrogance then evolves from this privilege. White people may believe that their successes are hard earned and merit based as opposed to acknowledging the privilege they hold just by being White (DiAngelo, 2011). In addition, this arrogance positions White people to hold an all-knowing stance about why someone less privileged is not successful. DiAngelo (2011) noted White arrogance can lead to "simplistic platitudes (i.e., People just need to…)" (p. 61). White innocence, as Bertrand and Sampson (2022) explained, is "a discourse in which individuals or entities

project a positive image of themselves while deflecting blame for racism" (p. 1). Ultimately, it is a tool that is applied to maintain the status quo in race relations. Used alongside colour blindness, in which people claim colour does not make any difference in how they view others, White innocence can create a strong force of denial of the existence of racism for White people.

Finally, there is interest convergence, which is perhaps of most interest in the context of this dissertation. Interest convergence is a term coined by Derrick A. Bell Jr. (1980), often hailed as the godfather of CRT. Interest convergence suggests change happens only when it advantages not just the unprivileged group in question, in this case Indigenous peoples, but also the prevailing, dominant White population. When interests converge, so to speak, what can look like a social justice movement is allowed to take place and policy is changed (D. A. Bell, 1980, 2003; Shih, 2017). Shih (2017) wrote, "Interest convergence helps to explain diversity policies once we understand that institutions will lose more than prestige if they are perceived as unwelcoming or even hostile to students of color" (para. 9), or, for the purposes of this dissertation, Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

In a study on White preservice teachers, Valerie Hill-Jackson (2007) highlighted the challenges these teachers, who have led insulated lives through the reality of White privilege, must face when they must immerse themselves in a variety of cultural perspectives as society and schools become more diverse. Although Hill-Jackson conducted her study in the US, where the White preservice teachers were interacting with Latino/a/x and Black students for the most part, she described experiences that I contend are transferable to Canadian postsecondary education and the current push to indigenise.

Hill-Jackson (2007) noted three stages of shifting perspective: the unconscious stage, the responsive stage, and finally the critical consciousness stage. Applied to the Canadian context, in the unconscious stage educators are not aware of their own Whiteness. These educators may not truly be aware of race and racial issues and are only able to use the additive approach to curriculum, which does not break down the cultural binaries of White/Indigenous but rather reinforces the power imbalance, often perpetuating cultural stereotypes, and can be seen as tokenistic homage to Indigenous culture. The second stage of shifting perspective, responsiveness, occurs when, rather than checking a box, preservice teachers began to demonstrate curiosity and speak of wanting to change the way things are. Unfortunately, this is often accompanied by a White saviourism mentality,

which again does not break down the binaries but instead unwittingly reinforces the superiority of Whiteness over the problematised Indigenous or other culture. At the responsive stage, resentment may build as White fragility begins to kick in. The overwhelming awareness of the need to understand another's lived reality can, as one preservice teacher participant in Hill-Jackson's study noted, be like "a water hose has been turned on full blast down my throat" (p. 32). At this point, there may be a retreat to the comfort of White supremacy ideals until internal defences lower and one can venture back out into the uneasy world of others. Hill-Jackson noted this stage is the most "treacherous" (p. 32). She likened it to a multicultural purgatory where an educator can be stuck as they "wrestle with reconciling old states of consciousness in light of newly acquired information" (Hill-Jackson, 2007, p. 32). The question remains as to whether the educator retreats to the unconscious stage or pushes forward into the new awareness of the critical consciousness stage, in which individuals are both able to and willing to question their own assumptions. They are prepared to "name, critique, and act on fundamental issues of power and its relationship to the greater societal forces that affect schools" (Wink, 2005, as cited in Hill-Jackson, 2007, p. 33). Critical consciousness involves peeling back one's own layers of understanding and integrating new cultural realities. According to Hill-Jackson, it is at this stage that White educators are able to unveil their cultural biases, see the world through a new lens, and begin to affect real social change by advocating for multicultural education.

One of the key concerns with Whiteness is that, by virtue of its invisibility, White people can "race shift" (Sturm, 2011, p. 144). Canadians have begun to recognise and challenge acts of White supremacy, such as when a White person assumes another's cultural identity in order to financially or socially benefit and, in effect, to maintain power. In 2016, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network revealed that "celebrated and acclaimed Canadian author Joseph Boyden had fabricated his claims of Indigenous ancestry" (Cyca, 2024, para. 7). Since then, "investigations into the spurious claims of prominent Indigenous figures have appeared frequently in Canadian media" (Cyca, 2024, para. 7). These "pretendians" (Cyca, 2024, para. 7), people falsely assuming an Indigenous identity, are being exposed in the media more often than one might expect, especially with respect to postsecondary education indigenisation efforts. Since the issuing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC, 2015b), the 94 Calls to Action, and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG; National Inquiry Into MMIWG, 2019) reports, the demand for Indigenous employees, faculty and leadership at Canadian colleges

and universities has grown. While many Indigenous individuals seek out these positions, there is a growing awareness that they are competing with pretendians and sometimes losing potential positions to them.

Falsely assuming an Indigenous identity for any reason is a crime. It is harmful to Indigenous peoples and to society as a whole. When it results in financial gain, it constitutes the criminal act of fraud and should be prosecuted as such. In what is likely to become known as a precedent-setting case for Canada, in June 2024, the Nunavut Court of Justice sentenced a woman guilty of defrauding Inuit organisations of more than $158,000 for her twin daughters' education to 3 years in a federal prison (Tranter, 2024). The judge in this case noted the finding organisation was not the "true or ultimate victim … the true victim of [this] crime are the Inuit of Nunavut" (Tranter, 2024, para. 13).

In an article on the harmful nature of Indigenous identity fraud, Kim Tallbear (as cited in Forester, 2021) stated, "Greed and ambition are probably the simplest reasons why people commit Indigenous identity fraud. But those aren't the only reasons" (para. 1). Tallbear (as cited in Forester, 2021) explained further that "the bizarre compulsion to 'play Indian' is rooted in a cunning form of colonial nationalism, 'which is about needing to belong to this place and needing to feel that one has a moral authority to belong to and possess this land'" (para. 2). Tuck and Yang (2012) suggested these shifts are actually "settler moves towards innocence" (p. 1) as a way of trying to absolve themselves of any blame for the colonial genocide that has taken place in Canada. While White people have long dressed up as Indians and appropriated Indian symbols and terminology for sports teams, assuming an Indigenous identity is the ultimate assertion of White power. Huhndorf (2013) in her book *Going Native* wrote about "culture crossing" (p. 169) and noted,

> The ability to journey into another culture for the purposes of redefining oneself and bettering one's own position—is most certainly a privilege of whiteness … it is white women who benefit from these acts; it is they (rather than Native women, for example) who gain "mobility, more social prominence, and more economic participation" in their own cultures. Thus, this act itself comprises an act of dominance by inventing an "other" to serve one's own needs. Such a compulsion to transcend social boundaries, "to coordinate the differentiations of the world into a single ideology," in one critic's words, "is intimately linked to its capacity to subordinate other peoples to its values." (Huhndorf, as cited in Teillet, 2022, p. 17)

3.3.2 Paternalism

Paternalism, according to Ronald Dworkin (2020) in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, is "the interference of a state or an individual with another person, against their will and defended or motivated by a claim that the person interfered with will be better off or protected from harm" (para. 1). Paternalism has a contextual connotation that it is a relationship between unequals, for example, a father and their child, a reigning power and their subjects, a government and the citizens (Grill, 2011; Smiley, 1989). In this sense then, not only does paternalism involve an infringement on a person's autonomy, but it also involves the implication that the less powerful individual has a reduced capacity for autonomy and relatively poor judgement. In a democracy, in which all adults are purportedly equal, paternalism presents an ethical dilemma.

Paternalism is a defining feature of settler colonialism (Shadle, 2015), and it takes many forms. Cloaked in benevolence and the stated need to "ensure fair treatment of Aboriginal peoples while bettering their living conditions" (Roe, 2003, as cited in Legault, 2022, p. 54), Canada's Indian Act of 1876 was designed to assimilate the Indigenous people and benefit the government. Resting beneath early settler policy are race-based stereotypes of Indigenous people being "incapable of defending themselves, and thus requiring others to speak on their behalf, advocate for their needs, … thus require[ing] guardianship" (Legault, 2022, p. 54). These stereotypes continue to exist today. In their recent study in Québec, Saïas et al. (2020) polled university students to understand their views of Indigenous People. Despite a respectful naming of who Indigenous People are, consistent with the reconciliation context alive in Canada today, the students expressed negative associations with the Indigenous People and made reference to "alcohol, drug or dependence, to poverty, violence, social problems, vulnerability or homelessness, to health problems, mental health problems and isolation were found in 43.9% of our sample" (Saïas et al., 2020, p. 15). What Saïas et al.'s study shows, shockingly perhaps, is that despite, or perhaps because of, the truth and reconciliation movement underway in Canada, the general public continues to see Indigenous People as unwell and in need of care. This extends to college administrators and professors who may perceive their role to be that of providing education as a way of improving learners' potential for a better life (Saïas et al., 2020). With that objective in mind, paternalistic policies continue to be supported in postsecondary education, in particular towards equity-deserving individuals such as Indigenous learners.

Paternalism intersects with neoliberalism in that concepts such as "normalization, mainstreaming, mutual obligation and conditionality come into play in the governing of Indigenous communities, organizations and individuals" (Howard-Wagner et al., 2018, p. 18). As such, a neoliberal government imposes conditions upon Indigenous People and communities in order to obtain the assistance required for them to exist. Centralising services, blaming Indigenous People for their problems, and trying to fix the problems through social programs to educate and make employable those viewed not to be already so are the goals of government. It is clear that in this situation the paternalistic narrative of the last 160 years persists in Canada.

3.4 Defining Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Decolonisation

To fully understand the current movement towards indigenisation in the postsecondary education sector in Canada, it is important to first understand colonialism in the Canadian context and to explore postcolonialism through different lenses. Only after having delved into these complex concepts is it possible to understand the push towards decolonisation and challenge the rationale and power behind indigenising the postsecondary education environment. I argue that indigenisation policy development and implementation are not acts of social justice and reconciliation, nor are they a productive means of decolonising Canadian society; rather, they are hegemonic and, in fact, another form of colonialism. Decolonisation will require a different approach, a lot of time and effort, and a desire on both the colonisers' and coloniseds' parts to create a new reality.

3.4.1 Colonialism

Defining colonialism is not a simple or straightforward task. It is highly contextual in terms of time, place, and peoples. However, at its most basic definition, colonialism is "the principle, policy, or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country and occupying it with settlers; the principle, policy, or practice of maintaining colonies" ("Colonialism," 2022). Canada, as it is now known, is a relatively new nation, colonised from the 1500s by the British and French (Hele, 2023, para. 2). This geographical territory was, however, home to several Indigenous nations prior to its "discovery" by the Europeans. These nations still exist in Canada. The "discovery" of Canada happened at a time when the British Empire and European nations were expanding political territory and rule by pushing into what they saw as new lands rich in resources that could also support their economic goals. Colonialism, capitalism, and imperialism are

intrinsically linked in this endeavour, demonstrating that while there is a political aspect to colonialism, there is an equally important economic one.

In the 1800s, Karl Marx (1848) posited colonialism was fuelled by capitalism. He suggested capitalism could not exist within the boundaries of a single country but that it was a "world system" (Marx, as cited in Chandra, 1981, p. 39). Marx stated capitalism "compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; … become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image" (p. 16). In 1902, Hobson concurred with Marx, arguing imperialism was driven by the need for outside markets. Hobson asserted overproduction in capitalist countries necessitated finding foreign consumers in order to maximise profit.

In 1947, in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,* Lenin described imperialism against a context of capitalism, arguing European countries needed to acquire labour and human resources in order to sustain their financial growth. Lenin predicted, over time, European financial interests would absorb the entire world and it was this larger global system that could be called imperialism—an ideology that espoused a stage of capitalism. In this sense, there is no "rule of an emperor" (Loomba, 1998, p. 4) required, it is instead the development of a relationship of "dependency and control" (p. 6) that embodies imperialism. Loomba aptly suggested "the imperial country is the 'metropole' from which power flows, and the colony … the place which it penetrates and controls" (p. 7). Perhaps most importantly, "imperialism can function without formal colonies but colonialism cannot" (Loomba, 1998, p. 7).

Said (1979) in his book *Orientalism* postulated, for Europe to be able to maintain political and financial power, it was necessary to create divisions between Europeans and others. He explained this was done through discourse—defining knowledge of others through a European cultural bias. Said attempted to show that this European understanding of Oriental culture was reinforced through discourse at all levels of society across an extensive period of time. This new "knowledge of the Orient, though flawed, provided the power base from which colonizers set about their mission" (Said, as cited in Harris, 2024, Section 4.3, para. 4). By painting a negative picture of the culture of others, Europeans become the cohesive, polarised opposite, the desired picture of culture, allowing them to uphold power. Said's discussion of others provides the groundwork for the binary oppositions of us and them.

Critics to Said's (1979) work suggest he focused purely on the construction of this image of the Orient through Western literature and did not delve into how it was challenged by non-Westerners (Loomba, 1998). Despite this, I argue colonialism in Canada is much the same, with discourse driving knowledge and reinforcing power from the 15th century forward. In fact, there are many examples of powerful descriptions of Indigenous People and culture that are inaccurate and persist to this day, kept alive through misunderstanding and lack of direct experience or knowledge with Indigenous People and culture. Indigenous people continue to be misrepresented in the media or are treated as a curiosity. An article by Media Smarts (n.d.), last accessed August 9, 2024, reported mass media tends to present romanticised stereotypes such as the princess, the warrior, or the noble mystic (see also Government of Ontario, 2023; National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.-b).

It should be noted here that, in fact, an important tool used in colonialism is education. As Daniels and Enslin (2023) argued,

> What education was available was dismissive of Indigenous traditions of upbringing and education, with missionaries aiming to "improve" indigenous people by providing religious and moral education as well as basic vocational training to create a useful workforce. (p. 224)

In Canada, the federal government has and continues to use mandatory education as a means of control. Education is a way to indoctrinate Indigenous people, in effect to White wash them and ensure they did not challenge but rather "serve the interests of the colonial powers" (Daniels & Enslin, 2023, p. 224). Residential Schools for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children existed in Canada for over 150 years, with the last one closing relatively recently in 1996 (National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, n.d.-b). The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (n.d.-b) at the University of Manitoba reported more than 150,000 Indigenous children attended Residential School and "many never returned" (para. 2; see also Government of Ontario, 2023). Based on incomplete school records, the Government of Ontario (2023) has reported 4,200 children died while at Residential School and to date only 2,800 have been identified. The TRC's (2015b) work was undertaken to document the lived experience of those impacted by Residential School policy. The TRC report concluded Residential Schools were "a systematic, government-sponsored attempt to destroy Aboriginal cultures and languages and to assimilate Aboriginal peoples so that they no longer existed as distinct peoples" (p. 153). The TRC

went a step further to classify this as cultural genocide. From that commission was the publication of 94 Calls to Action (TRC, 2015b), discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, which created a sense of urgency for change in Canada towards reconciliation. Interestingly, education was once again identified as a mechanism for this change to occur.

To this day, Indigenous People in Canada continue to be presented as needing saving. Marsden (2021) noted harmful stereotypes of Indigenous People in Canada include images of them as being "drunks, drug addicts, unemployed, unable to govern themselves, and violent" (p. 77). While there is an acknowledgment of the "effect of settler colonial mandates as a form of wide-scale cultural oppression" (Marsden, 2021, p. 78), in the media, there continues to be reporting on Indigenous people as either "passive or problematic" (p. 79). They are presented either as victims who are not able to help themselves or as problematic—connected to drugs, crime, and violence or protesting government's stance on resource development and land rights (Clark, 2014, as cited in Marsden, 2021).

I argue here that the lack of knowledge about Indigenous People and culture is perpetuated by widespread dissemination of polarising discourse intended to highlight the problematic Indigenous People, thereby upholding the righteousness of the White settlers in Canada as a means of maintaining political control and power. This discourse is what perhaps has held the most sway in Canada's treatment of Indigenous peoples over the past 150 years and which, with the clear dichotomy created with the now popular construct of "Indigenousness," will continue to ensure the colonial settlers maintain a "stable social order" (Barker, 2009, p. 327), even in a postcolonial era.

3.4.2 Postcolonialism

Whereas the term *postcolonial*, when taken literally, seems to suggest colonialism occurred at a defined time in the past, this is neither the case in Canada nor the typical meaning of the term. Colonialism is not a temporally limited condition that simply ends at some arbitrary point in time. In fact, I argue colonialism changes from an overt control to a more insidious, hidden dynamic unless deliberate actions are taken to disrupt the status quo.

Postcolonial studies in the 1950s were largely focused on analysing the effects of imperialism. There was an attempt to examine the effects of the colonisation and to present "an alternative view of imperial history from the perspective of the colonized" (Young, 2020, p. 34). While this is admirable, what cannot be overlooked is that many of the academics who are dominant in the field of postcolonialism formed their ideas after leaving their home countries to study and or teach in the United Kingdom or the US where they had to make sense of history from a different perspective (Young, 2020).

Postcolonial theory attempts to explain the political dynamics of 19th century imperialism but skips over the 15th to18th centuries when Britain and other countries were establishing settler colonies, most of which had become independent by the 19th century, although still "under the control of the settler … classes" (Young, 2020, p. 36). The focus of postcolonialism is primarily on the "violence and trauma of conquest and dispossession, as well as the accompanying colonial discourses about culture, language and race that dismissed the indigenous as inferior and assumed the superiority of the colonisers" (Daniels & Enslin, 2023, p. 223). It is important to note that much postcolonial theory ignores the differences between colonised countries. It disregards the idea that the extent of colonialism—beyond financial and political organisation origins to overarching ideology—means that it still exists today (Young, 2020, p. 37). For many countries that had obtained their independence in the 1800s and early 1900s, postcolonial theory does not go far enough. Settler societies require a more intensive approach to decolonising.

Decolonising is not a simple undertaking. It does not mean simply returning to a precolonial status. It is not merely a case of renaming streets and taking down statues of colonisers; it must go deeper to demythologise Whiteness (Mbembe, 2015). Mbembe (2015) remarked,

> Whiteness is about entrapment. Whiteness is at its best when it turns into a myth. It is the most corrosive and the most lethal when it makes us believe that it is everywhere; that everything originates from it and it has no outside. (para. 22–23)

Decolonising, then, is not just on the colonisers but also on the colonised to begin to redefine who they are and rise above the oppression that is omnipresent. There is a need to break the chains of White oppression to regain a presence, complete with what Mbembe

(2015) referred to as "a logic of self-affirmation" (para. 43). Important work but not easily accomplished.

While one could potentially argue colonisers just need to give back what is not theirs and return the country to its rightful owners, what is forgotten is the need to consider how the precolonial culture changed, and in turn changed the settlers' culture, what was embraced of the Indigenous culture and practices by the settlers and what was discarded, and how these interactions cocreated a new and complex existence. Postcolonial critics caution against the idea of going backwards to recover what has been lost. Gayatri Spivak (as cited in Loomba, 1998) suggested the "pre-colonial is always reworked by the history of colonialism, and is not available to us in any pristine form that can be neatly separated from the history of colonialism" (p. 18). Megan Vaughan (1994, as cited in Loomba, 1998) wrote, "Custom and tradition are 'constructed' and 'invented' by both colonialists and their opponents" (p. 55); therefore, there are no clear binaries, colonisers and the colonised are "active in constructing each other" (Loomba, 1998, p. 55). This is similar to Bhabha (1994), who coined the phrase "third space" (p. 55) with an appreciation of the "fusion and mutual effects the colonizers and colonized had on each other" (Seremani & Clegg, 2016, p. 172). Spivak (as cited in Loomba, 1998) went further to caution against there being an easy way to "'recover[y]' the 'voice' or 'agency' of colonised peoples" (p. 51) because of the depth of changes that have occurred through colonialisation. Finally, Mbembe (2017) wrote, "The processes of mixing and interlacing cultures, peoples, and nations are irreversible" (p. 182).

Taking this a step further and drawing on Foucault's (1980, as cited in Ghandi, 1998) understanding of power as being "employed and exercised through a net-like organization" (p. 14), whereby individuals "are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing or exercising this power" (p. 14), when examining the precolonised state, one must consider the colonised could both "hate the colonizers and yet admire them so passionately" (Memmi, 1968, as cited in Ghandi, 1998, p. 11). Like others mentioned above, Memmi (1968, as cited in Ghandi, 1998) stated there exists a reciprocity between the colonisers and colonised and that this needs to be acknowledged in order to finally dissolve the "lingering residue of colonization" (p. 11).

To successfully "dismantl[e] formal colonial structures" (Loomba, 1998, p. 52), resulting in a true "postcolonial recovery of the colonial condition" (Ghandi, 1998, p. 28), I propose

that this is what lies at the heart of what can be termed decolonisation—a more radical and reconstructive approach compared to postcolonial theory that "moves away *and beyond* the post-colonial" (de Jong, 2022, p. 91).

3.4.3 Decolonisation

Decolonisation can be defined as "the process of deconstructing colonial ideologies" (Antoine et al., 2018, p. 6), both an internal decolonising of one's mindset and an external decolonising of policy and action at the larger level. Fanon (1963) is credited with stating that decolonising the mind is the first step in decolonisation, although not the only step. Tuck and Yang (2012) noted decolonisation goes beyond ending oppression and social justice to "require the repatriation of Indigenous land and life" (p. 21). La paperson (2017) echoed this and stated that a decolonizing university is about more than just decolonizing knowledge production but extends to decolonizing operations and influencing the decolonizing of other "machines", i.e., media,war and government machines. Anything else is simply a "settler move to innocence - diversions, distractions, which relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility, and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 21). Tuck and Yang stated, while decolonisation should be defined by action, the term is instead tossed around to make settlers feel as though they are doing something positive for Indigenous People and their rights, becoming somewhat of a metaphor.

Decolonisation is a term that is rapidly becoming commonplace. It is used in a myriad of settings—there is talk of decolonising Canada's justice system, education system, and politics. It is tacked onto social justice arguments and tossed around almost casually—a need to "decolonize our schools" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 2), use "decolonizing methods" (p. 2), or "decolonize student thinking" (p. 2). Seemingly, as the term gets overused, it loses context and meaning. As well, it becomes a self-assuaging way of showing allyship with Indigenous People. Tuck and Yang (2012) suggested "dressing up in the language of decolonization" (p. 3) is a form of inclusion that is "dangerous in how it domesticates decolonization" (p. 3). In doing so, they cautioned "it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future" (p. 3); all of these being the opposite of what the term suggests people should do. Tuck and Yang continued on to say that decolonisation is "hard, unsettling work" (p. 4).

In *Custer Died For Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto,* Deloria (1988) mentioned the "Indian grandmother complex" (p. 3). He posed the question of why Americans so often claim that they have an Indigenous ancestor, typically a female. He questions if this is a way for settlers to tie themselves to the land or a way to negate the guilt of how settlers treat the Indigenous People. It is possible, with the increased awareness thrust upon settlers of a history that can be framed as cultural genocide, that there is also a growing need for settlers to assuage their own guilt for the wrongs of the past. If decolonisation discourse, as argued above, serves to merely make reconciliation more palatable, that is not acceptable. For decolonisation to be possible and effective, it requires both the colonised and colonisers to be actively involved. Those who are colonised need to do the internal work to decolonise so that they can lead the way towards decolonisation. From this perspective, decolonisation should be "an action taken by the colonized upon the colonizer" (Etherington, 2016, p. 157). It should not be led by the coloniser to assuage relationships with the colonised. Regardless, meaningful decolonisation will require a complete disruption of the colonial structure in Canada.

If education is a tool to colonise, it can also be used as a tool to decolonise. This would, however, require moving beyond a Eurocentric portrayal of history and knowledge acquisition. Eurocentrism can be defined as:

> a cultural phenomenon that views the histories and cultures of non-Western societies from a European or Western perspective … it assumes the superiority of European cultural values over those of non-European societies … advocate[ing] for the imitation of a Western model based on "Western values." (Pokhrel, 2011, p. 321)

Furthermore, eurocentrism is tied to modernity and to distribution of wealth. Within the current move to globalisation, postcolonialists view eurocentrism as being particularly problematic in that it "increases the polarization between a privileged minority and the world's excluded, oppressed majorities" (Pohkrel, 2011, p. 324). Daniels and Enslin (2023) highlighted Paulo Freire's (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* as being instrumental in promoting "educational practices that aim at fostering critical consciousness" (p. 224). Daniels and Enslin went on to note other approaches such as "the retrieval of indigenous traditions of upbringing and education (e.g. Adeyemi and Adeyinka, 2003), including what knowledge and skills would have been emphasized as well as local values and conceptions of authority" (p. 224). Using education as a decolonising tool has promise, but this

approach is undermined by the fact that education is a tool of a neoliberal government and as such is subject to globalisation and marketisation, rather than social justice.

3.5 Neoliberalism and Social Justice

The movement towards decolonisation needs to be considered within the broader international environment of neoliberalism. How social justice can be impacted within a neoliberal society is critical to moving forward towards disruption of colonial structures such as postsecondary education. In this section, I first explain neoliberalism before contrasting it with social justice theory.

3.5.1 Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism emphasises the importance of free-market principles and individualism, while reducing the role of government in regulating economic activity. Since the 1970s, neoliberalism, as an ideology and economic policy, has taken hold across all policy spheres, including education. Through this economisation,

> people are conceived of solely as interdependent market actors, every activity whether wealth generating or not is conceptualized as a market, and every entity (whether public or private, whether person, business, or state) is governed as a firm. (Cifor & Lee, 2017, p. 3)

Neoliberalism is based on the assumption that capitalism, the market, competition, and the performance principle will close "justice gaps" (Schäfer, 2019, p. 49, as cited in Gruber & Scherling, 2020) within societies. It is expected to do this by promoting the private sector, encouraging deregulation, decentralisation, and privatisation (Fisher et al., 2009). Neoliberalism also ensures freedom and choice for individuals to do what is best for themselves, with the expectation that their action will, in turn, benefit the economy. In doing so, though, neoliberalism guides people to hold individuals responsible for the consequences of their actions, no matter the constraints on their actions, such as lack of skills, education, and childcare in a period of high unemployment and limited welfare benefits (Brown, 2003).

The World Bank Group (2018) defined human capital as "the knowledge, skills, and health that people accumulate throughout their lives, enabling them to realize their potential as productive members of society" (para. 1). With a focus on human capital, neoliberalism

ensures people value themselves in terms of how they can contribute meaningfully to the economy (Gruber & Scherling, 2020) and, therefore, seek education to obtain the skills to function in the neoliberal capitalist society. When considering that capitalism is the impetus for colonialism, it becomes difficult to see this as anything other than maintaining the power and political status quo.

3.5.2 Social Justice

Ensuring all individuals in a society are viewed as equal, with equal access to education, health care, political rights, and liberties, continues to be a pressing problem of justice (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 2). While the concept of social justice feels somewhat abstract, Nussbaum (2006) argued it needs to be in order to evolve and adjust in response to the concerns of the day. Sandel (2009) noted Aristotle's teachings were that people should be given what they deserve and that what is deserved is defined by "what virtues are worthy of honor and reward" (p. 9). Immanuel Kant in the 18th century and John Stuart Mill in the 20th century argued justice should not be centred on a specific concept of virtue (Jost & Kay, 2010). Mill (1910, as cited in Jost & Kay, 2010) noted, "Not only have different nations and individuals different notions of justice, but, in the mind of one and the same individual, justice is not some one rule, principle, or maxim, but many, which do not always coincide in their dictates" (p. 1151). While early definitions of social justice focused on equitable distribution of resources (utilitarianism), a concern for just outcomes when inequality was present led to the development of social contracts.

In contemporary times, social contracts have since underpinned most theories of social justice assuming that "rational people get together, for mutual advantage, deciding to leave the state of nature and to govern themselves by law" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 3). Moving beyond the idea of social contracts, social justice theorists examined "concerns about informal as well as formal treatment by others in everyday life" (Jost & Kay, 2010, p. 1146). More recently, studies of retributive and restorative justice have taken on importance in the social justice field. In an attempt to establish a way to measure social justice, Jost and Kay (2010) identified eight principles that must be maximised in a just society: "equity, equality, need, merit, liberty, consistency, accuracy and ethicality" (p. 1150).

A challenge with the identification of these principles is that what these concepts mean is not absolute. In addition, there is also the presence of the social system that people operate within—the customs, traditions and practices that perpetuate inequality. Frankena (1962, as cited Kay & Jost, 2010) stated, "All sorts of injustices may be enshrined in the rules of society, as those who settled this country knew and as many of those whose ancestors did not come willingly know even now" (p. 1150). It could be construed, then, as John Stuart Mill (as cited in Sandel, 2009) believed, that "a just society respects each person's freedom to choose his or her own conception of the good life" (p. 10).

In 2000, Martha Nussbaum, drawing on Amartya Sen's pivotal work on the capabilities approach for evaluating well-being in the 1980s, proposed 10 capabilities that are essential to human dignity as follows:

1. Life (being able to live to a normal life expectancy in a way that is worth living),
2. Bodily health (having good health, being adequately nourished and having adequate shelter),
3. Bodily integrity (freedom to move around and be safe from assault, have choice in matters of sex and reproduction),
4. Senses, imagination and thought (access to adequate education, experiencing and producing works and events of one's own choice, political and artistic speech and freedom of religious exercise),
5. Emotions (to love, grieve, experience longing, gratitude and justified anger without fear or anxiety of reprisal),
6. Practical reason (able to form a conception of the good and engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life),
7. Affiliation (able to live with, show concern for and engage with others, being treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others – includes non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, caste, religion and national origin),
8. Other species (being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and nature),
9. Play (being able to laugh, play and enjoy recreational activities), and
10. Control over one's environment (both political – right of choice, political participation, free speech, and material – ability to own property, have property rights equal to others, and to meaningful work). (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33–34)

Nussbaum (2003, 2011) argued, if society does not endorse and action each of these entitlements, it is not a fully just society.

Canada prides itself on being a just country and yet Indigenous Peoples in Canada do not have all of the above capabilities. Statistics Canada reported, in 2011, the life expectancy for Indigenous People at age 1 was 10 years shorter than for non-Indigenous people (Tjepkema et al., 2019). While Indigenous People in Canada have seen gains in life expectancy between 1996 and 2016, these are either less than or not statistically different from the gains achieved by the non-Indigenous population (Tjepkema et al., 2019). Clean water is not afforded to all in Canada. According to a Government of Canada (2024a) report, as of June 22, 2023, there were 28 short-term water advisories in place in First Nations communities, not including those in British Columbia. In addition, there were 28 long-term water advisories in 26 communities in place as of June 19, 2023 (Government of Canada, 2024a).

Furthermore, statistics on victimisation of Indigenous People in Canada are staggering. In 2022, Statistics Canada reported four in 10 Indigenous people experienced sexual or physical violence by an adult before the age of 15 (Perreault, 2022). Indigenous children are more likely than non-Indigenous children to have been placed in government care during their childhood (11% versus 1.3%; Perreault, 2022). In 2019, nearly one in 10 (8.4%) Indigenous People were victims of sexual assault, robbery, or physical assault, about twice the proportion of non-Indigenous people (4.2%; Perreault, 2022). Finally, from 2015 to 2020, the average homicide rate involving Indigenous victims was six times higher than the homicide rate involving non-Indigenous victims (Perreault, 2022).

It has been said that "education is the great equalizer in a democratic society, and if people are not given access to a quality education, then what we are doing is creating an underclass of people who will challenge our very way of life" (Gonzalez, 2001, as cited in Growe & Montgomery, 2003, p. 23). Further, Gonzalez (2001, as cited in Growe & Montgomery, 2003) reportedly stated the "civil rights questions of our nation [the United States of America] is that of access to a quality education" (p. 23). In Canada, according to a 2016 census, only 63% of all Indigenous youth had completed high school compared with 91% of the non-Indigenous population (Statistics Canada, 2023). As well, only 37% of Indigenous youth went on to pursue postsecondary education, compared to 72% of non-Indigenous youth who had completed or recently attended a postsecondary education

program (Statistics Canada, 2023). This suggests the playing field is not equal for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada, and that there is work to do to ensure Canada can be considered a socially just society.

3.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have contextualised the issues that are germane to my analysis of indigenisation policy implementation in Canadian postsecondary education institutions, in particular critical race theory. I have defined colonialism within the context of Canadian history, explored postcolonialism theory, and decolonisation. Further to those concepts, I touched on the focus of neoliberal economics and highlighted the challenges associated with a social justice approach in this context. In doing so, I argued, while Canada presents itself as a nation intent on promoting social justice, Indigenous Peoples and communities do not have all of the entitlements that are imperative in a socially just society (Nussbaum, 2003). In the next chapter, I explain my methodology and procedure along with the ethical approach taken for this research, and I discuss the limitations that constrained this research.

Chapter 4: Methodology

In this chapter, I describe the methodology I employed in this study. For this dissertation, I chose to use document analysis as defined by Bowen (2009), which allowed me to delve into previous research and writings on indigenisation and related concepts while also conducting a poststructural analysis of policy and an evaluation of the implementation of such policy in postsecondary education. To analyse the implementation of policy, I conducted a sampling of 34 Canadian College websites for evidence of movement towards indigenisation. In addition, I leaned on decolonising methodology as explained by Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) to ensure I listened critically to the empirical data and writings of others in order to tell a story that would have impact. After explaining the methodology, I describe the procedure and the ethics adhered to in the study.

4.1 Methodology

As a researcher of indigenisation in postsecondary education in Canada, I chose to analyse policy implementation through a decolonising research methodology lens. To do so, I relied on document analysis and the Foucauldian understanding that "power relations in society are conditioned by a culturally generated set of ideas, otherwise known as discourse" (Ward et al., 2016, p. 44). Policy can be viewed as a process rather than an output. Ball (1998) suggested "policies are … ways of representing, accounting for and legitimating political decision" (p. 124). Similarly, Olssen et al. (2004) stated policy is a way of identifying goals, defining values, or allocating resources (Ward et al., 2016, p. 45). Essentially, policy can be thought of as a process that validates and promotes government ideas and actions, either to reinforce public values or to promote reform (Ward et al., 2016, pp. 44–45). Ward et al. (2016) noted policy response is a dialogue between policy makers and policy implementers.

Policy analysis as a qualitative research method varies depending on the stage of policy that is being analysed. Tamtik and Guenter (2019) noted that it is important to pay attention,

> not only to the content of the policy, but also to the processes of policy development and implementation to evaluate how policy making processes are arranged, what particular set of educational values have been endorsed, to investigate whose interests the policy serves and to examine how a policy has been implemented, and with what outcomes (Henry et al., 2021). (p. 44)

For this dissertation, my interest lay in the implementation of policy. Ball (1993) discussed the first- and second-order effects of policy:

> First order effects are changes in practice or structure (which are evident in particular sites and across the system as a whole); and second order effects are the impact of these changes on patterns of social access and opportunity and social justice. (p. 16)

Thus, analysing policy implementation is a combination of looking at how the policy was developed, the changes that it was trying to effect as well as the impact on the issue it was addressing, and the barriers that may be in place to limit that impact. Policy drives culture, and policy related to Indigenous people in Canada has shaped social and cultural beliefs and practices since the late 1800s. While many tools can be used to analyse policy, I chose to use document analysis as defined by Bowen (2009) as "a systematic procedures for reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material" (p. 27).

To stay true to the intent of this research, I chose to use an overarching decolonising methodology paradigm as a guiding framework, which was essential to my topic. Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) described decolonising methodology as a newer qualitative research methodology currently characterised by four principles: (a) exercising critical reflexivity, (b) reciprocity and respect for self-determination, (c) embracing "other(ed)" ways of knowing, and (d) embodying a transformative practice. A goal of my research was to begin the process of decolonising not only in my own mind and practice but also with postsecondary educators and administrators in Canada. Using decolonising methodology was critical in this process.

4.1.1 Document Analysis

In defining document analysis, Bowen (2009) noted it can "elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (p. 27). It was with this definition in mind that I undertook an analysis of policy related to truth, reconciliation, and indigenisation in the Canadian postsecondary education sector. I wanted to understand how the historical and more recent discourse relates to what is happening in Canadian colleges, where the levers for change may be, and how the postsecondary education sector and society could be changed for the better.

To fully understand the present policy environment, I chose to analyse policy discourse starting with the Indian Act (1876). Understanding the historical context of colonialism, the role of education in this, and the impact of colonialism on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples in Canada throughout the 20th century, and now into the 21st century, was essential to positioning my arguments and seeing what may in fact be possible in driving change (Fairclough, 2015, p. 42). Seeing the power behind the discourse is deeply relevant to understanding the move towards indigenisation policy in postsecondary education institutions. While policymakers in Canada have moved towards reconciliation with Indigenous People, it is important to dig deeper to analyse the powers in the new discourses, what the intentions are, and who holds the power to make the changes necessary. Equally important is to look at how the policies are being implemented, who is driving the implementation, and whether it is actually changing systems.

Analysing power in discourse is important in understanding what Fairclough (2015) called "power relations" (p. 65). He noted, "Power relations are always relations of struggle" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 65). Analysing language allows researchers to look for the dynamics of power at play and observe how the dominant group is constantly "defend[ing] or los[ing] their position" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 66). I suggest, in the movement towards social equity, what may on the surface look like a shift in power from the traditionally dominant power holder to other groups of previously oppressed and dismissed people (e.g., Black, Indigenous, people of colour, working class, women), is perhaps not a recalibration of power but simply a drive to push it underground, forcing the dominant class to find "less direct ways of exercising and reproducing their power" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 97). Fairclough (2015) further noted that social equity should not be misinterpreted as giving up power but rather as a "concession" (p. 97). I suggest this concession could be to perhaps appease those oppressed or dismissed.

Moving beyond the Indian Act (1876), I selected reports from several seminal inquiries that served to disrupt governmental policy somewhat and brought about the now almost ubiquitous concept of indigenisation, particularly in the postsecondary education environment. These include the RCAP (1996a) report, the *Gathering Strength* action plan (Government of Canada, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1997), the TRC's (2015b) *Calls to Action* report, and the MMIWG report (National Inquiry Into MMIWG, 2019). In examining the terminology in these reports, I observed that the shift in language to a more politically correct ideology is evident while power is maintained.

4.2 Procedure

As noted above, I began this study by reading and critically analysing the Indian Act (1867). This was important in setting the stage to understand the colonial government's role in the cultural genocide of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. I initially scanned the document for vocabulary that portrayed positive and negative views of Indigenous people and culture. My intention was to have a baseline that illustrated the government's role in asserting power and how it was justified. I was interested in seeing if and how this language shifted over time as amendments were made to the act and as external forces and inquiries led by Indigenous representatives were reported on. To this end, I reviewed the media reporting of the 1990 Oka Crisis and the impact on government policy, the subsequently appointed RCAP (1996a) report, the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action, and the MMIWG (National Inquiry Into MMIWG, 2019). Going beyond the textual analysis, I then examined Canada's relationship with the United Kingdom as a British Commonwealth nation and how that supports or does not support decolonisation.

The second piece of my analysis was that of policy implementation evaluation in the postsecondary education environment. Implementation of policy is impacted by a multitude of factors, with commitment being key, followed closely by cooperation (Brynard, 2009, p. 560). A 2021 guidebook entitled *Indigenous Reconciliation: A Toolkit for Employers*, published by Indigenous Works through the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, is intended to guide organisations and businesses on how to create a reconciliation action plan. This guidebook presents a continuum of seven stages that indicate how embedded indigenisation is within the organisation: indifference (inclusion is not on the radar), intimidation (inclusion as forced compliance), image (inclusion as public relations), initiation (inclusion as a business imperative), incubation (inclusion nurtured as a core competency), integration (inclusion as a catalyst for growth), and finally full inclusion (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021). These indicators also align with best practices identified by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan, n.d.-a, n.d.-b) in its *Indigenous Education Protocol* drafted in 2013–2014 (see Appendix A).

While the Indigenous Works continuum is designed for businesses (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021), it can be applied to colleges when examining an institution's from taking small steps that do not impact the overall fiscal balance sheet (intimidation/image) to starting to spend funds on small initiatives that may result in

attracting more Indigenous students and result in increased revenue (initiation).

Understanding at which point the educational institution moves forward from reaping

additional revenue through inclusion initiatives to the next levels of not only investing in

Indigenous spaces and curriculum but truly embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and

being in staff development (incubation), in day-to-day practices at all levels of the

institution (integration), and finally in participating in the community as a true partner with

Indigenous organisations and communities (full inclusion) is important. For the document

analysis, I identified indicators as documented in Table 1.

Table 1
Document Analysis Using the Continuum of Seven Stages

Indicator	Indifference	Intimidation	Image	Initiation	Incubation	Integration	Inclusion
Presence of a Land Acknowledgement page for the college		X	X				
Existence on the website of Indigenous student support services		X	X	(X)			
Presence of at least one action-focused goal related to Indigenisation in the most recent strategic plan				X	X		
Description of a dedicated Indigenous student space or spaces					X		
Presence of a webpage dedicated to Indigenous initiatives						X	

Note. X = the website element *is* an indicator of this stage; (X) = the website element *may be* an indicator of this stage.

See the *Indigenous Reconciliation* guidebook for more information on the continuum of seven stages (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021).

To analyse implementation of indigenisation policy in colleges in Canada, I chose to

examine college websites and document how they are incorporating Indigenous concepts,

programs, and initiatives. To do so, I undertook a review of 32 English-speaking, publicly

funded, community or regional college websites. These colleges were located across two

provinces, one in Western Canada (Alberta) and one in Eastern Canada (Ontario). On the

websites, I looked for indicators of the Indigenous Works stages (Canadian Centre for

Diversity and Inclusion, 2021). I was interested in exploring whether certain elements and

best practices were evident through the college website as well as how prominently they

were presented as indicators of whether colleges were moving beyond the Initiation and Incubation stages to the Integration and Inclusion stages (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021).

Using a coding of 0 for no evidence and 1 for the indicator being evident, I combed through each college's website to obtain a total score out of a possible 5 (see Table 2). I then used this total score to rank the colleges for depth of implementation of indigenisation.

After identifying if each of these indicators was present or not present. I then delved deeper to determine if the webpage was actively updated, engaged students, employees, and the public, featured Indigenous events, and mentioned employee training or professional development opportunities on Indigenous culture. Presence of these indicators, represented in the notes column by asterisks or a comment, demonstrated a more in-depth commitment to embracing Indigenous culture and "becoming" versus the more formal and expected acknowledgements towards indigenisation I was looking for in the preliminary scan.

Table 2

Website Analysis of Alberta and Ontario Colleges
Indigenous Policy Implementation (July 2022)

College Name	Land Acknowledgement	Indigenous Student Services	Strat Plan Goal	Indigenous Space	Indigenous Initiatives	Total Score	Notes
Bow Valley College	0	1	0	1	0	2	
Keyano College	0	1	1	0	0	2	
Lakeland College	1	1	1	0	0	3	
Lethbridge College	1	1	1	1	1	5	****
Medicine Hat College	0	1	0	0	0	1	
NorQuest College	1	1	1	1	0	4	National Indigenous Education Award

College Name	Land Acknowledgement	Indigenous Student Services	Strat Plan Goal	Indigenous Space	Indigenous Initiatives	Total Score	Notes
Northern Alberta Institute of Technology	1	1	0	0	1	3	
Northwestern Polytechnic	1	1	1	0	0	3	
Olds College	1	1	1	0	1	4	****
Red Deer College	0	1	1	0	0.5	2.5	
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology	1	1	1	1	0	4	****
Alberta	7	11	8	4	3.5		
Average score for indicator	**0.64**	**1**	**0.73**	**0.36**	**0.32**	**3.05**	
Algonquin College	0	1	1	1	1	4	National Indigenous Education Award
Cambrian College	0	1	1	0	0	2	
Canadore College	1	1	1	1	1	5	
Centennial College	1	1	1	0	1	4	Indigenous Strat Plan
Conestoga College	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Confederation College	0	1	1	1	1	4	
Durham College	1	1	1	1	1	5	Strengthen relationship with Indigenous communities
Fanshawe College	1	1	1	1	0	4	Indigenous Action Plan - very separate from whole
Fleming College	1	1	1	1	0	4	All under Indigenous student services
George Brown College	1	1	1	1	1	5	Under Indigenous strategy

College Name	Land Acknowledgement	Indigenous Student Services	Strat Plan Goal	Indigenous Space	Indigenous Initiatives	Total Score	Notes
Georgian College	1	1	1	1	1	5	Hidden under National Indigenous Education Award
Humber College	1	1	1	0	1	4	
Lambton College	0	1	1	1	0	3	Part of EDI
Loyalist College	1	1	1	1	0	4	Indigenous understanding in strat plan
Mohawk College	1	1	1	1	1	5	
Niagara College	1	1	1	1	0	4	Weak and segregated
Northern College	1	1	1	1	0	4	
St. Lawrence College	1	1	1	1	0	4	
Sault College	1	1	1	1	0	4	Very detailed Indigenous plan
Seneca College	0	1	0	0	0	1	Present but vague and not action oriented
Sheridan College	0	1	0	0	0	1	
St. Clair College	0	1	0	0	0	1	
Ontario	14	22	18	15	9		
Average of Indicators	**0.64**	**1**	**0.82**	**0.68**	**0.41**	**3.55**	

Note. 0 = not present; 1 = present.

This ranking, which I completed in the summer of 2022, revealed a pattern of implementation that was significant for the purposes of this dissertation. It should be noted that, because of the ever-changing landscape in Canada around reconciliation, I needed to limit my research to being indicative of a specified point in time. As such, this website analysis reflects only the actions being taken by colleges up to and including 2022. My analysis does not indicate any actions taken by colleges that were not published on their website and, by virtue of it being a single-point-in-time analysis, it does not indicate if a shift has been made in the culture of an educational institution since that time.

Nonetheless, the analysis provided evidence of colleges' intentions in 2022 towards decolonising.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

As outlined in most university and social research ethics documents, including the Canadian *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (TCPS; Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2022), ethics in research is bounded by the principles of doing good and, conversely, doing no harm. Although this dissertation's document analysis approach relied on information published publicly and not involving direct interaction with human participants, I purport it is not possible to do justice to topics such as indigenisation, decolonisation, and reconciliation using only the usual western epistemologies or research methodologies.

Western knowledge production tends to be positivist in nature, seeking one truth that explains all. However, poststructuralism is unique in that it "enables alternative and multiple ways of knowing, with no one way being considered more 'right' than another" (Singh & Major, 2017, p. 17). Indigenous research methodologies require researchers to recognise Indigenous knowledge as legitimate, acknowledge the role of researcher identity, use the research to empower Indigenous People, and understand that knowledge is relational and dependent on people, time, and context (Singh & Major, 2017). While I have referenced using a poststructural stance with CRT as the crucial hinge for this research, this is merely a starting point.

Audra Lorde (1984) stated, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p. 2). This statement suggests that using the same methods colonizers used to create the current state will not undo the settler colonial system that was established. New ways of thinking and researching are critical to approach the problem. This is why using a decolonising research methodology, as Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) described, is important. Undertaking a dissertation on indigenisation policies and practices in postsecondary education had the potential of ultimately reinforcing colonial perspectives and, in so doing, perpetuating harm rather than seeking advancement of Indigenous Peoples' rights and freedoms. This was not my intention, so I needed to consciously reflect, listen, question, and change in order to do the topic justice.

Critical reflexivity, the first of the four principles Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) proposed, is the defining ethical principle in a decolonising research approach. As a researcher examining indigenisation, I needed to reflect on my own positionality, how I view the world, what questions I was asking, and what answers I was looking for, if answers were the outcome I even wanted. Barreiros and Moreira (2020, as cited in Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021) argued raising questions and prompting deep introspection are just as significant as finding answers due to their ability to break down colonised "knowns" (p. 4) into decolonised "unknowns" (p. 4). Understanding that the process of asking the questions could be impactful on its own was transformative for me allowed me to sit comfortably with the knowledge that I might not find the answers I was seeking.

Reciprocity and respect for self-determination, the second principle proposed as part of Thambinathan and Kinsella's (2021) decolonising methodology, is more difficult to exemplify in a conceptual study like this one. I chose to emphasise what Thambinathan and Kinsella referred to as the "act of listening" (p. 4). In this context, this meant "listening affectively" (McDermott, 2013, as cited in Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021, p. 4), by opening not only eyes and ears but hearts and minds, to learn, be accountable and "commit to growth for space and becoming" (p. 4).

Embracing other(ed) ways of knowing (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021) in this dissertation involved seeking out texts by Indigenous authors and scholars to understand and integrate other viewpoints. Storytelling is a cornerstone of Indigenous knowledge; as such, I sought out stories in fiction, non-fiction, film, social media and academic writing to ensure I was immersed in and drawing on a wide representation of Indigenous ways of knowing and being.

Lastly, employing a transformative praxis, as Thambinathan and Kinsella (2021) recommended, is vital in decolonising research methodology. As Freire (1970) asserted, "Discovery cannot be purely intellectual but must involve action; nor can it be limited to mere activism but must include serious reflection: only then will it be a praxis" (p. 5). Without these critical approaches to my research, I was at risk of reinforcing colonial legacies (Thambinathan & Kinsella, 2021), rather than shifting the discourse and practice in postsecondary education settings. Thus, without these critical decolonising research approaches, I was at risk of causing more harm than good overall.

4.4 Limitations

I intentionally chose to conduct a document analysis to understand the history of colonisation in Canada and to look for evidence of the implementation of indigenisation in the postsecondary education sector. However, a limitation of this approach was that I was not able to gather experiences and opinions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous academic and administrative employees regarding indigenisation policies and processes. Furthermore, my analysis was limited to the Canadian postsecondary education environment and should not be extrapolated to other systems, except to provide foundational questions for exploration. Another significant limitation is that the research was bound in time. The political environment in Canada is constantly evolving, with steps being taken to acknowledge Canada's role in the genocide of First Nations. Reparations are ongoing, so what was true when this dissertation began in 2021 may not necessarily be the case when it was completed in 2024. As such, the outcomes of this research are relevant to a point in time and caution should be taken when applying the findings moving forward.

4.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I explained the research framework for the policy implementation evaluation in this study. In the next three chapters, I analyse and discuss key historical policies and reports of commissions appointed by the government in the past 20 years to move Canada's relationship with Indigenous Peoples forward. I do this to provide an understanding of the not only the history of Indigenous relations in Canada but to appreciate the current situation with regard to truth and reconciliation in Canada. I then discuss the context of postsecondary education in Canada in Chapter 6 and the various policies currently impacting Canadian higher education to better understand how indigenization as a policy fits in. In Chapter 7, I focus specifically on the context for indigenisation of postsecondary education policy and discuss the results of the document analysis I conducted of 32 Canadian college websites to assess their stage of indigenisation policy implementation in late 2022.

Chapter 5: Canadian History Through an Indigenous Policy Lens

In this chapter, I present the findings of my policy analysis. The policy implementation evaluation scan results will follow in Chapter 7. I begin with a review of the Indian Act (1876), highlighting discourse that defines the history of Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples. In Section 5.2, I look at how this relationship began to change in the 21st century and the events that precipitated the shift, beginning with the Oka Crisis (de Bruin, 2023) and later the RCAP (1996a) and their lengthy report. In Section 5.3, I analyse the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action and the MMIWG (National Inquiry Into MMIWG, 2019) reports. In the final section of this chapter, I summarise the progress that Canada has made while challenging the concept of Canada as a postcolonial nation.

5.1 The Indian Act (1876) and Related Policies in the 20th Century

The Indian Act was passed in 1876 in Canada. The groundwork for this act resided in the Bagot Report of 1844 (as cited in Joseph, 2018, p. 7), a colonial document recommending centralised control over the Indians, their assimilation into a European culture by removing children from their homes and culture, and the isolation of Indians on their own lands whereby they could sell these lands to one another but not to non-Indians. In 1867, with the passing of the British North America Act (now known as the Constitution Act, 1982), the British Crown gave the Government of Canada jurisdiction over Indians and the lands of Indians as well as responsibility for negotiating treaties and purchasing land for the Crown. Joseph (2018) described this as placing Canada in a conflict of interest. In 1876, the Indian Act came into play with a clear paternalistic mandate to care for the Indians and educate them. In the annual report of the Department of the Interior for the year ending 30th June, 1876, the then Superintendent-General, the Hon. Mr. Laird (as cited in Joseph, 2018), is reported to have stated the following with respect to the Indian Act:

> The aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage and treated as wards or children of the State … every effort should be made to aid the Red man in lifting himself out of his condition of tutelage and dependence … through education and every other means, to prepare him for a higher civilization by encouraging him to assume the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship. (p. 16)

This paternalistic attitude persisted well into the 20th century, despite calls to revisit the act and to ease restrictions that had been imposed in the early 20th century with the intention to completely disenfranchise the Indians and seemingly eradicate them and their

culture from Canada. Duncan Campbell Scott (as cited in Joseph, 2018), the Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs in the 1920s, stated he "want[ed] to get rid of the Indian problem.… Our objective is to continue until there is not an Indian that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and that there is no Indian question, and no Indian department" (p. 8).

After World War II, Canadians began to take notice of how Indians were being treated (Joseph, 2018). Along with recognition of their contribution to the war efforts, people were learning of the deaths of children in Residential Schools and were beginning to call for investigations. Despite these shifts in awareness and subsequent amendments to the Indian Act over the years, the act remains largely the same as when it was first enacted (Joseph, 2018).

5.2 Tides of Change (1990–2015)

In the summer of 1990, Canada experienced what is commonly referred to as the Oka Crisis, a resistance movement by the Mohawks of Kanehsatake and resulting conflict with Québec Police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Canadian Armed Forces over an infringement on a land claim near Montreal, Québec (Conradi, 2009; de Bruin, 2023). This crisis was a 78-day armed standoff prompted by the proposed development of a golf course on Mohawk land. Although the term "crisis" implies a short, time-limited uprising, the events were rooted in a long-standing conflict over land claims between the Mohawks of Kanehsatake and the Government of Canada. This particular incident remains one of the most dramatic in recent Western history (Conradi, 2009) and was a defining moment in the movement towards reconciliation in Canada. The mass media coverage of the event began when the clan mothers leading the initial resistance called for Mohawk warrior support to prevent them from being removed by the authorities. This escalated quickly from a quiet protest for land claim to a larger protest for Mohawk sovereignty (Conradi, 2009). The media coverage of the protest shook the public, causing them to question what was right. Conradi (2009) noted Canadians experienced what McEachern (2002) described as the "familiar [becoming] unfamiliar" (p. 55). This opened up new ways of thinking and looking at things (McEachern, 2002; see also Conradi, 2009). In fact, following this incident, the Progressive Conservative government, which held power at the time, commissioned an inquiry into the events. Thus, the RCAP was established in 1991 (Doerr, 2021).

Commissioners on Aboriginal Peoples (four Indigenous and three non-Indigenous individuals) held close to 100 meetings, many lasting several days, between fall of 1991 and 1995 (RCAP, 1996a). Their report is extensive in its recording of history and documenting of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada to the time of publication. It encompasses five volumes: *Looking Forward, Looking Back; Restructuring the Relationship; Gathering Strength; Perspectives and Realities;* and *Renewal: A Twenty-Year Commitment* (RCAP, 1996a), spanning over 3,200 pages. Volume 1 of the report explicitly stated, "Contemporary Canadians reject the paternalism of yesterday and recognize that Aboriginal people know best how to define and promote their own interests" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 8). While stating that Aboriginal people matter and know best how to look after themselves, the commission's report does not go so far as to suggest the Canadian government should relinquish control. Instead, it stated, "Whenever governments intend to exercise their constitutional powers to legislate or make policies that may affect Aboriginal peoples in a material way, particularly in an adverse way, they would be wise to engage first in a process of consultation" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 8). Self-government is the means by which Aboriginal people can begin to define their interests and engage in negotiations regarding treaties (RCAP, 1996b).

Interestingly, while the RCAP (1996a) report was forward looking in its recommendations to reconstruct the relationship between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian government, in the opening pages of Volume 1 there remains an underlying tone of denial or desire to absolve Canadians of responsibility (RCAP, 1996b). After a paragraph outlining the history of cultural oppression and assimilation, it was quick to follow up with "this is not an attractive picture, and we do not wish to dwell on it" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 12). The report went on to state that Canadians must look back in order to move forward (RCAP, 1996b), but in this section, in which they interpret their mandate, the commissioners seem to offer space for readers to distance themselves from the actions of the past and maintain their denial of the events that have taken place. Lee Maracle (2017) has written extensively about Canadian denial and perception of innocence. She also noted, "Canadians do not resist culturally" (p. 63), but while "Canadians think they are nice, but they absolutely hate sharing the country with us" (p. 81). I argue, while Canadians are beginning to acknowledge the less-than-peaceful history of settling North America, there is a long way to go to fully accepting and owning that history.

The Aboriginal people involved in meetings with the RCAP (1996b) made it clear to commissioners that the only way forward was to take "deliberate action to 'set the record straight'" (p. 16). This is the first mention of the need for reconciliation. The report stated, for reconciliation to occur, a "great cleansing of the wounds of the past" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 17) must take place. They stated the Canadian government must acknowledge and express regret on behalf of the Canadian people for the harms imposed in the past and must commit to never permitting or supporting such violence in the future. In addition, the report asserted Aboriginal people must "free themselves of the anger and fear that surges up in any human being or collective in response to insult and injury, and extend forgiveness to the representatives of the society that has wronged them" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 17). Rather than a means of building trust, which the Royal Commission wrote is important for reconciliation to occur, having these statements back to back suggests again that space is being provided for readers to distance themselves from a history of cultural genocide. In *Psychology Today,* Buscho (2019) wrote, "An apology does not include a request for forgiveness. Asking for forgiveness puts the focus back on you when it should stay on the person who feels hurt or wronged" (para. 1).

Part One: The Relationship in Historical Perspective, found in Volume 1 of the Royal Commission report, again provided a Eurocentric dominant perspective while trying to explain the differences in how people understand and record historical events (RCAP, 1996b). They excused Canadians' understanding of the past and then stated, "The non-Aboriginal historical tradition in Canada is rooted in western scientific methodology and emphasizes scholarly documentation and written records" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 37), while Aboriginal historical tradition is oral, with stories and legends handed down to teach. These stories are purposefully open to interpretation by those hearing them in the context of their own experience. There is no emphasis on truth (RCAP, 1996b). The Royal Commission, however, presented an argument to suggest that the Eurocentric view of history is linear, seeing past events as over and done, whereas the Aboriginal view is cyclical, with up cycles and down cycles, but a desire to renew and find balance. This argument illustrates the significant difference in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal culture and a different rationale for both for wanting to reconcile the past.

From this point on, the RCAP (1996b) report becomes much more of a documentary of the history of relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people with an eye to how to move forward. In the closing section of Volume 1, the commission sets out their vision

for a renewed relationship based on "mutual recognition, mutual respect, sharing and mutual responsibility" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 645). The report stated, by renewing the relationship with these principles in mind, Canadians can return to a "path of justice, co-existence and equality" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 660). Volumes 2 to 5 went further into depth on how the government can begin to ensure that Aboriginal peoples become "full partners in Confederation" (RCAP, 1996b, p. 645).

Among the recommendations in the RCAP (1996a) report are:

- a new Royal Proclamation;
- an Indigenous parliament to advise Parliament on matters related to Indigenous people;
- establishment of a lands and treaties tribunal to oversee negotiations related to land issues;
- encouragement for Indigenous peoples to "establish economic institutions that reflected cultural values, were accountable and yet were protected from political interference" (Doerr, 2021, para. 7);
- several directives related to social and cultural issues intended to improve health and education for Indigenous people;
- "public education initiatives to increase cultural sensitivity and understanding among non-Indigenous people" (Doerr, 2021, para. 8);
- active involvement by Aboriginal people in the political and economic development that is underway in Canada's North; and
- a call for a First Minister's Conference in response to the report with changes to federal government departments and increased spending for Indigenous programs.

Although the Liberal government committed to review the Royal Proclamation report and its recommendations when it was received in 1996, it did not hold a First Ministers Conference (Doerr, 2021, para. 12). Instead, the federal government issued a report outlining its own achievements since 1993 when the Liberals came into power (Doerr, 2021, para. 12). The first formal response to the Royal Proclamation report came in 1998 in the report *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan* (Government of Canada, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1997) along with a Statement of Reconciliation and a Statement of Renewal (Government of Canada, 1998).

An underlying theme in the *Gathering Strength* report is accountability (Government of Canada, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1997). The word "accountability" appears 15 times and the term "accountable" 14 times. The press release from the government also stressed accountability as being important in the rebuilding of relationships. Minister Stewart stated in the unveiling of the plan that there was commitment to "building a real partnership with Aboriginal people, including the development of mechanisms to recognize sustainable and accountable Aboriginal governments and institutions" (Government of Canada, 1998, para. 2). This statement seems to stress that before this action plan Aboriginal organisations were not accountable financially and that they require the federal government's assistance to create sustainable and accountable structures.

In reviewing the Government of Canada (1998) press release, which included the Statement of Reconciliation (1998), I found a large emphasis placed on the impact of the Residential School system. The action plan further supported this emphasis, with $350 million set aside for healing (Government of Canada, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1997). While this is admirable on the surface, it reinforces the idea that Indigenous People have a problem and that non-Indigenous programs are the answer (Roland Chrisjohn, as cited in Barnsley, 1998). It is with this in mind that I suggest the *Gathering Strength* report (Government of Canada, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1997), while written in a politically correct fashion intended to promote relationship building between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal nations, holds an underlying paternalistic view of the relationship.

Even with the *Gathering Strength* action plan put forward in 1998, not much changed in terms of Indigenous self-government (Government of Canada, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1997). In 2008, then Prime Minister Stephen Harper issued a formal apology to Indigenous People in Canada's House of Commons ("Apology to Native Canadians," 2008). The core of this apology was for the harms inflicted by the Residential School system. While this seemed to pave the road for reconciliation efforts to begin, it must be noted, in 2007, Canada had voted against the *United Nations Declaration on Rights of Indigenous People* (UNDRIP; United Nations, 2007) and, in 2009, Prime Minister Harper (as cited in Joseph, 2018) stated at a G20 meeting that Canada had "no history of colonialism" (p. 88). Once again, the Canadian government's words and actions come into question—are they political rhetoric or a commitment to change? In 2010,

Canada reversed its decision not to endorse UNDRIP. However, this endorsement does not mean that Canada accepted the declaration. Coppes (2016) noted,

> Canada's official stance was that, "although the Declaration is a non-legally binding document that does not reflect customary international law nor change Canadian laws, our endorsement gives us the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to continue working in partnership with Aboriginal peoples in creating a better Canada" (para. 9)

In 2016, under the Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government, Canada signed UNDRIP (Coppes, 2016).

Between 1998 and 2016, the federal government appeared to put most of their energy into Aboriginal healing program funding and implementation. In 2008, an Aboriginal not-for-profit organisation was created and provided with a $350 million federal grant (Facing History & Ourselves, 2020). The grant was designated "'for community-based healing as a first step to deal with the legacy of physical and sexual abuse at Residential Schools' and laid plans for community development and strengthening Indigenous governance" (Facing History & Ourselves, 2020, para. 6). With this grant, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation was given an 11-year mandate.

Frustrated by the slow pace of action on the part of the federal government, in 2005 Phil Fontaine, in his role as National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, launched a lawsuit on behalf of Aboriginal People. This class action lawsuit was settled out of court in 2006 and received a settlement of $125 million (Facing History & Ourselves, 2020), which was given to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation to administer, extending its mandate to 2014 (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, n.d.).

5.3 Truth and Reconciliation – Calls to Action

Another agreement made in the settling of the lawsuit was for the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, noted in the Statement of Reconciliation (Government of Canada, 1998). While the TRC was supported by the federal government through the appointment of commissioners and an approximate $72 million grant (Government of Canada, 2024d), it is important to remember the requirement for this commission was only driven by a class action court settlement (Facing History & Ourselves, 2020). It was not initiated by the federal government in response to the RCAP

(1996a) report. The release of the TRC (2015b) report with 94 recommendations was perfectly timed with a federal election campaign. The Liberal party headed by Justin Trudeau built a strong election mandate around "working with Aboriginal people to build a 'renewed relationship'" ("AFN General Assembly," 2015, para. 3). In November 2015, the Liberals were elected to power, Justin Trudeau began his term as Prime Minister, and he "accepted the Final Report on behalf of the people of Canada" (Government of Canada, 2024d, para. 10). At that time, a commitment was made for the Government of Canada to continue to work respectfully with Indigenous Peoples to forge a true partnership to implement the recommendations of the TRC as well as to implement the UNDRIP (United Nations, 2007). This commitment marked perhaps the most significant turning point in Canada's history for fostering cooperation with Indigenous people and organisations to start the process of truth and reconciliation.

The move towards indigenisation in schools and postsecondary educational settings has been largely driven by the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action. It is interesting to note that the Calls to Action are recommendations not for the federal government but rather for the people of Canada. This could be seen as intentional to build on some of the grassroots momentum happening in Canada at the time, such as the Idle No More movement (de Bruin, 2019), which not only focused on government action and treaty rights but also the plight of missing and murdered Indigenous women across the country as well as "the sixties scoop" (Sinclair & Dainard, 2024, para. 1), in which Indigenous children were removed from their homes and adopted to non-Indigenous families at alarming rates. With the growing awareness of the impact of Residential Schooling on Indigenous people, the time was perhaps right for calling on Canadians across levels of government and as individuals to acknowledge the truth and begin the path of reconciliation. Poirier and Hedaraly (2020), in their analysis of the TRC (2015b) final report, suggested the decision to not address the report directly to the federal government may have been intentional, as a way to avoid "legitimizing a federal system which was imposed on Indigenous peoples" (p. 174). This could be seen as an attempt to assert Indigenous Peoples' power over the colonial government system that remains in place.

Despite the TRC (2015b) not directly addressing the Calls to Action to the Government of Canada, over 80% of the recommended actions are "exclusively or partially addressed to formal Canadian 'governmental entities', that is, the federal, provincial, territorial or municipal governments" (Poirier & Hedaraly, 2020, p. 178). Several proposed actions call

for implementation of UNDRIP (United Nations, 2007), and many call for changes in legislation (TRC, 2015b). A full range of policy areas are touched on in the Calls to Action, including child welfare, health care, justice, and education (TRC, 2015b). Eleven of the 94 Calls to Action are related to education, from early childhood through to postsecondary education (TRC, 2015b). One of the specific requests is for the federal government to "eliminate gaps in education and employment between Indigenous and non-Indigenous 'Canadians'" (Poirier & Hedaraly, 2020, p. 199; see also TRC, 2015b).

In 2016, Canada's federal government launched the National Inquiry into MMIWG in response to TRC (2015b) Call to Action #41, which spoke to the thousands of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and the links to the intergenerational legacy of Residential Schools. The National Inquiry Into MMIWG (2019) inquiry went beyond the TRC Calls to Action to look specifically at systemic causes of all forms of violence against Indigenous women and girls through gathering stories using Indigenous research methodologies and empowering Indigenous women and girls to reclaim their power and place in society (see National Inquiry Into MMIWG, n.d.). Recommendations put forward in the National Inquiry Into MMIWG (2019) report supported the TRC's Calls to Action and further identified the need to end the oppression of Indigenous women and girls through providing increased access to education, training, and economic security. Education is key to reducing violence by alleviating many of the conditions that lead to it, such as poverty and lack of housing—basic economic and social security afforded to non-Indigenous people in Canada everyday (National Inquiry Into MMIWG, 2019).

5.4 Canada as a Postcolonial Nation?

As I noted earlier, the act of settlers moving to Canada, taking possession of the land, and displacing Indigenous People may be in the historic past, but colonial practices are far from over. Given that Canada is no longer a colony of the British Empire but is an independent nation deemed part of the British Commonwealth as of 1982, some may suggest that Canada has moved to a postcolonial stage. Ideologically, I challenge this argument, as Canada most certainly maintains economic and cultural ties to Britain.

In 1926, at a conference of the British Dominions, the attendees agreed that Britain and her dominions were all equal (The Commonwealth, n.d.). With this decision, the British Empire moved to become the British Commonwealth of Nations (The Commonwealth,

n.d.). Canada, as a previously colonised nation of Britain, remained within the British Commonwealth. The conference attendees decided that, while the United Kingdom would no longer rule over them, all commonwealth nations would swear an oath of allegiance to the British monarch. With the signing of Canada's Constitution Act in 1982, Canada became a fully independent nation. While still a part of the Commonwealth, the reigning British monarch has no ability to amend or enact legislation in Canada (Blakemore, 2023), yet Canada is definitively a constitutional monarchy.

It is interesting that in a time considered to be postcolonial, Canada would still opt to remain closely connected with her coloniser. Lee Maracle (2017) noted there is a "Britishness" to the Canadian national identity. She remarked on the "sense and courtesy of the British aristocracy still has a strong presence in Canada, and we all are expected to adore the queen [now king] no matter which country we are originally from" (Maracle, 2017, p. 27). Canada's Prime Minister attended the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II in 2022 (Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, 2022). He grieved her passing on behalf of Canadians, many of whom continue to be colonised under her rule. An even more striking and current illustration of this allegiance to the British monarchy is Canada's swearing the oath of allegiance to the recently proclaimed King Charles III. According to the Government of Canada's website, "as a constitutional monarch, His Majesty King Charles III does not 'rule' the country. However, as Canada's Head of State, he remains a fundamental part of Canada's system of government and our sense of identity" (Government of Canada, 2024c, para. 3).

In May 2023, the Canadian Prime Minister attended the coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, surprisingly accompanied by a contingent including Canada's first Indigenous Governor-General Mary Simon, First Nations National Chief RoseAnne Archibald, President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) Natan Obed, and President of the Métis National Council Cassidy Caron (Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau, 2023). In addition, a Canadian postage stamp has been designed to celebrate this coronation and Canadian paper currency is being produced with the image of the new king replacing that of Queen Elizabeth II ("His Majesty," Canada Post, 2023). Maracle (2017) perhaps explained this best when she noted from an Indigenous perspective, for many, "this is a painful colonial expectation, but no matter, we must love the queen" (p. 27), and now the king.

The actions listed above are seemingly in contrast with the idea of a postcolonial existence, even if Canada is no longer part of the British Empire. As a country in the throes of self-determination, it must be noted that even if Canada has essentially broken free of British rule, Canadians continue to be a divided people—split along the lines of race. Mary Louise Pratt (1992, as cited in Loomba, 1998) critiqued the idea of postcolonialism existing, noting that White Americans in their attempts to decolonise and create a new "American society and culture … retain[ed] European values and White supremacy" (p. 9). Canada is no different. Canadian society remains driven by the logic of imperialism and engages in concerted colonial action against Indigenous peoples" (Barker, 2009, p. 325). With this understanding then, colonialism still exists.

I believe colonialism in the US and Canada (and other nations striving to decolonise) needs to be defined differently. Settler colonialism differs from other forms of colonialism in that "settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land … insist[ing] on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). Land becomes a valuable resource and the most contested. Tuck and Yang (2012) noted, in taking over land that belonged to the Indigenous People, they not only have control over this land for their home, making it a source of capital, but also and more importantly, disrupt the Indigenous relationship to their land. This constitutes a "profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). This violence does not stop once the land is appropriated, but continues to this day. Treaties were established in Canada to remove Indigenous Peoples' claims to their land. The federal government moved Indigenous Peoples to reserves, took their children, strove to erase their language and culture by ensuring their children were schooled in English, and created policies that reinforced the power differential between Indigenous and settler Canadians.

The ongoing suppression of the colonised without military control in place suggests there is more at play in colonisation than forceful takeovers of peoples to exploit resources. I suggest modern colonialism is focused more on "winning over the hearts and minds of people who have previously been geographically enveloped by imperial forces" (Barker, 2009, p. 326). In Canada, Indigenous People have been colonised through traditional means (e.g., losing ownership of lands and being forced to adapt to British laws and customs), cultural genocide in Residential Schools and government programs, and the ongoing false history and reinforcement of racist attitudes of settlers (Barker, 2009). Education has been used to disempower Indigenous Peoples and to maintain this status

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quo. W. A. Wilson and Yellowbird (2005) strongly asserted, in the US, "the current institutions and systems are designed to maintain the privilege of the colonizer and the subjugation of the colonised, and to produce generations of people who will never question their position within this relationship" (p. 1). The same can be said of Canadian institutions and systems.

In recent years, colonisation has been propagated under the guise of justice. Creating and promoting the classification of initially the "Aboriginal" and now "Indigenous" People in an attempt to placate, has in fact reinforced and perhaps further strengthened a delineation between the privileged settlers and the non-privileged others (Barker, 2009). Social categorisation is a powerful means of fostering difference and ensuring a continued binary paradigm that reinforces "otherness." Binaries promote "a hierarchy within which one category is 'better' than the other. This hierarchical order is embedded in societal structures and tightly bound with systems of oppression, confirming power and privilege and maintaining a social order rooted in racism" (Shelton & Dodd, 2021, p. 624). Furthermore, Shelton and Dodd (2021) noted, "Maintenance of this social order … perpetuates violence and marginalization" (p. 624). Without otherness, there is no benefit to being White. By labelling Indigenous People as Natives, Indians, Aboriginals or Indigenous, White settlers continue to subjugate the other, thereby ensuring their superiority in Canada.

5.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented an account of the history of Canada's relationship with the Indigenous Peoples who were here long before Canada was "discovered" by Europeans. I have shared an overview of the language and discourse that has brought indigenisation to the forefront in Canada and created a sense of urgency for postsecondary educational institutions to lead the movement with shifts in policy, approach, and practice. In the next chapter, I focus on Canada's higher education framework and how it is impacted by and responding to neoliberalism and globalisation. I then delve deeper into the policies of widened access and equity, diversity, and inclusion and their association with indigenisation.

Chapter 6: Canadian Postsecondary Education Environment

In this chapter, I discuss the complex Canadian postsecondary environment. I first describe the current types of postsecondary institutions before delving into the impact of neoliberalism versus social justice on postsecondary education in Canada. This leads to an in-depth discussion of the impact of globalisation on higher education and the outcomes of widening access, internationalisation, and marketisation on the learning experience of students in Ontario today. Finally, I touch on the challenges of equity, diversity, and inclusion policies in the sector and the impact of these challenges on moving indigenisation forward as a policy in postsecondary education.

6.1 Higher Education in Canada

Higher education in Canada is a complex system, comprising publicly funded research-driven universities, private universities, publicly funded colleges and polytechnic institutions, and nonfunded private career colleges. Added to this complexity is that there are differences in priority and focus for funding of education across Canada's 13 provinces and territories. In the 1800s, when the Canadian Confederation was formed, responsibility for education was given by the federal government to the provincial governments. Section 93 of the Canadian Constitution "commit[ted] both levels of government to furthering economic development to reduce disparities in opportunities" (Kirby, 2007, p. 3). This ensures that while the provincial governments are primarily responsible for funding postsecondary education, the federal government supports when necessary by issuing transfer payments to help equalise service levels across richer and poorer provinces, supporting national scientific research, and provides financial assistance to students (Usher, 2021).

Traditionally, in Canada, there were universities, community colleges, and trades apprenticeships. In recent years, hybrid educational institutions called polytechnics have evolved out of the college sector. In addition, Canada has a growing private career college (PCC) industry that typically provides training programs of up to 12 months in duration. According to Usher's (2021) higher education report, the earliest universities in Canada were denominational with religious education aimed at clerics or future school teachers. Kirby (2007) noted Canadian universities are based on "the medieval European *studia generalia* of Bologna, Paris, Oxford and Cambridge" (p. 3) and are oriented towards both teaching and research. While Canadian universities confer bachelor's, master's, and

doctoral degrees, colleges have traditionally offered more vocational types of learning leading to certificates and diplomas.

Largely established in the 1960s, with an influx of federal investment in nonuniversity postsecondary education, colleges initially offered programs up to 2 years in duration. Programs offered have evolved from upgrading and general education programs aimed at mature students to a mix of vocational programs in a range of fields, including arts, technology, business, and health sciences (Kirby, 2007; Usher, 2021). Many of the programs offered by colleges are now up to 3 years in length. In the past 10 to 15 years, some provinces, including Ontario, have granted colleges the right to confer degrees (Kirby, 2007), and, in February 2024, the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Colleges and Universities (2024) put forward a proposal to amend the Post-Secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act (2000) to allow colleges to offer applied master's degrees (Ontario Regulation 279/02, 2024). These changes are narrowing the divide between universities and colleges in terms of identity and purpose, driving up competition for a shrinking pool of domestic students and funding. Finally, PCCs are not subsidised by government funding and operate as for-profit businesses (Usher, 2021). While there used to be a significant divide between PCCs and publicly funded postsecondary education, new partnerships are being forged between colleges and PCCs to deliver provincially approved college programs primarily to international students in Canada.

It is important to note here that the number of universities, colleges, and PCCs in Canada is hard to enumerate accurately due to the different jurisdictional laws and regulatory bodies overseeing them. According to the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Colleges and Universities (2024) website, in Ontario alone, there are 23 publicly assisted universities, 24 publicly assisted colleges, and more than 500 registered PCCs and institutions. Extrapolating this across Canada makes it easy to see how the highly competitive postsecondary educational environment creates the drive to generate revenue to ensure financial sustainability of an institution. In this context, the implementation of policies such as widening access and internationalisation can serve the institution well. Embracing the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action by driving forward indigenisation is yet another means of ensuring relevance and appeal in this highly competitive postsecondary market. However, performing indigenisation as a marketing strategy might not equate to the meaningful change that was called for by the TRC.

6.2 Neoliberalism and Globalisation of Postsecondary Education

Neoliberal policies and social justice initiatives are seemingly at odds with one another. Neoliberalism shifts the focus away from structural social issues, emphasising individual responsibility for personal predicaments or circumstances (B. M. Wilson, 2007), while social justice makes a "commitment to challenging social, cultural, and economic inequalities imposed on individuals arising from any differential distribution of power, resources, and privileges" (Mills School of Education, 2019, as cited in Sabzalieva et al., 2022, p. 8). Neoliberalism can be thought of as the ultimate manifestation of capitalism, with a focus on deregulation, marketisation, and globalisation alongside reduction of social supports and government subsidy of many programs including postsecondary education (Kotz, 2010). A key concept associated with neoliberalism is human capital theory. Investment in human capital implies an investment in education and postsecondary education to increase profit through output within a market society. However, the focus has been on equality of opportunity through initiatives such as widened access (discussed later in this chapter) versus "equalizing starting points through socioeconomic adjustment" (Gilles, 2015, p. 5). A neoliberal government cuts back on the additional supports "required for less advantaged communities and individuals to improve their educational and vocational prospects" (Gilles, 2015, p. 5). This occurs because

> human capital theory views those experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage, or those with learning difficulties, as wasted investment opportunities rather than in terms of justice, equality, or morality, then only a very obvious financial return can justify the costs incurred in the educational provision for such groups. (Gilles, 2015, p. 5)

Human capital theory suggests that not only is there a financial benefit for the individual who "invests" in their education, but increased postsecondary education participation can also be tied to a nation's overall economic growth (Gilles, 2015). A significant challenge of human capital theory in education is that it risks the focus of postsecondary education becoming driven by economic and workforce needs. Tying education to the economy is controversial for a number of reasons, starting with the narrowing of the curriculum and focus away from education for the sake of learning (Robeyns, 2006). Narrowing the focus of education to high-quality skills and technological training also creates graduates who lack the soft skills needed to be employable (Gilles, 2015). Robeyns (2006) also noted not only can education help improve individuals' standard of living through preparing them for a job, but in a more collective sense, education can also improve society by broadening

people's minds and experiences. While this seems to make sense at one level, Schultz (1971, as cited in Gilles, 2015) noted it is unreasonable to think education can lift a nation out of an economic setback as it is never a quick fix.

In the 1980s, as the notion of human capital gained popularity, some nations recognised that competing globally required a strong focus on the quality of education. As economies around the world, fuelled by the free market forces of neoliberalism, became increasingly interconnected, an educated workforce became imperative to maintaining global competitiveness (Kirby, 2007). A knowledge economy is one "based on production, distribution and utilization of knowledge and information as fundamental enablers of growth, wealth creation and employment" (Đonlagić & Kurtić, 2016, p. 92). Within a knowledge economy, a nation's wealth is measured by its ability to generate and provide human capital. As discussed in the previous section on human capital theory, this perspective shifts postsecondary education from being humanistic in its goals to develop individuals to their fullest, strengthen respect for human rights and freedoms, and contribute to promoting peace (United Nations, 1948, as cited in Kirby, 2007) to serving a strong economic purpose. As such, government intervention in society and the economy through education, training, and labour market policies has increased in the last 20 years. Attention is being given to

> the continuing and expanding influence of privatization and marketization in postsecondary systems; the growing role of governments in quantifying and monitoring the quality of postsecondary institutions and their programs; and the growing emphasis on internationalization as a mechanism for meeting national challenges in the areas of postsecondary education funding, workforce development and innovation. (Kirby, 2007, p. 6)

By virtue of their vocational focus, one might expect that Canadian colleges would be less impacted by globalisation and the shift to producing human capital. This, after all, was the initial mandate of colleges—to train individuals for the workforce as opposed to broadening minds, per se. However, colleges have experienced increased government oversight in terms of accountability despite decreases in operational funding support. In 2020, the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Colleges and Universities released its *Major Capacity Expansion Policy Framework*, in which it reiterated that "institutions must align programming to meet local labour market needs" (p. 3) in order to "prepare students for the jobs of tomorrow" (p. 3). The focus of the framework is "ensuring that [Ontario's] high-quality postsecondary education system is accountable, accessible, [and] affordable" (p. 2).

In a paper presented at the John Deutsch Institute's Higher Education in Canada Conference, Kingston, Ontario, Skolnik (2004) noted there has always been a tension between economic and intellectual purposes of postsecondary education but that "society is best served when there is a healthy balance between the two" (p. 5). Kirby (2007) noted access to education at any level contributes to social and economic well-being. Education "helps to reduce inequality by providing … opportunities for personal and occupational advancement that [individuals] would not have otherwise had" (p. 7). It is the "great equalizer of the conditions of men" (Mann, 1868, as cited in Kirby, 2007, p. 7). However, "globalization threatens to upset this balance, as governments employ financial and other policy levers in ways to get universities to give the dominant emphasis to the economic objectives of their activities" (Skolnik, 2004, as cited in Kirby, 2007, p. 6). Essentially, "the economic-utilitarian discourse is expanded beyond workforce education to include the entirety of postsecondary education, including university-level studies" (Kirby, 2007, p. 7). Rather than looking to colleges to supply highly skilled workers, there is a demand for universities to produce graduates with skills to meet the new knowledge economy. One offshoot of this is the shifting of educational requirements from what might have previously been met through college technical training to requiring a university degree or even degrees. University degrees are also required for many of the new occupations that have evolved worldwide.

In 2007, a number of provinces, including Ontario, underwent a postsecondary system review. Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (as cited in Kirby, 2007) opened the review by stating, "the key to competing and winning in a highly competitive global economy is having the most highly skilled and educated workforce" (p. 8; see also Government of Ontario, 2004, para. 3). While the reviews referenced "the benefits of learning … for the sake of learning itself" (Kirby, 2007, p. 8), they overwhelmingly focused on "the need to increase access to postsecondary education as a means of gaining competitive advantage, developing a highly skilled workforce and meeting provincial goals for economic growth" (p. 8). The Ontario report noted that "because the new economy demands it, the number of people attending [postsecondary studies] will need to rise substantially in the years ahead" (Kirby, 2007, p. 8). All provincial reports had this similar focus, with recommendations for increasing participation in postsecondary education to include all who were "willing and qualified" (Kirby, 2007, p. 9) along with initiatives to improve levels of underrepresented groups both in education and the labour

market, including Indigenous People. As such, this policy to widen access has been driven by globalisation.

6.2.1 Widening Access

Widening access to postsecondary education in Ontario has been a goal of the provincial government for close to 20 years. Widening access has two leverage points that can be applied, one in overall growth and the other in broadening the diversity of students. In 2005, the provincial Liberal government provided funding for more than 100,000 new spaces to Ontario colleges and universities (Deller et al., 2019). First, the focus of this influx of financial support was on ensuring that anyone who wanted to attend postsecondary education should be able to go (growth model), and, second, the focus was on equity of access, ensuring "all Ontario youth have an equal opportunity to access and succeed in the postsecondary system" (Deller et al., 2019, p. 6). As Deller et al. noted, research at that time suggested the youth in need of an equal opportunity to access and succeed were those whose own parents had not completed postsecondary education (first-generation students), those from lower income families, those with disabilities, and Indigenous People.

The money invested in creating 100,000 new spaces in Ontario postsecondary in 2005 did positively impact enrolment growth, with a 31% increase in enrolment from 2004 to 2015 (Deller et al., 2019). While this is impressive and ultimately placed Ontario as a leader in postsecondary attainment in Canada and internationally among the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (Deller et al., 2019), it has not come without challenges. Critics note the assumption behind widening access was that this would "reduce the participation gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students" (Deller et al., 2019, p. 8), but there is little evidence of this outcome, nor is there evidence that the growth model positively impacted retention or graduation rates, as the focus was purely on getting students in the door, per se. In addition, Deller et al. (2019) reported, because there was not a similarly timed investment in faculty and resources to support the burgeoning enrolment, quality of the learning experience has been impacted negatively. In Ontario for example, public funding for colleges, which is used to support teaching salaries and services for learners, was 54.4% of overall college revenue in 2008–2009, in contrast to 2019–2020 when it was only 32.2% (Statistics Canada, 2022b).

While the growth model was impactful in raising enrolment between 2005 and 2015, because of changes in how the provincial government funds postsecondary education and the decreasing domestic, direct entry from high school student enrolments, alongside cost of living increases impacting salary and service provision costs, universities and colleges are faced with a shrinking revenue margin. Generating new revenue streams through recruitment of international students is one practical means of addressing these concerns.

6.2.2 Internationalisation

In order to remain financially sustainable, Ontario colleges have had to find ways to attract new students. One way they have done so is by leaning heavily into recruiting international students to bolster revenue. In the *Internationalization and Trade in Higher Education* report, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2004) noted, in 2000, the rationale for recruiting international students to Canadian universities was to (a) "integrate domestic and international students in and out of the classroom" (p. 73), (b) "increase the institution's profile and contacts in target recruitment countries" (p. 73), and (c) "*generate income for the institution* [emphasis added]" (p. 73). At a time where domestic student enrolment is declining, attracting international students who pay a premium tuition to attend Canadian postsecondary institutions makes financial sense. A report by the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario (2021) noted that between 2012–2013 and 2020–2021, domestic student enrolment at Ontario's public colleges declined by 15%, but international student enrolments increased by 342%. A strategy report by Global Affairs Canada in 2019 noted, "International students in Canada spent an estimated $21.6 billion on tuition, accommodation and other expenses in 2018 and sustained close to 170,000 jobs for Canadians in 2016" (p. 2). The economic benefit to postsecondary education and to Canada overall is evident in these numbers.

Building on Success: International Education Strategy 2019–2024 was published by Global Affairs Canada in 2019 as a sequel to the Canadian government's 2014–2019 strategy document (Government of Canada, 2014). The Global Affairs Canada report reinforces the Canadian government's commitment to growing international student recruitment. One of the key initiatives highlighted in the Global Affairs Canada report is the need to diversify the countries from which Canada attracts international students, expanding beyond China and India, and to ensure a more balanced distribution where they settle once they arrive. The desire is to increase the diversity of international students, not

only with the benefit of diversity for student experience in mind, but also with the neoliberal economic focus of "building labour markets, [and] spur[ring] economic development in target regions and industries" (Global Affairs Canada, 2019, p. 4). With the ageing Canadian demographic and the new skill sets being demanded by employers, including intercultural competencies and strong international networks, immigration is essential. International students often choose to remain in Canada upon graduation, providing a much-needed pipeline of employees who can help ensure Canada remains competitive in the global market (Global Affairs Canada, 2019).

Without international enrolment, Canadian colleges would not be financially viable or sustainable at the current level of government investment. Given the interest the Canadian government has in continuing to diversify Canada's workforce to remain competitive on the global stage, educational leaders can expect the international student population will continue to grow.

6.2.3 Marketisation of Postsecondary Education

As previously noted, despite the rapid growth in enrolment in Ontario colleges following the infusion of funding for additional seats in 2005, institutions received no additional funding for faculty or resources. In addition, after the initial spike in enrolment with the increase in available seats in 2005, domestic enrolment across colleges and universities in Canada has experienced a more recent decrease. Choi and Hou (2023) reported, across Canada, "domestic student enrolments increased from 1,821,246 in 2010/2011 to 1,847,490 in 2012/2013 and decreased gradually over the following years to 1,784,181 in 2019/2020" (Descriptive Results section, para. 2). In Ontario, the domestic enrolment for 2010–2011 was 713,682 and in 2019–2020 had dropped to 705,303 (Choi & Hou, 2023).

Universities experienced similar challenges to those faced by colleges, with reduction in grants driving a need to increase tuition fees and solicit philanthropic support (Kirby, 2007). With ongoing decreases in government funding and tuition freezes reducing revenue, educational institutions are increasingly functioning as other businesses do. For Ontario colleges, generating revenue through research, increased international enrolment, partnerships with PCCs, and learning enterprises has gained importance. In this environment, marketisation is evident but resembles a quasi or managed market (Burke, 2005), in which the government still plays a guiding role in establishing priorities and

providing incentives (Rigas & Kuchapski, 2016). A discussion paper produced by the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in 2012 entitled *Strengthening Ontario's Centres of Creativity, Innovation, and Knowledge* stated that higher learning systems around the world are transforming "in response to evolving economic, social and student learning realities" (p. 4). The "demand for greater levels of knowledge and skill" by "increasingly diverse and mobile learners" is leading to "an expectation of high quality in return for what they pay" (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2012, p. 4). Combined with an expectation from the government that "Ontario colleges and universities will put students first" (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2012, p. 7), the idea of students being clients or consumers is reinforced.

This shift away from education for education's sake to a business-focused lens necessitated reforms to higher education such as the creation of education standards, an increased focus on assessment of students and teachers, and funding of professional development for teachers, particularly in the area of technology, all as a push to improve efficiency (Sahlberg, 2016). Performativity, with its focus on performance, results, and efficiency—essentially a corporate approach to ensuring companies remain competitive in the global market—has extended to the field of education (Hill, 2007, as cited in Hennessy & McNamara, 2013). In Ontario, as an example, the Ministry of Training, Universities, and Colleges created key performance indicators (KPIs) and later tied them to funding for universities and colleges (applying a performance-based funding model). With this funding model, $16.5 million was allocated to universities in Ontario based on graduation rates, employment rates 6 months after graduation, and employment rates 2 years after graduation (Government of Ontario, Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities, 2001). The 2020–2025 strategic mandate agreements for universities and colleges in Ontario noted that, up to that point, a very small percentage of funding (1.2%) was tied to performance (Government of Ontario, 2024). The new agreements for 2020–2025 stated more of the funding would be tied to 10 performance metrics (Government of Ontario, 2024). The Government of Ontario (2024) stated the planned system-wide proportion of funding tied to performance (i.e., the performance funding grant) was anticipated to be 10% by 2023 and 25% by 2025. It appears, then, that both a roll-back (i.e., deregulation) and a roll-out (i.e., reregulation) process has been happening simultaneously, resulting in an increase in surveillance, regulation, and competition in postsecondary education (Peck, 2010, as cited in Aikens & Hargis, 2019). This tension forces educational institutions to do

more with less (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). It creates additional burden in the postsecondary education system that is now being asked to engage in a major systematic shift to provide widened access while ensuring it is bounded by the tenets of equity, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, the postsecondary education system is expected to achieve these results while keeping indigenisation at the forefront.

This focus on performativity, explained through the need for cost effectiveness and efficiency in a time of lowered government funding of higher education, is also strongly related to the globalisation of education and the need to attract international students. International students can bring increased revenue to ensure financial viability and sustainability despite government funding cuts as well as feed into the nation's desire to attract talent in order to remain competitive in the global market. Attracting international students requires that postsecondary educational institutions focus on recruitment through ensuring they have a strong reputation for top programs and high postgraduation employment rates. Universities and colleges are increasingly being forced to compete against one another, within Canada and internationally. All of the above has created a system that measures inputs and outputs in the form of research funding received, student numbers, teacher quality, graduation rates, and jobs obtained upon graduation (Cowen, 1996; Government of Ontario, Ministry of Colleges and Universities, 2024). Skilbeck and Connell (1996, as cited in Cowen, 1996) noted, "The generation of knowledge and new technologies have become central elements of international economic competitiveness" (p. 253). Not surprisingly, the demand for research to move technology forward is a driving factor in what credentials are available, which credentials are in demand, and which are no longer enough. It has also created a "robust global ranking system used to attract students and talented researchers" (Holmes, 2024, para 5). In a study on higher education transformations in Russia, Smolentseva (2016) noted, "Systems that are constantly producing status on a competitive basis cannot ensure social justice" (p. 213).

Universities and colleges have been ranked in Canada for a number of years, I personally, remember rushing to buy the annual *Maclean's* magazine issue with the Canadian postsecondary education institutions ranked on factors such as the number of students, number of credentials, research partners and projects, location, amenities, graduation rate and employability. However, this ranking has now become a profitable business in its own right. Bailey (2015), in an article written for *The New Economy*, noted, in 2003, with the release of the Shanghai Rankings, the business of academic ranking of universities grew

significantly. Magazine inserts have increasingly become commercially driven, aiming to boost magazine sales (Bailey, 2015). Similarly, rankings have evolved to include paid-for and opt-in gold star rating services for the universities that can afford them. This shift also includes the monetisation of data, in which information gathered from higher education institutions worldwide is sold back to the very same institutions that provided it. Additionally, the convening of "prestigious events in spectacular settings" (Holmes, as cited in Bailey, 2015, para. 8) have become a part of this landscape, offering "a lucrative mix of business opportunities including customized rankings, conferences, consultancy, and workshops" (para. 8) with financial benefits to both "hosts and sponsors and profit for the rankers" (para. 8). With this turn towards the commercialisation of ranking, it is difficult to believe that they remain objective and merit-based.

Two key challenges associated with the widespread expansion of access to and marketization of higher education, particularly when arguing that neoliberalism and globalisation run against social justice tenets, are the rise of credentialism and the perpetuation of systemic inequality. Referencing Hirsch (1976) and Marginson (1997), Smolentseva (2016) described, as the number of people holding a certain credential increases, the value of that credential declines. As more people enter the labour market with a credential, the ability to differentiate between candidates is minimised and a demand for a new level of credential is driven by the market, employers, and professionals. This process contributes to a self-reinforcing system that drives the value of credentials downward and requires the achievement of ever higher levels of postsecondary education by individuals in order for them to remain competitive and secure employment. This process also reinforces inequality because, as the credential itself loses value, other variables, such as the country or institution a graduate attended, can increase in value. This skewing of value of credentials and the ongoing performative measurement in higher education results in reinforcing the status quo and silencing ideas that challenge it.

Higher education is still a privilege reserved for those who can afford it. Sabzalieva et al. (2022) noted, "Those from wealthier backgrounds are still more likely to progress to higher education (Ilie et al., 2021)" (p. 20), and I argue those from wealthier backgrounds tend to have differential access to the top institutions. Top institutions continue to be selective in accepting students due to the demand for their "product," with a mindset that those who can get into those elite institutions do and those who cannot do not. This further

reinforces the divide between the "haves" and "have nots" along the "social background, motivations and life chances [continuum]" (Smolentseva, 2016, p. 214).

Beyond socioeconomic factors is the belief in the existence of a meritocracy attached to considerations of access to postsecondary education and achievement therein. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit" (United Nations, 1948, Article 26, para. 1). Selectiveness is, therefore, embedded in postsecondary education in that applicants must meet certain academic criteria to enter (Sabzalieva et al., 2022). The intention of establishing an admissions process based on academic criteria may be to provide objectivity, but it is a social construct that may actually discriminate against lower socioeconomic and racialised populations. It is not enough to look at academic ability when considering how accessible higher education is. Merit and capability are important, but so is having the financial means to apply and attend. Burke (2016) noted inequality is "deeply entrenched" (p. 7) in education. In order to apply and be accepted to postsecondary education, one must have attended a school that provided the curriculum required (e.g., academic level high school courses). Not all rural or marginalised communities have this privilege. In my own experience, the education system in small Inuit communities in Nunavut does not provide this option. In 2002, when my family left Nunavut, the high school graduation rate in Nunavut was 25.4% compared to 72.8% for all of Canada (Statistics Canada, 2016). Neary (2023) reported the graduation rate in Nunavut in 2022 was 38.4%. Statistics Canada (2022a) noted a graduation rate of 84% in 2020 (the most recent data available). In Grade 7, my oldest daughter supplemented her schooling by completing correspondence courses from Southern Canada that would prepare her academically for university. Recognizing these courses would not be available to her if we stayed in Nunavut was one factor that precipitated our relocation to Southern Canada when she was 13 years of age.

Living remotely is not the only systemic barrier to accessing higher education. Being part of a marginalised community means that the primary and secondary schools children attend may not have the course offerings required, there may not be any academic counselling available, or staff might not share the child's culture. This means that youth may not be academically prepared to be successful in higher education or that they do not even aspire to pursuing it. Youth in rural and marginalised communities may not be aware of financial aid or may not have access to a computer with reliable internet in order to

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apply for financial aid or to the college or university program they are interested in. This leaves them at a disadvantage whereby they don't pursue higher education because it does not seem viable financially. These barriers to being able to access higher education go beyond merit (Erwin & Thompson, 2021). In their report on access to postsecondary education, the Higher Education Quality Council (2020) indicated underrepresented students in higher education in Ontario include those from low-income households, Indigenous students, those with disabilities, and first-generation students (those whose parents did not complete postsecondary). These issues persist despite recent years of increased enrolments in postsecondary and expansion of the student financial aid system.

To increase opportunity for those populations that are not accessing postsecondary education as readily as others, different approaches are being implemented around the world. In their United Nations report, *The Right to Higher Education: A Social Justice Perspective*, Sabzalieva et al. (2022) stated some postsecondary institutions are using quotas as a means of affirmative action to increase diversity. Others have implemented standardised testing across senior high school students with lower entry points to postsecondary for people from some backgrounds. Finally, some have created pathway programs and incentives for what are sometimes termed equity deserving students (i.e., those who are from low-income families, first-generation postsecondary students, and racialised and Indigenous students). These social justice approaches are critical to broadening access to higher education. I believe higher education is a factor in improving the lives of equity-deserving students and thereby changing the cultural and political structures that exist. Increasing diversity and offering incentives requires funding through government support of higher education; however, this runs directly counter to neoliberalism discourse, which suggests racial and economic inequality are not structural but the result of individual choices and, therefore, do not warrant government intervention. I argue, therefore, that the corporate mentality in neoliberalism is defining higher education today. It determines who attends postsecondary education institutions, what programs are delivered, how subjects are taught, and what learning outcomes are expected. If racial and economic inequality are not structural but the result of individual choices, then widening access to higher education should erase the have-and-have-not divide. However, as noted above, widening access is not a panacea for inequality.

Thus, globalisation is a driver of widened access, internationalisation, and the quasi-marketisation of postsecondary education. I argue that as an outcome of neoliberalism, the

potential social justice benefits of widened access and internalisation are not being realised. While attracting international students is highly effective in increasing revenue and diversity of the student population, without adequate supports and college resources, I believe the quality of the student experience is being negatively impacted for all students. Adding equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and indigenisation strategies, and then ensuring that all programs and initiatives are measured and reported on, is next to impossible, which is another reason why social justice does not mesh with the neoliberal tenet that "learning is valued primarily in terms of its contribution to economic growth and the corporate agenda" (Aikens & Hargis, 2019, p. 24).

6.3 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Policies on equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in Canadian postsecondary institutions are grounded in federal legislation (Chan, 2005), such as the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982), the Employment Equity Act (1995), and the Canadian Human Rights Act (1985). For a western, developed country known for its attention to human rights, policies such as widened access to higher education are fundamental and central to any argument of social justice in education. Ensuring underrepresented groups have access to affordable, quality higher education that can lead to meaningful employment is key. I argue Canada is fulfilling the first half of this mandate, but opening the doors of higher education to traditionally excluded groups is not enough. Retaining these learners by ensuring they see themselves within the institution, feel welcome, and are free from "racist stereotypes and patronizing, paternalistic attitudes" (Kennedy, 2023, para. 10) is critical to promoting academic success and changing not only the education environment but also their subsequent work environment.

Postsecondary institutions worldwide are including diversity statements in their plans and marketing materials and are reflecting diversity in position titles (Tuitt & Stewart, 2021). In 2019, Universities Canada (as cited in Tuitt & Stewart, 2021) conducted a survey on EDI across Canadian universities. The survey revealed that 77% of universities have EDI written into their strategic plans and 70% are engaged in developing an action plan (University Affairs, as cited in Tuitt & Stewart, 2021). I believe the numbers would be similar for colleges in Canada.

However, statements and marketing are not enough. At the heart of this dissertation is the claim that postsecondary education institutions are patriarchal, hegemonic spaces where "White privilege is consciously and unconsciously advocated as habitual practice, which subsequently marginalises and excludes ethnic minority groups (Arday, 2017; McIntosh, 1990; Warren, 2007)" (Arday, 2020, p. 974). In a time of widened participation, this statement seems contradictory. Nevertheless, as Arday (2020) noted, commitment to EDI initiatives are largely driven by funding opportunities and reputational goals and often fall short on actual impact. Tate and Bagguely (2017) noted, by focusing on equity and diversity, postsecondary institutions are avoiding the reflexive work needed to unpack structural Whiteness, an uncomfortable process for those who believe they do not see colour or difference. In refusing to unpack the structural discrimination within colleges and universities, racial inequality remains very much present (Arday, 2020). One of the ways this can be seen is through daily microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are subtle comments and actions directed at non-White individuals that serve to maintain the sense of White superiority; they occur daily and "undermine and demean the presence of ethnic minorities within HE [higher education] spaces" (Arday, 2020, p. 975). Examples of microaggressions include "the questioning of professional capabilities; the marginalizing of individuals based on cultural difference; or the trivializing and dismissing of racist occurrences as hyper-sensitivity" (Arday, 2018, p. 32).

Not surprisingly then, despite this effort to advance EDI, campus protests and human rights tribunal cases continue to occur. Tuitt and Stewart (2021) suggested this may be due to the emphasis on inclusion rather than equity and the fact that "diversity initiatives have not resulted in substantial transformation of the day-to-day operations of campus business and instead focused more on how to assimilate minoritised [including Indigenous] students into the existing campus culture" (p. 100). This practice is consistent with the neoliberal and corporate drive to attract more students and make them feel welcome, while maintaining the status quo in terms of power and structure. As I discuss in the next chapter, what is not happening yet is the true decolonising work that constitutes social justice and which could result in meaningful indigenisation in the postsecondary education sector, as is being called for by Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

6.4. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, after first presenting a description of Canada's postsecondary education structure, I argued globalisation has led to an increasingly marketised, economically driven model for postsecondary education. This environment, while espousing a desire for social justice, is driven by financial need, quantification of results, and accountability. Policies such as widened access have led to a broader student base, and, while EDI policies are present, they primarily focus on inclusionary practices rather than equity. In the next chapter, I expand this discussion to explore Indigenous Peoples' experiences specifically, through examining indigenisation policy in postsecondary education, assessing the implementation of this policy as of 2022 at colleges in Alberta and Ontario, and discussing levers affecting the implementation.

Chapter 7: Truth, Reconciliation, and Indigenisation in Colleges

Indigenisation is not easily defined as it is interpreted differently by people depending on background, context, and intent. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define indigenisation as a process being undertaken in postsecondary educational institutions as part of the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action for reconciliation. In this chapter, I first discuss the political and economic drivers of indigenisation before moving to locate indigenisation within postsecondary education as a means of decolonising. I end the chapter with the findings of the analysis I completed of 32 Canadian colleges' websites to examine evidence of implementation of indigenisation policy.

7.1 Political and Economic Drivers of Indigenisation

Policy drives change and indigenisation is no exception to this. In this analysis, however, it was important that I explore the political and economic drivers that may be at play beyond the desire for truth and reconciliation in Canada. While some would purport that indigenisation is a social justice movement, I suggest it supports government economic policy at this time, and this has a significant impact on how colleges and universities are moving the indigenisation agenda forward.

As noted in the previous chapter, neoliberalism has had a significant impact on higher education, with many institutions adopting market-driven approaches to funding and governance (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997), particularly as the government decreases the financial support given to postsecondary institutions. As institutions are forced to compete for students and funding, an emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism has emerged both in terms of student population and curricula (Marginson, 2016). Universities have recognised that attracting Indigenous students is a matter of economic competitiveness. As institutions increasingly adopt market-oriented policies and practices, they are seeking to attract a diverse student body and respond to the demands of a globalised economy (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Indigenous knowledge and perspectives have been recognised as valuable resources for these institutions, as they can enhance the cultural competence and global awareness of students and faculty (Chilisa, 2012).

Indigenous knowledge refers to the knowledge and wisdom that is held by Indigenous Peoples, much of which has been developed over many generations (Smith, 2021). This knowledge is often rooted in a deep understanding of the environment, spirituality, and

community, and has traditionally been undervalued and marginalised within mainstream education systems in Canada (Tuck & Yang, 2012). With the increasing competition to attract students to universities and colleges and the global awareness of decolonisation underway in many nations, there may be a financial value to indigenisation that drives its uptake in postsecondary education. Not only does embedding Indigenous knowledge into curriculum attract Indigenous learners, but it may also provide a competitive advantage globally (Smith, 2021) for institutions who can graduate students, domestic and international, with enhanced ways of thinking that include both Western and Indigenous ways of knowing. For example, the University of Saskatchewan's (Teillet, 2022) Indigenous Land-Based Education program offers courses that combine Western science with Indigenous knowledge to prepare students for careers in environmental science and management.

In Canada, the TRC's (2015b) Calls to Action included a call for the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods in universities and colleges, which, as I noted earlier, has led to increased efforts to indigenise postsecondary education. Through the development of government policy and funding initiatives that prioritise the advancement of Indigenous education and research, many institutions are developing policies and programs aimed at incorporating Indigenous knowledge and perspectives (Pistorius, 2019). For example, the University of British Columbia's (2020) *Indigenous Strategic Plan* called for the integration of Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing into all aspects of the university's operations, including teaching, research, and governance.

Along with enhancing curricula and developing governance policies to guide indigenisation, as noted above, neoliberalism has driven the adoption of policies and programs aimed at increasing the retention of Indigenous students. These policies and programs often focus on providing financial support, mentoring, and other forms of academic and social support to Indigenous students (Ottman, 2017). For example, some institutions have established scholarships and bursaries specifically for Indigenous students, while others have created specialised support services such as academic advising and counselling. Additionally, some institutions have established partnerships with Indigenous communities in an effort to promote cultural exchange and knowledge sharing (Tuck & Yang, 2012).

Ensuring proper credit is given when cocreating knowledge can be challenging because of the unequal power balance that exists. Finding ways to overcome this power imbalance and ensuring academics do not appropriate Indigenous knowledge is important if meaningful change is to be effected. Todd (2016, as cited in Morreira et al., 2020) referred to "a new form of epistemic injustice by academics who exploit the currency of indigenous knowledge to further their own careers" (p. 12). They do so by acquiring local Indigenous knowledges and repackaging it as their own. Todd suggested this only manages to further "erase and silence subaltern knowers and undermine the historic decolonial struggles of Indigenous peoples" (p. 12). Essentially, rather than promoting equality and erasing colonialism through indigenisation, indigenisation initiatives being developed could in fact be perpetuating (neo)colonial power relations.

In the late 1800s, the Government of Canada worked diligently to force assimilation through mandatory education and by outlawing cultural ceremony and practices, such as the potlatch ban legislated in Canada in 1885 (Living Tradition, n.d.) The potlatch is a ceremony used in celebration involving feasting, spirit dances, singing, and gift giving. It helped to maintain community and relationships between clans. The ban in 1885 lasted until 1951; while the government was seeking to eradicate the ceremony and eradicate Indigenous culture, potlatches continued in secret (Living Tradition, n.d.). While the government was working to assimilate the First Nations People by banning ceremony, the film industry capitalised by capturing ceremonies for entertainment. Time and again, directors filmed movies that were said to portray the lives of Indigenous People but really just presented a popular image that fit the story of savages that needed to be saved and educated. What is worse is many of these constructed realities were marketed as documentaries (e.g., Nanook of the North; Flaherty, 1922).[2] These depictions are tools of the coloniser, used to justify policy and practice that dehumanised Indigenous People.

Canada is built on a foundation of cultural appropriation—the appropriation of all things Indigenous—their lives and their land. Its origins lie in what Jesse Wente (2021), an Indigenous writer, broadcaster, and arts leader, referred to as a "massive resources extraction project – the exploitation of the land's natural bounty in order to enrich

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[2] For more discussion on *Nanook of the North* (Flaherty, 1922) and controversy over its documentary status, see "The First Documentary? Or an Utter Falsehood?" (Cole, 2024).

Europeans – that was often both illegal and murderous" (p. 169). The story told to justify this is the settler history, which describes European settlers finding empty lands with groups of primitive savages here and there. In this false narrative, settlers did the right thing in negotiating land purchases, creating reservations, building schools to educate the children, breed civility, and enable them to become Canadians (Wente, 202).

Cultural appropriation can be defined as "tak[ing] place when members of a majority group adopt cultural elements of a minority group in an exploitative, disrespectful, or stereotypical way" ("What is Cultural Appropriation," n.d., para. 3). Furthermore, the Canada Council for the Arts (n.d.) has stated, for their purposes, "'cultural appropriation' applies when cultural borrowings or adaptations from a minoritised culture reflect, reinforce or amplify inequalities, stereotypes and historically exploitative relationships that have direct negative consequences on equity-seeking communities in Canada" (para. 7). In Canada, museums and galleries, established in the late 1800s and early 1900s, gathered a vast number of Indigenous artefacts (Gadacz, 2023). While it is plausible that the gathering if Indigenous items was part of their desire to educate the general public on Indigenous cultures, given that the government was working to assimilate and eradicate those cultures, I argue it was appropriation with an intent to entertain and gain financially. Wente (2021) stated cultural appropriation "infused their every action, every engagement with Indigenous culture, the very way they thought of Indigenous people *when they thought of us at all* (emphasis added)" (p. 165). Museums and galleries around the world hold many Indigenous sacred items, many of which were seized when ceremony was being banned. These items have been contextualised in museums and galleries for White audiences by White curators. This appropriation is yet another form of recontextualisation of Indigenous stories and culture, wrongly interpreted for profit by colonisers.

As Wente (2021) noted, the media today continues to be White dominated, so the stories of Indigenous People continue to be told almost exclusively through a White lens or are simply overlooked. It is the overlooking of important Indigenous issues that raises the most flags for Indigenous People when expressing their concerns about cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation goes beyond "representation and responsible storytelling: it is life and death" (Wente, 2021, p. 165) in some instances. If the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women, unsafe drinking water advisories, and other travesties were reported by Indigenous writers, editors, producers, and broadcasters with the urgency they demand, meaningful action may be taken. However, Indigenous stories are a threat to the

story Canada tells itself and the world (Wente, 2021), so what Wente (2021) referred to as narrative sovereignty—the right of a "people, communities and nations to control their own stories and the tools used in that storytelling" (p. 168)—is still a long way off.

Thankfully, an awareness of cultural appropriation has begun in Canada. While this critical education is still in its infancy, change is starting, albeit with defensiveness still present when non-Indigenous people feel threatened by the discussion. Canada would prefer to be portrayed as a country that did everything right, "a nation of immense natural beauty and overwhelming politeness" (Wente, 2021, p. 170); as such, people in positions of power attempt to bury the stories of Residential Schools, missing and murdered women and girls, and the history of Canada before settlers arrived. This intentional silencing has been unravelling in recent years. Rather than hiding from it, embracing Indigenous sovereignty—"narrative, political, and physical" (Wente, 2021, p. 171)—is the path for Canada to truly become the world leader it has always wanted and claimed to be.

7.2 Reconciliation, Decolonisation, and Indigenisation in Postsecondary Education

Canada is a settler nation where being Indigenous has been problematic and led to Indigenous Peoples being ostracised and erased from mainstream society. Given this history, there is reasonable scepticism from the Indigenous community about how settlers are now actively trying to atone for the wrongs, and not always in an ethical way. The TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action triggered a shift in the Canadian discourse on the country's colonial history and the way Indigenous People are treated. In Canada, there is a growing awareness of this history that is expanding as the strength of the minority Indigenous voices rise. I have observed Indigenous Peoples from dozens of Nations stand together for what was once theirs. They are uniting in a shared history of pain and understanding of multigenerational trauma. They are speaking out in the media, in political forums, through government establishment of commissions to uncover truth, in literature and in other arts. They are forging a new discourse, one that is more balanced in its portrayal of the past 400 years than the one-sided colonial perspective of Canada's history traditionally presented as the truth by settlers.

Against this backdrop, and that of truth and reconciliation, a push for indigenisation of the postsecondary education sector has emerged. What is meant by the term indigenisation in postsecondary educational institutions is not clear. At its simplest, Bopp et al. (2017)

suggested it is creating a safe and comfortable space in colleges and universities that enables Indigenous People to be successful. In this context, however, what constitutes safety and defines success is not straightforward. Success holds different meanings to different people. For an Indigenous learner, success might be completing a postsecondary course or program, but, as Bopp et al. discussed, it could also mean "reframing knowledge production and transmission within the academy from an Indigenous perspective" (p. 2). While there is no firm definition of what indigenisation means (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018), attempts have been made to make colleges and universities more inclusive, with particular attention paid to Indigenous students. Postsecondary institutions are striving to raise awareness of Indigenous knowledge by embedding Indigenous knowledge and ways of being into existing course curricula while ensuring this is done without appropriation or reinforcing colonial power.

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) discussed the possibility of three forms of indigenisation in the academic setting: Indigenous inclusion, reconciliation indigenisation, and decolonial indigenisation. For the first term, Indigenous inclusion, the postsecondary educational institution largely remains unchanged structurally, but attempts to create a welcome environment for Indigenous People. For reconciliation indigenisation, shifts are made with regard to relationships with Indigenous Peoples and the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge into the environment, perhaps by ensuring Indigenous history is taught along with Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Finally, decolonial indigenisation involves a rebalancing of "power relations between Indigenous peoples and Canadians, transforming the academy into something dynamic and new" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 219). Michelle Pidgeon (2016) cautioned, however, that "indigenization cannot be defined or bounded by [non-aboriginals'] expectation of what it should mean" (p. 79).

Today, it is difficult to find a college or university in Canada that does not have indigenisation referenced as a goal in their strategic plan. These initiatives began in the early 1970s with calls to include indigeneity in Canada's postsecondary education environment. The call for change increased in the 2000s with a compilation of essays entitled *Indigenizing the Academy: Transforming Scholarship and Empowering Communities* (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004). This was closely followed by Kuokkanen's (2007) book *Reshaping the University: Responsibility, Indigenous Epistemes and the Logic of the Gift*, which argued that Indigenous People and Indigenous knowledges and worldviews must be included in the academy. If the intent of universities is to "expand the

bounds of the human imagination and explore truth in all its forms" (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 140; see also Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018), then this would require the inclusion of diverse forms of knowledge. In Ontario, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development established the Aboriginal Educational and Training Strategy in 2007, with the release of the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (Government of Ontario, 2007). The purpose of this framework was to increase knowledge and awareness about Indigenous histories, cultures, and perspectives among all students. Key to this framework were the goals to improve achievement among First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students and to close the achievement gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students by 2016 (Government of Ontario, 2007).

With the release of the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action, the term indigenisation took hold. Canada's postsecondary education institutions publicly committed to reconciliation. It became imperative for colleges and universities to take steps towards indigenising the postsecondary education environment. What this looks like became the primary question of my research and how effective it is the second. The impact on learners, professors, administrators, and those called upon to share Indigenous knowledge and lead the shift is also important to determining effectiveness. Building relationships with Indigenous communities so as to be able to authentically engage with Indigenous knowledge is challenging for a system "that is still, for the most part, invested in Indigenous erasure and marginalization" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 218).

Next, I turn to the examination of policy implementation of indigenisation based on a preliminary analysis of the content of several college websites, which serves to demonstrate the lack of clarity across Canadian postsecondary education institutions on how best move indigenisation forward. The aforementioned lack of clarity on what indigenisation needs to be along with the diverse starting points and needs across the country has led to a full range of strategies being employed. In my discussion of these strategies, I raise the question of whether or not these policies are sufficient to shift the culture in postsecondary education, and in a larger sense, in Canada.

7.3 Policy Implementation

Part of policy analysis involves looking at how policy is being implemented. With the drive for truth and reconciliation placing education front and centre in its calls for action,

postsecondary institutions have sought to position themselves as leaders in this area. Most have EDI committees, and leadership has been carefully including Indigenous initiatives as goals in strategic plans over the past few years. Organisational structures are shifting to include departments specific to Indigenous initiatives staffed from frontline to the executive level with Indigenous employees. Job postings appear regularly on a Canadian academic job site called Academica (n.d.) for Indigenous professors and heads of Indigenous programs. Land acknowledgements are embedded in websites and at public events. While progress is being made, it is crucial to distinguish genuine and meaningful strides towards indigenisation from token gestures intended to give the impression that indigenisation is more advanced than it truly is (or to placate people in a way that reinforces power). Ron McLester (2022), former Vice President of Indigenisation at Algonquin College, posted the following on Twitter in response to an article about the Indigenous science framework being removed from Ontario elementary school curriculum in 2022: "True reconciliation, decolonization and Indigenization is more than pretty spaces and land acknowledgements. The problem is that few places want more than that. You can cover a horse in all the feathers you want, but it's still a horse" (para. 1).

In 2013–2014, CICan (n.d.-a) brought forward an *Indigenous Education Protocol* (see Appendix A), developed by the Indigenous Education Committee with the intention to support Canadian Colleges' "commitment to improving and better serving Indigenous education" (para. 5). The committee comprised representatives responsible for Indigenous programs and services from across Canada with urban, rural, and regional representation and CICan members were encouraged to share the protocol with Indigenous partners in their areas. The protocol has seven principles that signatories must agree to in order to sign on:

1. Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.
2. Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.
3. Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.
4. Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.
5. Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.
6. Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.

7. Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research. (CICan, n.d.-a, para. 8–14)

Each of these seven principles then drills down to what exemplary practices for the specific principle would be, including examples such as land acknowledgements, increasing the number of Indigenous staff at all levels of the college, enhancing the visibility of Indigenous culture throughout the college spaces (e.g., signage, gardens, gathering spaces), and more (CICan, n.d.-a). As of July 9, 2023, 71 of 142 CICan member colleges across Canada had signed on to this protocol (CICan, n.d.-c).

Most postsecondary institutions in Canada now have an indigenisation strategy that they are striving to implement (Bopp et al., 2017; Pidgeon, 2016). The challenge is that colleges and universities are White settler institutions that are in fact part of the "genocidal and assimilationist goals" (Steinman & Scoggins, 2020, p. 73) of the Canadian government. While the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action ignited a desire to "pursue reconciliation and amend practices of colonizing education" (Steinman & Scoggins, 2020, p. 74), this significant systemic change is very difficult to achieve without a clear vision of what the desired end result should be. Even if a clear vision can be established, moving beyond policy to transition postsecondary education is highly complex (Bopp et al., 2017, p. 5). Bopp et al. (2017) noted indigenisation goes beyond "implementing a few strategies" (p. 3) to needing to shift "characteristics and behaviours [that] are almost always embedded in the living culture of organizations" (p. 3). These characteristics and behaviours are typically "outside of the conscious awareness of principal actors" (p. 3). Michelle Pidgeon (2016) concurred, stating indigenisation is more than a policy. She asserted indigenisation is a "culminating and complex living movement" (p. 81) that requires input from Indigenous Peoples to shape the outcome. Laenui (2006) went further, stating,

> True decolonization is more than simply replacing Indigenous or previously colonized people into the positions held by colonizers. Decolonization includes the reevaluation of the political, social, economic, and judicial structures themselves, and the development, if appropriate of new structures which can hold and house the values and aspirations of the colonized peoples. (p. 4)

Pidgeon also noted,

> Indigenization initiatives need clear funding commitments that are not dependent on securing of the next grant [and] for Indigenization of the

academy to have a lasting legacy … it must be sustainable and integrated, not an add-on approach that is limited by funding. (p. 87)

In essence, in order to decolonise and achieve meaningful indigenisation, settlers need to "replace narrow notions of equity as mere recruitment and move towards a new kind of relationality" (Pete, 2022, p. 57), including coming to the table together with Indigenous Peoples as equals.

7.4 Content Analysis of College Websites

Successful implementation of policy is impacted by a multitude of factors, some of which are under control of the indigenisation implementing the policy and some which are not. These can be grouped under the following broader categories: commitment at all levels inside and outside of the indigenisation over the short and long term, training to increase the implementers' self-efficacy and confidence to overcome barriers, and the institutional environment and willingness to change (Brynard, 2009). Hudson et al. (2019) indicated policies are successful depending on the process used to implement them. Systems and organisations are complex; therefore, the factors that influence implementation must also be recognised as being complex, not unlike "wicked problems, … [which are] resistant to change, have multiple possible causes, and with potential solutions that vary in place and time according to local context" (Rittel & Webber, 1973, as cited in Hudson et al., 2019, p. 2). With this challenge then, comes the need for implementation support to ensure that expectations are managed over the longer term, that policies are not implemented solely from the top down but also from the bottom up, that collaboration happens with a range of stakeholders at all levels, and that the policy is not subject to failure due to changes in government priorities (Hudson et al., 2019).

In response to the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action for all Canadians, a 2021 guidebook entitled *Indigenous Reconciliation: A Toolkit for Employers* was published by Indigenous Works through the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (2021). It is intended to guide organisations and businesses on how to create a reconciliation action plan. Indigenous Works suggested there is a continuum of seven stages that indicate how embedded indigenisation is within the organisation: indifference (inclusion is not on the radar), intimidation (inclusion as forced compliance), image (inclusion as public relations), initiation (inclusion as a business imperative), incubation (inclusion nurtured as a core competency), integration (inclusion as a catalyst for growth), and finally full inclusion

(Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021, pp. 16–17). These indicators also align with best practices identified by CICan (n.d.-a) in its *Indigenous Education Protocol* drafted in 2013–2014 (see Appendix A).

While the Indigenous Works continuum is designed for businesses (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021), it can be applied to colleges when seeking to determine where the turning point is for the institution from taking small steps that do not impact the overall fiscal balance sheet (intimidation/image) to starting to spend funds on small initiatives that may result in attracting more Indigenous students and result in increased revenue (initiation). It is important to understand at which point the educational institution moves forward from reaping additional revenue through inclusion initiatives to the next levels of not only investing in Indigenous spaces and curriculum but truly embedding Indigenous ways of knowing and being in staff development (incubation), in day-to-day practices at all levels of the institution (integration), and finally in participating in the community as a true partner with Indigenous organisations and communities (full inclusion).

As previously noted, to understand the level of implementation of indigenisation policy in colleges across Canada, I examined college websites and documented how they evidenced incorporation of Indigenous concepts, programs, and initiatives. I reviewed 32 English speaking, publicly funded, community or regional colleges' websites. These colleges were distributed across two provinces, one in Western Canada (Alberta) and one in Eastern Canada (Ontario). On the websites, I looked for indicators of the Indigenous Works stages (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021). I was interested in knowing whether certain elements or best practices were evident on the college website as well as how prominently they were presented. I used these as indicators of whether colleges were moving beyond the Indigenous Works Initiation and Incubation stages to the Integration and Inclusion stages (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021). For this analysis, I identified indicators as follows: the presence of a land acknowledgement on the main landing page for the college (Intimidation and Image stages), existence on the website of an Indigenous student support service (Intimidation, Image, and possibly Initiation stages), presence of at least one action focused goal related to Indigenisation in the latest strategic plan (Initiation and Incubation stages), description of a dedicated Indigenous student space or spaces (Incubation stage), and presence of a webpage dedicated to Indigenous initiatives (Integration stage; see Table 1 in Section 4.2 in Chapter

4). For my first level scan, I noted if each of the indicators were present or not present. I then delved deeper to determine if the webpage was actively updated, engaged students, employees, and the public, featured Indigenous events, and mentioned employee training or professional development opportunities on Indigenous culture. Presence of these indicators would show a more in-depth commitment to embracing Indigenous culture and "becoming" versus the more formal and expected acknowledgements towards indigenisation I was looking for in the preliminary scan.

My findings (see Table 2) reveal there is a full range of stages across the colleges in both Alberta and Ontario. While Ontario has a higher percentage of colleges meeting all the indicators, few show significant movement towards full Integration using the indicators I identified above. Of the 11 colleges in Alberta, only seven (64%) included land acknowledgements on the home page. Ontario was not much further ahead, with 14 of the 22 (64%) colleges examined including land acknowledgements on the home page. Land acknowledgements are an important first step in indigenisation; however, there are differences between land acknowledgements that can indicate depth of understanding and commitment to this action. Some colleges simply acknowledged that they were on unceded lands and mentioned the treaty number or Indigenous Peoples the land belonged to. Others went a step further to add meaning to this formulaic and now politically expected statement. An example of this is Red Deer Polytechnic (n.d.), which (on August 7, 2023) in addition to the standard land acknowledgement, indicated the following about their location: "This is where we will strive to honour and transform our relationships with each other" (para. 9). Norquest College (n.d.-a) went a step further and included their location in Cree (both traditional syllabic symbols and roman orthography) along with the land acknowledgement, which (on August 7, 2023) stated, "We acknowledge that we are on the traditional lands, referred to as Treaty 6 Territory and that the City of Edmonton and all the people here are beneficiaries of this peace and friendship treaty" (para. 1). Niagara College Canada (n.d.), located in Ontario, went beyond simply stating a comprehensive land acknowledgement to including a section titled, "Why do we have a land acknowledgement?" which includes a video that discusses the purpose of the land acknowledgement and how it can open discussion and deepen intentions, actions and relationships related to Indigenous Peoples.

All colleges in Alberta and Ontario had designated student services for Indigenous students listed in their websites, although the ease of finding the services and the level of detail

provided varied. Some websites had services for Indigenous students on their homepage with links to more detail elsewhere, while others had an Indigenous support centre listed in small print along with all of the other services provided to students on a Student Services landing page. In these situations, it is incumbent on the user to know what they are looking for; a commitment to welcome and support Indigenous learners was not highlighted on their main website.

Eight of the 11 colleges in Alberta (73%) had goals to initiate or continue to implement an indigenisation strategy built into their most recent strategic plan. In Ontario, 18 of the 22 (82%) colleges clearly identified indigenisation as part of the strategic plan. Some colleges' indigenisation goals were as vague as stating a commitment to respond and support the TRC's (2015b) Calls to Action. Others referenced indigenisation and/or decolonisation in multiple goals. For example, Norquest College in Alberta listed the following key objective: to "integrate Indigenous knowledge and wisdom into all aspects of college life, and facilitate a mutual understanding, respect, and learning between Indigenous Peoples and others" (Norquest College, n.d.-b, p. 14). Norquest College (n.d.-b) also set an EDI objective that specifically identified becoming a "decolonized organization" (p. 18). Algonquin College (2022) went one step further in its strategic plan with an initial statement titled "Becoming Again" (p. 2) with reference to Indigenous ways of knowing and being and the earth awakening from the big sleep. Page 6 of the Algonquin College (2022) *Strategic Plan* includes a photograph of a large piece of Indigenous art in the college along with an explanation of the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address, which the college shares before many gatherings. In later pages, Algonquin College provides other examples of ways the institution has embraced Indigenous knowledge, and finally the acknowledgement of Indigenisation as a foundational theme tied to an outcome under the goal of "creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive work environment" (p. 19). Going beyond including indigenisation within a strategic plan, three colleges in Ontario had separate indigenisation plans: Centennial College, Fanshawe College, and Sault College.

In trying to identify if there were Indigenous spaces on campus, I chose to look for services that went beyond a designated student support centre. For Indigenous Peoples, their relationship to the land is central to their health and overall well-being (Peach et al., 2020, p. 118). As such, I was interested in seeing if colleges had invested in designing and setting aside space for more traditional gatherings that would reflect an investment of time and resources beyond reserving a classroom or office space for Indigenous student use. In

Alberta, four colleges stood out for their efforts in this regard: Bow Valley College, Lethbridge College, Norquest College, and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology. All four have designated spaces specifically for Indigenous student support and counselling, traditional ceremonies such as smudging, and cultural events and activities. In Ontario, 70% of colleges had designed an Indigenous space. These spaces include student centres, Indigenous gardens, fire pits and outdoor ceremonial spaces, and meeting circles.

Finally, I searched for relationships with the Indigenous community and evidence of Indigenous partnerships as an indicator of full Integration, which I interpreted as being more meaningful indigenisation. Relationships are at the heart of Indigenous ways of knowing and being and indigenising means moving from consulting with Indigenous people to recognising them as the experts who need to shape the changes needed (Efimoff, 2022; Hoskins & Jones, 2022; Peach et al., 2020). Many of the colleges that had designated Indigenous learning spaces had also established partnerships with community, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and included other Indigenous resources on their websites. In Alberta, Lethbridge College had the most comprehensive evidence of indigenisation when looking at the indicators identified above (scoring 5 out of 5 on the indicators), followed closely by Norquest College (scoring 4 out of the 5 indicators evident). It is worth noting here that Norquest College won bronze in the CICan Indigenous Education Excellence Awards in 2022 (CICan, 2022). Gold and Silver CICan Indigenous Education Excellence Awards in 2022 were given to Georgian College and Algonquin College, both in Ontario (CICan, 2022). CICan noted the following about Georgian College:

> Indigenous Studies & Services (ISS) have a long history at Georgian College, growing steadily since the early 1990s. Graduates from the college's three Indigenous-focused academic programs are the next generation of Indigenous community leaders. Georgian has undertaken concerted efforts related to loss of Indigenous language and is producing language champions critical to cultural survival. An Indigenization strategy focused on the infusion of Indigenous curriculum, faculty training, Indigenous knowledge sharing and enhancements to physical and virtual space is also underway, with advancements in each of the seven principles in the CICan's Indigenous Education Protocol. The road to Truth and Reconciliation is reflected in Georgian College's Strategic and Academic Plans, moving the college forward in a good way. (CICan, 2022, Gold: Georgian College section, para. 1)

This scan provides an initial sense of how deep Indigenisation initiatives are in the college system. In general, according to the chosen indicators, I found Ontario colleges were further ahead in indigenisation efforts than those in Alberta. I assessed that colleges in both

provinces are largely in the Indigenous Works (Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, 2021) Initiation and Incubation stages, with a few moving more into the Integration stage. As I noted above, many websites used Indigenous imagery in various places, and some provided an Indigenous name for their student services initiatives and spaces. Without visiting the campuses and speaking to staff, faculty, and students, it is difficult to state without reservation that Indigenisation is or is not meaningfully being implemented; however, based on my analysis of institutional websites, I argue that indigenisation is still very much a side initiative that lies outside of the basic business of the colleges to provide education and training. In many cases, it seems that indigenisation is being implemented to various degrees to be politically correct in this time of increased awareness of reconciliation. As I noted earlier, "a horse covered in feathers is still a horse" (McLester, 2022, para. 1).

7.5 Chapter Summary

I opened this chapter with a discussion of political and economic drivers of indigenisation. In Section 7.2, I moved to locate more specifically the goal of indigenisation within postsecondary educational institutions. In Section 7.3, I explained policy implementation in preparation for presenting the results of the implementation analysis that I completed through looking at college websites in 2022 for signs of uptake of the call for indigenisation. In this analysis, I looked for evidence of awareness of this call, signs of inclusion, and more important signs of policy change through actionable goals embedded in strategic plans. Not surprisingly, I found a broad range of indigenisation across the 32 colleges examined. In Chapter 8, I delve deeper into a framework developed by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) on indigenisation in postsecondary education that is centred around three stages: Indigenous inclusion, reconciliation indigenisation, and decolonisation indigenisation.

Chapter 8: Stages of Indigenisation in Ontario Colleges

In this chapter, I examine the current state of indigenisation in postsecondary education using Gaudry and Lorenz's (2018) definitions on indigenisation as a framework. In doing so, I explore the motives behind indigenisation, how it could be related to the desire to right the wrongs of the past through implementation of policy while considering that this desire lies within a broader political and economic context to ensure that existing power structures are maintained.

Canadian postsecondary educational institutions have now embraced indigenisation policies. As stated earlier, most of the institutions I reviewed have clearly stated indigenisation goals in their strategic plans, provide Indigenous student support spaces, have hired Indigenous senior executives and professors, and are adding Indigenous history, knowledge, and language into curricula. While these efforts can be viewed as commendable and coming from a true desire to atone for the wrongs of colonisers past, I question if it is perhaps not as altruistic as it appears and the results are not necessarily achieving a change in White settler and Indigenous relations.

For indigenisation to be effective, it needs to be disruptive. As Kuokkanen (2007) asserted, "[c]onceptually, indigenization represents a move to expand the academy's still-narrow conceptions of knowledge, to include Indigenous perspectives in transformative ways" (p. 2). According to Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), Indigenous scholars propose this requires a "foundational, intellectual, and structural shift in the academy, requiring the wholesale overhaul of academic norms to better reflect a more meaningful relationship with Indigenous nations" (p. 218), and that this is "too destabilizing" (p. 218). As such, the focus is placed on "increasing Indigenous student enrolment and hiring more Indigenous faculty and staff" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 218). As noted in the previous section on neoliberalism, the latter are in keeping with the capitalist requirement of growth as well. The challenge, however, is that without the foundational shift demanded by Indigenous scholars, the changes being implemented are tokenistic and, in fact, hegemonic, resulting in little, if any, change to the academic institution and having virtually no impact on true reconciliation. Finding a way to move beyond the types of actions being currently taken in the name of indigenisation is imperative to decolonise.

State-run education has been used as a tool in colonisation, eradicating Indigenous language and culture by removing children from their families and indoctrinating them in White ways of knowing and being. Postsecondary education, particularly at the university level, is deeply rooted in the European enlightenment ideals and has played a pivotal role in the spread of the empire and the scientific study of Indigenous Peoples and culture worldwide (Louie et al., 2017). With this history, indigenisation of postsecondary educational institutions is not a simple task. To decolonise, there must be a disruption of the "imperialist and assimilative frameworks" (Louie et al., 2017, p. 17) as well as the inclusion of Indigenous ways of knowing and being in a way that welcomes Indigenous staff, faculty, and students and their perspectives.

Increasing access to postsecondary education for Indigenous students is often cloaked in the plethora of EDI policies in place to promote social justice. However, indigenisation needs to go beyond EDI if it is to right the wrongs of history. Indigenisation and decolonisation efforts need to be approached differently than typical EDI initiatives if educators and educational leaders are to genuinely disrupt and move past the White settler colonialism mindset. It is crucial to remember "that even though political independence has been gained, a colonization of the mind continues (Sharp 2009; Dascal 2009; Thiong'o 1986)" (Pirbhai-Illich et al., 2017, p. 8). Furthermore, I argue that EDI policies are ineffective as they continue to dichotomise and categorise others, focused on differences and inadequacies, thereby only reinforcing the dominance of Whiteness, as opposed to fostering meaningful change.

In my experience, indigenisation in Canadian colleges and universities began with increasing access for Indigenous students. As discussed earlier, while this may have been interpreted as admirable and the right thing to do to ensure equal opportunity for all, it originated in the neoliberal political stance of growing human capital to build the economy. Institutions opened their doors and undertook recruitment efforts. They brought Indigenous students into the college. However, they soon realised, while it was possible to enrol Indigenous students, retention of these students and their success was not assured. With the paternalistic, saviour mindset that White settlers often have, educational leaders sought to find solutions to the retention issue, which, I note, has an impact on revenue. In 2015, the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action demanded education make meaningful steps forward to assist in reconciliation. Specifically, there was a call to teach Indigenous

language, culture, and ways of knowing and being. This began the current push Canadians to indigenise postsecondary education and the institutions that provide it.

In response to the TRC's (2015b) Calls to Action, most colleges and universities have placed indigenisation in their strategic plans in measurable ways that appear to support change. Some examples of goals are to increase Indigenous student enrolment, hire more Indigenous faculty and staff, build relationships with Indigenous communities, create Indigenous spaces on campus, and embed Indigenous cultural celebrations and ceremonies on campus throughout the academic year. These are important steps in the right direction. They raise awareness of Indigenous culture and foster inclusivity, but I argue they do not transform the system. I argue in this section that implementing indigenisation as an actionable structural change is not as evident. A scan of job postings identified as Indigenous positions in postsecondary education on Google on March 20, 2023, showed 67 jobs available across Canada. On September 16, 2024, this same search revealed there were 32 positions posted. This is much fewer than in March 2023, but could be for several reasons including that the new academic year is already underway so hiring has been completed. Although steps have been taken to be inclusive and attract Indigenous scholars to guide the shift, these steps have not always been successful for a variety of reasons, as I discuss in the next section. Other initiatives, such as Indigenous spaces, signposting, and events are perhaps steps on the right path; however, within the present environment, these can be seen as tokenistic, self-serving, and a form of cultural appropriation. In this chapter, I delve into the actions taken in the name of decolonising postsecondary education in Canada, highlight the experiences of Indigenous People involved in some of these settings, explore the positives and negatives of various actions and how they either contribute to indigenisation or fail to do so, and discuss how some of the outcomes could be viewed as cultural appropriation versus indigenisation.

Transforming the academy requires a complete destabilisation of the status quo, which I argue throughout this dissertation is unlikely to happen. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) wrote of a continuum of which, at one end, "the academic maintains most of its existing structures while assisting Indigenous students, faculty and staff in succeeding under this normalized order" (p. 218), and, at the other end—the one I contend indigenisation needs to reach—the college or university "is fundamentally transformed by deep engagement with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous intellectuals, and Indigenous knowledge systems for all who attend" (p. 218). When institutions attain this, students and educators alike will see

a new postsecondary education sector that embraces what Bartlett et al. (2012) described as Two-Eyed Seeing. As Mi'kmaw Elder, Albert Marshall (2004, as cited in Bartlett et al., 2012) stated,

> Two-Eyed Seeing is the gift of multiple perspective treasured by many aboriginal peoples … refers to learning to see from one eye with the *strengths* of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the *strengths* of Western knowledges and ways of knowing, and to using both these eyes together, for the benefit of all. (p. 335)

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) noted three stages of indigenisation: "Indigenous inclusion … reconciliation indigenization … [and] decolonial indigenization" (p. 219), each moving more fully toward "balancing power relations between Indigenous peoples and Canadians and transforming the academic into something dynamic and new" (p. 219). While colleges and universities appear to be aspiring to true (decolonial) indigenisation, current efforts can be understood as being in the very early implementation of the least transformational stage of Indigenous inclusion. In the following sections, I critically analyse the indigenisation work being carried out at postsecondary educational institutions through the framework presented by Gaudry and Lorenz, showing where Canadian institutions are along the continuum of inclusion, reconciliation indigenisation, and decolonial indigenisation.

8.1 Indigenous Inclusion

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) described Indigenous inclusion as being the first stage of indigenisation. Indigenous inclusion relates to increasing the number of Indigenous People—students, staff, faculty—on campus. In 2018, the University of Saskatchewan committed to hiring 30 new Indigenous scholars over the next 10 years (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). They were not alone in this commitment, although they may have been the boldest in terms of numbers. In 2022, Algonquin College committed to hiring two Indigenous curriculum consultants. Other colleges and universities sought out, and continue to seek, Indigenous leaders to hold positions such as vice president, Indigenous leadership, partnerships and strategies (Confederation College) and administrator, Indigenous initiatives – Indigenous Education Council (McMaster University). A May 2023 Google search revealed ongoing recruitment in this area with positions for Indigenous counsellors such as part-time Indigenous student support officer (Algonquin College), Indigenous counsellor (Niagara College of Applied Arts and Technology), as well as Indigenous

teaching staff, such as, part-time professor, Indigenous studies – business (Cambrian College), assistant professor – interdisciplinary studies (Indigenous studies) (Carleton University), assistant professor – Indigenous studies program (McMaster University), assistant professor – Indigenous digital arts, culture and media (University of Toronto), professor, Indigenous studies (Mohawk College), and more. The challenge noted by some who have taken on positions such as these is that colleges and universities are not adapting to fit the needs of these new hires but are merely "inserting them into departments where they are likely to be the only Indigenous scholars in their respective unit" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 219).

Shauneen Pete is an Indigenous scholar who has held positions such as vice president (academic) and interim president at the First Nations University of Canada; executive lead – Indigenisation at the University of Regina; Indigenous resurgence coordinator in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria; and most recently the chair, emerging Indigenous scholars for the College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University. In her chapter on "Decolonising Equity Praxis," Pete (2022) wrote, "Settler colonialism is a structure that assumes the assimilation of Indigenous people into mainstream society" (p. 41). Pete went further to note that she believes "equity, diversity and inclusion are projects that are both marked by and serve settler colonialism" (p. 41), and these policies often serve to "deflect to avoid a deeper examination" (p. 41) of the actual experience of Indigenous people working on campus. As such, Pete stated part of her role as an Indigenous employee in the postsecondary academic setting is to not simply to fit in but to "dismantle" (p. 41) or decolonize the structure. Pete related a personal experience she had in her role as executive lead – Indigenisation at the University of Regina, which I believe could be echoed similarly by many other Indigenous employees in postsecondary education. She shared, after presenting the definition of indigenisation and a work plan codeveloped by members of the Indigenous Advisory Circle, she was asked by a colleague to use language that was less political in nature. Pete related that if she chose language that was nonpolitical, it would serve the settler status quo, and that was not her intention. This experience reflects the discomfort White settlers express when forced to come to terms with the ongoing settler colonialism that exists in Canada and in the postsecondary education sector in which racial microaggressions occur every day.

Clearly Canada's postsecondary institutions wish to hire Indigenous faculty and staff at all levels, and often government funding is available to incentivise this, but inclusion policies

mean these individuals are being brought into the existing, and often "alienating" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 218), colonial hierarchy of the academy. It is an additive process with no intent to rethink the structure or imagine a new way of being. Furthermore, these individuals, once hired, are often the sole Indigenous person in their department, and other employees expect these staff and faculty will provide their knowledge freely (e.g., by providing guest lectures, free workshops, and land acknowledgements). The work of reconciliation is in essence made on the backs of Indigenous employees for White settlers.

Pete (2022) stated equity and diversity policies typically used to promote indigenisation are constructed through a settler colonial lens. This is supported by Lawrence and Dua (2005) who initially raised the concern that anti-racism is "constructed on a colonising framework" (p. 127). Pete described what she referred to as "settler logics" (p. 47) that are associated with indigenisation in the postsecondary education sector. These include settler logic of elimination, contractual benevolence of the academy, paying the cultural tax, and the assumption of access: presuming assimilation.

Settler logic of elimination refers to the "systemic exclusion and inequality of Indigenous epistemes, philosophies and intellectual traditions in the academy" (Pete, 2022, p. 48). Despite the hiring of Indigenous faculty and leadership, institutional leaders are reluctant to allow meaningful change to occur at the ground level. Pete went further to suggest this is actually a deliberate attempt to maintain the "settler colonial goals of elimination and assimilation of Indigenous peoples" (p. 48). This contractual benevolence of the academy can be explained best perhaps as "you are welcome to come to dinner at my house and sit at my table; but you better behave while at the table" (Gause, 2011, p. 6; see also Pete, 2022). Extended to the workplace, this plays out, as Pete (2022) noted, with Indigenous employees asked to be less political in their choice of words or to be thankful they have a job at all. Pete (2022) related a time when a colleague noted she had hit four of the equity hiring categories as if to assert she was not hired based on merit.

Indigenous postsecondary employees also speak of the extra work that comes with being hired into a role. Not only are they expected to carry out the same work as their peers, but they are asked to volunteer to do other "Indigenous things," such as share land acknowledgements, serve as the Indigenous representative on committees and working groups, support Indigenous students, provide coaching on topics related to Indigenisation, and be the voice for all Indigenous Peoples at the table (Gause, 2011; Kuokkanen, 2007;

Pete, 2022). Gause (2011) referred to this as cultural taxation: "Additional work expectations that do not boost … chances of earning tenure and/or promotion" (p. 6). Gause stated the "root of all of this goes back to power and hegemony" (p. 6). Pete (2022) also noted, when being asked to do this additional work, "the learning outcome is predetermined by members of the dominant group … [Indigenous employees] are expected to respond to what settlers want" (p. 52). Pete noted Indigenous employees are hired to be "knowledge brokers on all things Indigenous" (p. 52) and to be "change agents" (p. 5), but not to rock the boat and upset the status quo.

The final point of settler logics, as Pete (2022) described, is assumption of access: presuming assimilation. This refers to the idea that Indigenous People "should be grateful for gaining access" (Gause, 2011, as cited in Pete, 2022, p. 48) to a position within the academy, and that they should not use this to attempt to disrupt the system. In contrast, Pete noted Indigenous academics' and staff members' intentions are not "assimilative, but transformative" (p. 53). As "savvy navigators and negotiators within the structure" (Pete, 2022, p. 53), Indigenous academics aim to "support Indigenous sovereignty" (p. 53) by "confront[ing] existing colonial institutions, structures and policies … [and] having the courage and imagination to envision life beyond the state" (p. 53).

Indigenous inclusion in this sense are settler scholars' attempt to make Indigenous People feel comfortable entering the doors of an institution of higher learning—a place they have not belonged to date (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018)—while holding on to power. It does not affect meaningful change towards decolonisation. Recruiting Indigenous employees does, however, positively impact Indigenous student retention and success. Research has shown Indigenous faculty and staff can act as mentors and role models for Indigenous students, helping to foster a sense of belonging and persistence (Archibald et al., 2010; Gallop & Bastien, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Adding Indigenous-focused student supports, such as Indigenous support centres that provide access to academic and wellness supports and offer a culturally safe physical space, also improve Indigenous student success (Gallop & Bastien, 2016; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). These centres are now found on many campuses in Canada along with other Indigenous-focused and intentional spaces, such as Algonquin College's (n.d., 2018) Indigenous Learning Commons and outdoor courtyard with a Gathering Circle, Three Sisters Garden, and fire-vessel. More recently, Algonquin College (n.d.) undertook an Indigenous pathway naming project to name main indoor and outdoor passageways with animal names significant to the Anishinaabe Algonquin People.

These names and related Indigenous artwork have now been placed and students and employees are encouraged to refer to the Anishinaabe name when orienting people to different places in the college. Measures such as these are important when seeking to promote Indigenous inclusion but do not go far enough. As Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) noted, "'Mak[ing] spaces hospitable to Indigenous students and faculty' really means overhauling existing policy regimes to better reflect the experiences, worldviews, and needs of Indigenous peoples" (p. 220).

One of the many challenges with inclusion policies is that it puts the weight on Indigenous employees to bear the responsibility of change. Pete (2022) noted there is an assumption that Indigenous employees bring their "'perspectives' and that this will reform pedagogy and course and program design, and that we will help retain Indigenous learners" (p. 51). In essence, Indigenous employees are hired to be "change agents" within the institution; however, as their numbers are small, they carry an "unfair burden of responsibility to fulfil the needs of settlers" (Pete, 2022, p. 51). Kuokkanen (2007) wrote, "Indigenous discourses are allowed to exist in the university, but only in marginal spaces or within clearly defined parameters established by the dominant discourse, which is grounded in certain assumptions, values, conceptions of knowledge, and views of the world" (p. 20). To be successful in this environment, Indigenous employees and learners must either take on the role of teaching Indigenous perspectives to others in the classroom or abandon those perspectives and embrace the dominant Eurocentric structure and teachings of the academy (Kuokkanen, 2007). In doing so, these employees and learners become a token. Wente (2021) wrote,

> The difference between being valued for your work and being valued for as a symbol [is not always obvious].… People seem to want you around. You're made to feel involved in things. You also may be genuinely qualified and bursting with good ideas. It can take time to realize that those qualifications do not matter to your bosses and co-workers, and that nobody intends to act on anything you say – that you're there for show. (p. 121)

Wente continued,

> You may have become a token only over time. You may have been listened to at first. Your ideas and ideals may have been respected right up until the point where they required someone to take a stand or a personal risk, or until they required cost, sacrifice, or accountability. (p. 121)

Despite acknowledging the need to embrace indigenisation and the drivers of EDI policies, "changing the paradigm" (Kuokkanen, 2007, p. 27) does not come easily. Despite colleges and universities being centres of learning, research, and acquisition of new knowledge, Kuokkanen (2007) noted, "Individuals are often unwilling to examine their own blind spots … [or] acknowledge either their privilege or their participation in academic structures and the various colonial processes of society in general" (p. 27). When considered in this way, I suggest inclusion policies in postsecondary education are simply "replicating colonial erasure" (Allan, 2022, p. 24) versus making meaningful change towards indigenisation.

While not leading meaningfully to indigenisation and even perhaps reinforcing the hegemony and repression of Indigenous people and culture, I would be remiss to completely dismiss the positive impacts resulting from inclusion efforts. Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) stated inclusion could be considered the "minimum level of commitment to Indigenous faculty, staff and students, not the end goal" (p. 220). However, one result of the push for inclusive access is an increased participation and presence of Indigenous learners, employees, professors, and administrators on campuses. This is due to both removing some barriers to inclusion as well as making spaces more hospitable to Indigenous people. This is a necessary first step in engaging Indigenous People and communities to collaboratively examine existing policies and begin to transform the academy.

8.2 Reconciliation Indigenisation

Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) described reconciliation indigenisation as being the second step towards meaningful indigenisation. It moves beyond Indigenous inclusion to impact governance through steps such as the establishment of Indigenous advisory committees, councils, or circles. This is an important step in reconciliation with Indigenous People and communities. In 2007, the Ontario government encouraged the establishment of these as part of the Aboriginal Educational and Training Strategy. This led me to believe that Ontario colleges and universities would be further ahead in terms of reconciliation decolonisation than they are. Some of these committees have taken an active role in defining the goals of indigenisation for their institutions, moving them beyond the inclusion mandate. The defining factor in reconciliation indigenisation is that there is a shift in how non-Indigenous people "think about and act toward Indigenous people"

(Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 222). This then goes beyond college and university campuses to help transform the beliefs and actions of Canadians as a whole.

Unfortunately, while there have been considerable discussion and changes in use of language, along with aspirational definitions of indigenisation drawn up and embedded in strategic plans, meaningful change to college and university structure has not taken place to date. The existing situation is what Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) referred to as a "rhetorical shift to reconciliation and partnership" (p. 222). Tokenism is "representation without agency; it is a co-opting of Indigenous identity for the gain of non-Indigenous people without allowing those Indigenous representatives the ability to make decisions or effect change" (Wente, 2021, p. 101). Token actions have been taken: the development of Indigenous language electives, professional development modules on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, invitation to Indigenous Elders to lead blanket and box exercises with employees and learners, revision of course learning outcomes to include references to Indigenous concepts and more. However, these remain largely at the request of non-Indigenous administrators and meet the learning outcomes desired by the non-Indigenous majority.

Some colleges and universities have taken the step of embedding Indigenous culture and language in a larger way that appears to transcend both inclusion and reconciliation steps. Designing learning and teaching spaces in partnership with Indigenous Elders to ensure the embedding of Indigenous building materials and forms, naming spaces with Indigenous language, and placing Indigenous art throughout the public spaces are some examples. These steps have the benefit of enabling Indigenous students and employees to feel welcome and comfortable, but they can also be an attempt to start to shift ways of thinking by exposing non-Indigenous people to Indigenous culture in a nonthreatening way. Unfortunately, the nonthreatening aspect of this is troublesome in that it reinforces Kuokkanen's (2007) concept of being a good host. A good host is not necessarily openly hostile towards Indigenous beliefs and knowledge but is someone who ensures these remain controlled and nondisruptive to the dominant structures (Kuokkanen, 2007). There are conditions applied to the "hospitality" of colleges and universities. Kuokkanen noted, "Indigenous epistemes are unconditionally welcome only to a handful of marginal spaces that are insignificant to the academic at large" (p. 131), such as corridors with Indigenous animal names and art. This window dressing may lead people to think that they are in a progressive space where indigenisation is actively reforming policymaking, governance,

and structure, but in reality it might be lip service to prevent an uprising from Indigenous People who want more. This "tokenism is a by-product of dehumanization" (Wente, 2021, p. 124), which is a form of colonialism. Wente (2021) noted, "It is hard to tokenize someone you see as fully human, someone whose ideas and work you respect" (p. 124). To truly indigenise colleges, there is a need to disrupt and transform the colonial status. Pidgeon (2016) wrote that meaningful Indigenous inclusion has to be "more than a checklist" (p. 77). Indigenisation needs to be an intentional decolonising of the "whole system of higher education including its policies" (Pete, 2022, p. 54).

8.3 Decolonial Indigenisation

Meaningful indigenisation requires colleges and universities to go beyond the reconciliation rhetoric to decolonise teaching, research, and administration. As Pete (2022) noted, decolonial indigenisation requires a complete disruption of the colonial postsecondary structure to create a new academy with a different role and purpose (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). While scholars such as Linda Tuhaiwai Smith (2021) asserted universities (and I argue colleges) continue to be places of colonialism; others, such as Heath Justice (2004, as cited in Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018), stated there is an opportunity to transform and liberate through writing and teaching Indigenous history. Unsettling and dismantling settler colonialism is at the heart of decolonisation (Tuck & Yang, 2012) and is the only way to achieve true indigenisation.

In summary, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018) defined three concepts to explain what is meant by indigenisation in the Canadian postsecondary sector: Indigenous inclusion, reconciliation indigenisation, and decolonial indigenisation. As is evidenced above, while there is a lot of discussion on reconciliation indigenisation and a growing recognition that true decolonial indigenisation is critical, the focus in terms of tangible actions remains largely on Indigenous inclusion. Reconciliation indigenisation refers to a broader mandate than the additive nature of inclusion, yet, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, there exists a question of whether steps being taken at this level are still more rhetorical than meaningful. Tuck and Yang (2012) referred to metaphorisation of indigenisation, and this is where the steps academic institutions have taken are most often seen. Moving indigenisation beyond "window dressing" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 222), using Indigenous knowledge, art, and language to present an incorporation of Indigenous culture, needs to be actioned to effect real and meaningful change at the structural level. Instead,

postsecondary educational institutions remain stuck, focusing on what can be thought of as low-hanging fruit, that of increasing the presence of Indigenous Peoples on university and college campuses, as students, staff, and faculty.

8.4 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I utilised Gaudry and Lorenz's (2018) framework to define and analyse indigenisation initiatives in Canadian postsecondary educational institutions. This framework provided one answer to the research question "How is indigenisation defined in the postsecondary education sector?" I argued that indigenisation can be thought of as three stages, with the first being inclusion, second being more focused on relationship building towards reconciliation, and the third stage relating to relinquishing control, which is aspirational at this time, and what Canadians need to work towards as an ideal future.

Chapter 9: From Disrupting to Dismantling – Decolonising Postsecondary Education

In this chapter, I discuss how Canadians might create a postcolonial "third space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 55) to help evolve the postsecondary education sector. I propose an alternative view of what indigenisation could be if power and control could be relinquished, an aspirational view perhaps of what it could be like if polarities between settlers and Indigenous Nations were reduced and a true third space created in postsecondary education and the country as a whole—a decolonised state in which people's ways of thinking and behaving have been shifted "to produce a more just and equitable relation between the different peoples of the world" (Young, 2020, p. 18). While I describe this as aspirational, I believe it is a necessary move towards justice and take genuine and meaningful steps towards true reconciliation.

Decolonising is not a new concept. As I discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, as far back as 1963, Fanon wrote about a need to decolonise and create a new world, albeit cloaked in a violent and revolutionary style argument. Given this long history, it is surprising the discussion continues to this day on how to decolonise and indigenise meaningfully, particularly in the postsecondary education environment, which one might expect to be a leader in enlightened thought. I suggest this is because postsecondary education is deeply entrenched in the colonial system and in preserving the dominant race power reinforcing Eurocentric knowledge. Indigenisation requires ceding the position that Western knowledge is all powerful and allowing for another way of knowing and being to be promoted. Mabhena (2024) stated that to Walter Mignolo "[a] decolonized university is a pluriversity where a plurality and diversity of peoples and of knowledge systems can creatively encounter each other in the necessary competition and tension to produce new insights" (para. 26). To attain this means giving up power and allowing space for Eurocentric and other knowledges to coexist equally (Martinez-Vargas, 2020).

Rather than stepping into this unknown territory, postsecondary education institutions promote inclusion. Inclusion, however, forces others to conform to the dominant structure, often begrudgingly (Arshad et al., 2021). Begun and Saini (2019, as cited in Arshad et al., 2021) noted, without structural change, diverse scholars, and I would suggest students, are working within a system that is willing to accept and tolerate them (as long as they conform to colonial systems), rather than challenging systematic oppressions and moving towards the true change that decolonisation can bring.

9.1 Decolonisation First

If decolonisation is going to move beyond the metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2012), the colonial structures need to be dismantled. Audra Lorde (as cited in Arshad et al., 2021), a female Black activist, first stated in 1979 that the "master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p. 1). She suggested patriarchal tools, or in this particular case colonial tools, such as physical isolation, cultural control, or violence, will never disrupt the systemic oppression and inequity. True disruption requires a critical stance (Bowleg, 2021). Tuitt and Stewart (2021) proposed decolonising postsecondary education required four guiding concepts: "(1) decolonising the mind through ways of knowing and knowledge construction; (2) decolonising pedagogy; (3) decolonising structures, policies and practices; and (4) reimagining the academy from a decolonised lens" (p. 102).

First, decolonising the mind refers to taking into consideration and promoting "sources of knowledge outside of academia" (Tuitt & Stewart, 2021, p. 107), using "progressive language and terminology that reduces colonialist bias" (p. 107), "draw[ing] upon the voices of Indigenous groups and valuing the[ir] contributions" (p. 107), and questioning assumptions. In doing so, students and educators can potentially "disrupt the colonial gaze embedded in all of us … to promote racial equity and inclusion" (Tuitt & Stewart, 2021, p. 107). Nombuso Dlamini et al. (2012, as cited in Ngugi, 2018) wrote,

> Decolonizing one's mind is a life-long process, as well, systems of domination and subordination are not necessarily easy to identify when situated with unofficial cultures, that is, in interpersonal politics (within the negotiation of relation of power by individuals in interaction). (para. 8)

Decolonising pedagogy means "interrupting the dominant power/knowledge matrix in educational practices in higher education" (Morreira et al., 2020, p. 2). This means engaging in practices that both impact research priorities leading to knowledge production as well as what and how content is taught and how learning is assessed (Morreira et al., 2020). Morreira et al. (2020) advocated for educators to practise "epistemic humility" (p. 15) in learning from Indigenous Peoples and in recognising how this knowledge has been "historically dismissed as incoherent, unscientific, and lacking epistemic authority" (p. 15). These authors recommended educators put aside their own academic biases and be open to the potential answers to current world issues that are already available through Indigenous knowledge systems, if educators would only listen (Morreira et al., 2020).

Decolonising structures, policies, and practices requires those in control of postsecondary education settings to engage in system-wide debates on diversity and policy (Chan, 2005). Tamtik and Guenter (2019) noted, "Supporting authentic equity and inclusion among students and faculty is multilayered and complex" (p. 42). They asserted that it can mean employment equity initiatives, recruiting of diverse student populations through initiatives such as "Save Me A Seat" for women in science and technology programs at Ontario colleges, or providing services and spaces that are welcoming and provide financial and social support to Indigenous and other equity-deserving students. What is important, however, is to go beyond "articulating value for diversity … to demonstrating active commitments to inclusivity and equity (al Shaibah, 2014; Pidgeon, 2016)" (Tamtik & Guenter, 2019, p. 42). Morreira et al. (2020) noted there is "a real danger that the 'decolonial turn' might get co-opted and domesticated by desperate managers intent on growing their markets and pleasing their customers" (p. 12). If decolonising the university is no more than a movement towards EDI, as students and educators currently understand and implement the policies, then it will not work.

Much like decolonising the mind, this work must continue at a systemic level, examining how power is reproduced in practice is key if change is to happen. Ensuring diversity of voices at the policy table and challenging all those present to look inward and question intentions is vital if true change is going to be initiated. As Chan (2005) noted, if this does not happen, "privileged groups" (p. 43) will continue "making decisions for others" and the status quo will be upheld.

Reimagining the academy from a decolonised lens is the final guiding concept that Tuitt and Stewart (2021) put forward, and this is ultimately the purpose of this dissertation. It is critical that we as Canadians find ways to do things differently despite the deeply embedded historical and ideological Eurocentric view of knowledge and learning and the neoliberal political and economic environment we live in. Shifting postsecondary educational institutions from leaning on policies of EDI to embracing decolonisation is a lofty goal, but one whose time has come.

9.2 Envisioning a Different Future for Postsecondary Education and Canada

Indigenisation in postsecondary education, driven by government policy, is beginning to influence practice to some extent. Murray Sinclair (as cited in Wente, 2021), a retired

Senator and Commissioner of the TRC, stated, "Education got us into this mess and education will get us out" (p. 34). In 2015, the 90-plus members of Universities Canada committed to decolonising universities by "integrating Indigenous knowledge, perspectives and worldviews into curricula, programs and services, and providing relevant training for those teaching and interacting with our students" (Barnard, 2015, para. 5). In his 2015 statement as chair of the board for Universities Canada, Dr. Barnard went on to note, "When understanding of First Nation, Metis and other Indigenous cultures is woven through all of our campuses, then real change will occur not only with the institution, but within the many areas of society that we reach" (para. 5). Stephen Mintz (2021) identified five areas for transformation that could begin to decolonise postsecondary education: revamping curriculum, reimagining the syllabi, reimagining classroom dynamics, rethinking pedagogies, and bringing all students to mastery. I argue, while these are tangible steps that can be implemented by those who want to, decolonising education must begin with decolonising the minds of colonisers and the colonised. Additive steps are only the beginning. It will be incumbent on all actors in postsecondary education systems to go beyond these steps to actively "engage with issues of power, including the ways that hierarchical assumptions and inequalities rooted in gender, class, race, ethnicity and other variables influence classroom dynamics" (Mintz, 2021, para. 9). This means interrogating and dismantling "power structures that carry legacies of racism, imperialism, and colonialism" (Mintz, 2021, para. 13).

It is important to note, however, that discrimination and stereotypes do not disappear overnight. Wesley-Esquimaux (2023) asserted,

> Indigenous peoples and university administration have had to concede hiring deficits. There is still a perceived lack of cultural safety and Indigenous scholars and staff have experienced a "backlash" from what has been regarded as a forced inclusion of Indigenous knowledges and content requirements. There have been questionable appointments, and several people have been 'called out' across Canada on the credibility of their ancestral claims to Indigeneity. (para. 5)

Wicked problems can be defined as

> a social or cultural problem that's difficult or impossible to solve because of its complex and interconnected nature. Wicked problems lack clarity in both their aims and solutions, and are subject to real-world constraints which hinder risk-free attempts to find a solution. (Wong, 2023, para. 1)

Like any wicked problem, reconciliation is not going to be solved by colonial institutions throwing money at other colonial institutions to effect change. To genuinely impact social change, I argue reconciliation needs to happen in and amongst individuals and in the community. Indigenisation efforts in colleges and universities are largely serving a non-Indigenous population; this is important work but not impactful on Indigenous young adults who are still expected "to conform, to sacrifice who they are, to get an education" (Wente, 2021, p. 38). To truly change education, there needs to be a shift beyond tokenism—Canada and how it is governed needs to change. Postsecondary administrators, educators, and students need to pause and "interrupt the imperative to produce and resolve complex problems with uncomplicated solutions by instead sitting with and learning from the difficulty of decolonisation, and reflexively considering our own role and investments in the systems we undertake to study and critique" (Stein, 2017, para. 13). In pausing, there is a need to "retrace the history and itinerary of one's prejudices and learned habits (from racism, sexism and classism to academic elitism and ethnocentrism), stop thinking of oneself as better or fitter, and unlearn dominant systems of knowledge and representation" (Kapoor, 2004, p. 641). Stein (2017) noted, without doing this self-work, students, educators, and administrators cannot imagine or produce anything different in their collective work.

Reconciliation, I suggest, has become a buzzword. In 2015, Justin Trudeau, Canada's current head of the Liberal party and Prime Minister, ran his campaign on the slogan of reconciliation (Wente, 2021, p. 187). It provided the appearance of a progressive government that would work towards renewing a nation-to-nation relationship (Wente, 2021). With the release of the TRC's (2015b) 94 Calls to Action, there was hope that reconciliation was possible and perhaps even straightforward. As Wente (2021) suggested, the Calls to Action looked like a "paint by numbers" (p. 188) option to effect change. It has been 9 years since its publication, however, and, as is evidenced in this dissertation, reconciliation is still a long way away. Reconciliation, to the Canadian government, is a political platform of apologies and statements that relegate colonial wrongs to the past. Politicians ask Indigenous People for forgiveness, but to what end? If there is no meaningful change, these apologies are purely to assuage White guilt—an attempt to bring an end to what Wente (2021) referred to as feelings of complicity. There is no acknowledgement that colonialism still exists in Canada today, yet Canada continues to exploit Indigenous land for natural resources. There are more Indigenous children in care now "than at the height of the Residential School system … and incarceration rates of

Indigenous people remains disproportionate" (Wente, 2021, p. 191) to the Indigenous population in Canada. I assert this indicates that Canada continues to have a colonial vision focused on eradicating Indigeneity, the opposite of what is espoused in the call for reconciliation and move to indigenise postsecondary educational institutions.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that, although underway in Canada, indigenisation of postsecondary education remains at a basic level with token activities and initiatives in place. Inadequate funding to support required changes in structure and the onerous burden of representing Indigenous presence falling on a small number of Indigenous academic employees, leaders, and faculty members results in slow progress and the lack of meaningful change. In a study carried out by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), respondents stated funding is key to any successful initiative. One respondent noted, unfortunately, "funding goes primarily to students and departments who do not need it, often overdetermined by both profit motives and latent White supremacy, settler colonialism, and paternalism" (p. 166). To move indigenisation forward, resources will need to be pulled from other areas that are used to being well-supported financially. Gaudry and Lorenz expressed this will not likely be an easy shift and is likely to meet resistance along the way. However, without resources to "increase the presence of Indigenous scholars, teachers, administrators, and students on campuses" (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018, p. 166), significant and lasting structural change is not possible.

9.3 Chapter Summary

Canada takes pride in presenting an image of national character to the world, but hidden behind this image are half stories, tokenism, and ongoing cultural appropriation. Canadians are thought of internationally as being kind, gentle, loving, and accepting of all cultures. Canada largely holds a role on the international stage as peacemaker or peacekeeper. In addition, Canada uses Indigenous communities and culture to help portray this everyday by ensuring Indigenous art, music, dancing, and traditions are on display. To other nations, Canada appears to celebrate and honour its First Peoples, yet Canada continues its colonial relationship to Indigenous People with ongoing legal battles for land and resources without providing the basics of life such as clean drinking water. Essentially, Canada continues to perpetrate violence against Indigenous communities, despite wearing a cloak of acknowledgement, apology, and financial reparations, thereby ensuring that colonialism continues.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

I undertook this research study in an attempt to understand the push for indigenisation in Canadian colleges and universities—to determine who was driving this change, how and why it was being driven, and how deep and meaningful change to decolonise postsecondary education could be evoked. As an individual who has lived experience in Indigenous communities, living and working alongside Indigenous Peoples, and experience as an educator and administrator in a large public college in Canada, I have an abiding personal and professional interest in this topic. I also feel I bring a unique understanding, given my life experience, which would allow me to amplify Indigenous Peoples' voices as an ally.

In this inquiry, I explored the following research question: How might Canadian colleges meaningfully indigenise in order to advance decolonisation efforts in Canada? I also examined five subquestions:

1. How is indigenisation defined in the Canadian postsecondary education sector?
2. What factors are driving indigenisation initiatives in the Canadian postsecondary education sector?
3. Are current indigenisation initiatives in Canadian colleges meaningfully advancing decolonisation?
4. What changes could enhance the effectiveness of indigenisation efforts in contributing to decolonisation?
5. What might a preferable future of postsecondary education look like in terms of indigenisation?

From my research, I conclude that the process of indigenising Canadian colleges is not simple. There is no recommended process that colleges can take to meaningfully indigenise. What I will suggest later in this chapter is that indigenisation requires a ceding of power and the creation of a new, or third, space (Bhabha (1994). Indigenisation is a part of reconciliation. Reconciliation requires the building of new relationships with Indigenous peoples. This requires a decolonisation of individual and collective minds. La paperson (2017) defined a third space university as "fundamentally a decolonial project – as an interdisciplinary, transnational, yet vocational university that equips its students with skills towards the applied practice of decolonization" (Chpr 3, para 6). This third space does not

just exist to be lauded for what it is then, it actively works to disrupt the status quo thinking and actions of students, and I would suggest administrators, teachers, and members of the community across all walks of life.

In this dissertation, I have shown that there is no standard definition of indigenisation. As such, it is challenging to determine how effectively meaningful indigenisation is being carried out. What I have articulated through this dissertation is that indigenisation is a term that allows colonising parties to demonstrate a commitment to inclusion of Indigenous Peoples and culture in the postsecondary education environment. With initiatives to become more inclusive such as physical environments being refurbished and built to incorporate Indigenous circles, natural resources, Indigenous art, and Indigenous place-naming, along with preferential hiring for Indigenous academics, there is an appearance of full acceptance of Indigenous ways of knowing and being. It is important to note, however, that this work is carried on the backs of a few with the majority of non-Indigenous academics wary of moving beyond land acknowledgements for fear of making mistakes or being guilty of cultural appropriation. The dance between the coloniser and the colonised is not smooth, with steps that still need to be perfected, and because of this, indigenisation remains strongly rooted in token actions and much discussion continues about the appropriate next steps. During a recent college town hall I attended, a professor challenged the senior leadership team to critically reflect on their alignment with a major Canadian financial institution that was complicit in environmental destruction of Indigenous land. The professor asked how a college that is vocal about wanting to indigenise and is taking so many actions to make it appear so could be willing to accept monetary grants and support from a financial institution that was actively blocking the goals of Indigenous Peoples to protect and reclaim their ancestral lands. I posit this is because reconciliation in Canada is still very much at a beginning stage. Although the pace of change has accelerated, with significant progress made since the 1800s, "Canadians are still reconciling themselves with Canada's true history" (Wilson-Raybould, 2022, p. 13). I suggest indigenisation is a term that sounds politically correct and supportive of Indigenous Peoples and their cultures but does not go far enough towards what is truly needed and desired—decolonisation. Without steady funding and a deep political commitment from government to reconciliation, it is challenging for colleges and universities to move forward from the communicating and promoting the idea of indigenisation to actively decolonising at all levels. The action of decolonising remains too disruptive to power at all levels of education and government.

I posit, therefore, that what is driving indigenisation is the need to maintain control by providing an appearance of desiring decolonisation, but only to the extent that Indigenous Peoples and cultures are included in postsecondary education institutions and the broader environment. In today's neoliberal society, EDI are viewed as important. Indigenous Peoples' rights are lumped into the EDI initiatives, rather than being given the importance required to make significant progress towards decolonisation. Not giving any attention to Indigenous rights would be highly politically damaging with the rising awareness of Canada's colonial history. In order to maintain power and control, the government is required to ensure efforts are showcased to raise living standards for Indigenous Peoples through initiatives related to access to clean water, quality health care, quality education and equal opportunity for employment. However, in doing so, the government is demonstrating only a superficial commitment to reconciliation.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that current initiatives in Canadian colleges are not advancing decolonisation in a transformative way. Although more government support through ongoing funding could help, because there is no real definition of what is required for a college or university to be indigenised, it is challenging to demonstrate the outcome of any funding awarded. Academic institutions must move past quantifying Indigenous students, academics, and administrators to meaningful indicators of change and success. Simply embedding required electives on Indigenous language and culture into educational programs is also insufficient. Although it raises awareness among those enrolled, I believe the outcome can be positive or negative because the awareness is forced. Ensuring all Canadians are taught about Residential Schools and the multigenerational trauma it caused Indigenous Peoples is important, but it must not be done in a classroom environment where Indigenous students are at risk of being retraumatised. Asking Indigenous educators to teach only Indigenous language and culture courses is not reconciliation. Having Indigenous administrators at the table to lead indigenisation for a college or university but without the supports needed to make the work happen is not setting them up for success. In the end, these actions do not move Canadian colleges and universities towards the goal of decolonisation.

Reconciliation is what Indigenous People in Canada deserve and require, yet Canadian education systems are only tasked with making superficial changes that serve to maintain existing power structures under the guise of indigenisation. Reconciliation demands meaningful apology and reparation for historical wrongs. The term meaningful draws my

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attention back to decolonisation and the indigenisation of colonial institutions, such as colleges and universities, as a means of creating a new future for colonisers and the colonised. However, what reconciliation does not do is address the ongoing binary system of labelling groups based on race, which prevents the breakdown of polarities and creation of a new space.

In her 2022 book, Jody Wilson-Raybould noted, "Times of transition and transformation can be confusing" (p. 16). It is expected that people will struggle "to translate their increasing knowledge, awareness, understanding and desire into tangible action" (Wilson-Raybould, 2022, p. 16). I would include the word "palatable" alongside the term "tangible" in this statement. Understanding what is even expected by reconciliation is confusing. Wilson-Raybould asked, "What exactly [does reconciliation] mean? Whose responsibility is it to reconcile? Does reconciliation have a beginning, middle, and end?" (p. 19). Are we actually describing a resurgence or rebuilding of nations? This confusion is not only held by White people in Canada, but also by Indigenous People. Wilson-Raybould proposed the three core practices of true reconciliation are learning, understanding, and taking action. These are no different than engaging in any change process and perhaps by reducing reconciliation to these three steps—it is possible to make it more manageable.

Creation of a new decolonised space will not be a comfortable process initially, not for the colonisers nor for the colonised. It requires a ceding of power and a rebuilding of a new framework of governance. This is the third space Bhabha (1994) referred to. Wente (2021) suggested to reconcile means to "repair a once functional relationship" (p. 188) and that this has never existed. What needs to happen in actuality is the "building of a functional relationship in the first place; to stop pretending that the current relationship is worth saving and to discard it and start over" (Wente, 2021, p. 188). Dismantling the colonial nation-state and capitalist system requires non-Indigenous people to "reimagine and reconstruct how we have been socialized to think about and engage knowledge, relationships, gender expression, labor, the environment, property rights, governance – in short, *nearly everything about our existences on these lands*" (Stein, 2017, para. 24). These new relationships and spaces need to be ones in which all voices can be heard, all histories can be valid, and all ways of learning, knowing, and being can be embraced. Wilson-Raybould (2022) stated all Canadians including Indigenous Peoples need to find "ways to work together to tackle injustice, systemic racism, and the legacy of colonialism in a way

that reflects and advances the vision we have of our society into the future – constructive, resilient, cohesive, just, thriving, and peaceful" (p. 20).

For postsecondary education administrators and teachers, this important work begins with self. It begins with transforming one's own mind, reflecting on, acknowledging and understanding how colonialism has shaped beliefs and experiences. It requires deep listening and relearning of history through actively building relationships with others who challenge colonial ways of thinking. It must go beyond tokenism of actions to give the appearance of embracing Indigenous ways of knowing and being without changing any other part of the system. It must invite a joint rethinking of what postsecondary education can and should be to meet the needs of future generations of Canadians.

As I have argued, the postsecondary education system continues to replicate hegemonic control that prioritises the interests of the White, middle class, able bodied, male, non-Indigenous population. I have also presented Indigenous Peoples' voices that state for indigenisation to be effective it must be driven by the colonised rather than the coloniser. However, indigenisation efforts in postsecondary can only go so far if the entire colonial system of postsecondary education is not rethought. It is also important to realise that Indigenous peoples fighting for reconciliation cannot return to the past. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, there is no fully separate coloniser and colonised culture anymore. Both have influenced one another and the result is a complex dynamic that cannot simply be undone. Instead, there needs to be a revisioning of what each party sees as the future of education and of Canada, geographically, politically, and economically. Relationships need to be formed and trust needs to be built. My hope is that, in time, what results will be an authentic sharing of knowledge and being that embraces the best Western and Indigenous ways of being. It will not be Indigenous people being welcomed into a Eurocentric colonial postsecondary setting with areas set aside for them to feel comfortable and opportunities given for them to defend their knowledge of Canadian history. An ideal future will not have Indigenous People fitting into a system that dismisses their connections to the land and to relationship with everything, living or not, on this Earth. The ideal future will be a new imagining in which everyone can learn from each other, in which Indigenous art, culture, and knowledge no longer needs to have special steps taken to be visible but is simply acknowledged and seen as part of a new norm. Meaningful decolonisation will require a different approach, a lot of time and effort, and a desire on both the colonisers' and coloniseds' parts to create a new reality.

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Canada, as I have argued, is a neoliberal society bound by marketisation and performativity to validate actions. Righting historical wrongs and unpacking of the cultural genocide in Canada must be undertaken before Canadians can move to a new "third space" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 55). Creating a detailed plan for decolonisation is next to impossible when it is so embedded in colonial logic. The opportunity all Canadians have is to disentangle themselves from the system and "learn how to desire, imagine, understand, sense, relate, and exist very differently, without assuming that we already know how" (Shein, 2021, para. 29). Change can occur, but it requires everyone to engage—learning where we have come from, understanding the impact of that history, and taking action to improve the future. This mindset is embedded in Indigenous values and teachings, reflecting back on ancestors and making decisions today that will leave the world a better place for future generations (Wilson-Raybould, 2022).

While steps are being taken by all Canadians to do this, this also requires sustained investment of government funds, continued challenging of the status quo regarding Indigenous Peoples' rights, and a deep-seated desire for all levels of government and citizens to work together with Indigenous Peoples to forge a new and better Canada together. This means leaving paternalistic attitudes "at the door," so to speak, and recognising all people are equal, no matter where they live, what their background, and what their current health (physical and mental) status is. Meeting people where they are at and working with them to realise their human potential in a way that allows them to meaningfully contribute is critical to the work of decolonisation and indigenisation. Access to education in their own languages at all levels is important. Access to clean water and health care in all communities is vital. Valuing each person and community and the differences inherent in lived experience is critical to forging trusting relationships and building new norms. This is the root of social justice. While this process can be initiated within education, it will need to extend beyond in order to disrupt systemic oppression.

Being bound by political and economic realities on a global level means that this cannot happen in a vacuum—but it can happen. It starts with a personal commitment to change along with a national commitment to fund change on an ongoing basis, as a priority, and not as an election platform promise that is overturned when the governing party changes. Indigenisation of colonial institutions such as education, health, and justice is not a Conservative or a Liberal platform; it is a human one, one that every Canadian must embrace so that Canada can move forward.

10.1 Future Implications of Research

The floodgates of decolonising postsecondary education have opened in Canada, and around the world in other countries settled by the British Empire. With this comes the need for ongoing research to examine what is being done, by whom, and how effectively. This dissertation touched upon some of the current thoughts and actions arising from the recommendations of Canadian federally appointed commissions over the past two decades (TRC, 2015b; National Inquiry Into MMIWG, 2019). Transitioning recommendations into enacted policy is not only time consuming but also costly. Decolonisation is a significant change initiative that spans multiple lines of responsibility; therefore, it must effect drive at the personal level for each individual in Canada, as well as at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels of government, and within the core sectors of business, health care, science, and education. I believe a key success factor in this change is the political will at the federal and provincial government levels to foster awareness and an urgency for change, develop policies and legislation, and then implement a means to measure enactment of initiatives. Increasing funding for institutions such as colleges and universities to hire additional resources to research and draft policy and manage this change is fundamental to ensuring lasting change. For this to happen, as I have argued throughout this dissertation, neoliberalist goals need to shift away from a capitalist mindset to one focused on social justice.

While research on decolonisation and the role of indigenisation in postsecondary education is happening, more needs to be done. Indigenous-led research that advances Indigenous voices is essential for colleges and universities to truly evolve beyond their current status as colonial institutions. This research needs to be at the ground level in all disciplines as well as at the metalevel to observe changes being effected across all academic institutions. This research can build on the work researchers such as Tuck and Yang (2012) who cautioned against making decolonisation a metaphor, Michelle Pidgeon (2016), who stressed that meaningful decolonisation is more than a checklist, Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), who sought to define indigenisation and proposed three stages, Sharon Stein (2022), who wrote about the need for deep learning and unlearning in order to make change to the system, and Shauneen Pete (2022), who is involved in the good work of de/colonisation. Kerry Potts (personal communication, February 6, 2024), an Indigenous pedagogy and curriculum consultant at Algonquin College, stated educators need to "weave and 'braid' different subjects into a curriculum." She further noted Indigenous

voices and topics cannot be "siloed," nor can institutions focus on teaching the language and culture of one First Nation. According to the 2021 Canadian Census, there are over 630 First Nations communities in Canada, comprising 50 First Nations cultures and languages (Government of Canada, 2024b). I believe care needs to be taken to not oversimplify the challenge of indigenising postsecondary institutions. Taking a course taught by an Anishinaabe elder on local culture does not qualify someone to speak knowledgeably about Indigenous culture as a whole. Research is needed to determine how to meaningfully create curricula that bridge multiple Indigenous ways of knowing and being without doing it in such a broad brush stroke that it is a disservice. Research is needed to create tools to support this, and more so to find ways to ensure the heavy lifting of indigenising pedagogy and curriculum is not on the backs of Indigenous employees only. Finding ways to integrate Indigenous ways of knowing, learning, and being into the colonial box of postsecondary education is akin to trying to insert a large square peg in a round hole—it may fit with force, but not without serious gaps. Indigenous-led research as well as collaborative Indigenous and non-Indigenous research are needed to explore the ways that indigenisation is being done currently, to seek out new ways and to overhaul the education system in Canada from early learning in the preschool years through to postsecondary levels. Breaking down and rebuilding the educational system will require creativity and collective thought as well as ongoing evaluation.

Having lived and raised a young family in Nunavut, Canada's newest territory, which was formed with the dream of Inuit self-government, I feel I can say that I have experienced some of what it is like to be governed by members of a noncolonial culture. I say "some" because as a White person, I can never truly understand the generations of oppression and trauma that First Nations, Metis, and Inuit have experienced at the hands of White, colonial settlers. I have, however, strove to practise with cultural humility and sought to understand, respect, and admire the strength, resilience, and genius of the Inuit. To have survived in the extreme cold, remote Arctic for generations and to have incurred the invasion of colonial settlers and the rapidity of technological and lifestyle change thrust upon them is something that perhaps is not often considered. Inuit have evolved in 100 years to what took mankind the last 600 years or more, and they have done it with fortitude, determination, and grace.

Now Canada needs to evolve. It is time to give back and to give way. It is time for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit to be able to walk alongside the multitude of settlers, forging

their own important, equal, and prosperous path. Only when some of the most influential positions in organisations are held by Indigenous people and when non-Indigenous people are accepting of this and willing to partner in the true sense of the word can we as Canadians say we are in fact making progress towards decolonising. This is my long-term dream and it is built on much smaller steps.

This research, as I mentioned at the start of this dissertation, is but one small step, one I knew I could take to better understand Canada's colonial history, my place in it, my children's and grandchildren's place in it, and the process of decolonising postsecondary education through indigenisation. In completing this research, I have begun the process of decolonising my own mind and how I engage with the world around me. My hope is that this work will also evoke reflection and encourage individuals who read it to begin the process of decolonising their own minds. I hope this work raises questions. I hope it inspires educators to learn more about Canada's colonial legacy and the burden thrust upon all Canadians to reconcile. I believe that by breaking down the three types of indigenisation outlined by Gaudry and Lorenz (2018), I have shed light on the depth of some of the initiatives currently being undertaken. It is my hope that this work promotes further research and discussion on what indigenisation in postsecondary education means or should mean in the future. I hope that administrators of colleges and universities who may read this research gain a clearer sense of the policy levers that both positively and negatively impact on the work being done to indigenise. I hope that by sharing Michelle Pidgeon's (2016) and Shauneen Pete's (2022) more recent work on decolonisation that administrators will question the expectations as well as the learning and work environments that created for Indigenous students, employees, educators, and administrators in postsecondary education, moving beyond expecting them to be well-behaved guests at the table to embracing the ugliness and beauty in this joint journey to reconciliation that all Canadians have embarked on.

10.2 Next steps

While this dissertation has probed deeply into indigenisation in the postsecondary sector in Canada, much more research is needed. An important aspect of indigenisation work being done by Canadian postsecondary education is the embedding of courses that teach Indigenous culture and language, but too often these apply a broad-brush-stroke approach to Indigenous cultures, misrepresenting them as a whole, or centred upon one particular

Nation's beliefs. According to the 2021 Census, in Canada, there are over 630 First Nations communities comprising over 50 Nations and 50 different Indigenous languages (Government of Canada, 2024b), all with unique cultures. Within the Inuit population, there are eight main ethnic groups (Freeman, 2023). With this number of unique cultures, indigenisation is not as simple as, for example, requesting a Cree Elder come in to share the Cree story of creation. The Cree version of this story is not the same as the Anishinaabe, or Mohawk, or Songhees, much less the Baffin Inuit story. It is important to study what the differences are and how these different cultures are being supported from not only an inclusion stance but a true decolonisation lens.

It is also important to gather the viewpoints of Indigenous learners, faculty, and administrative employees in colleges and universities across Canada to monitor the progress being made towards decolonising postsecondary education. Reflecting on my own research, while I believe this inquiry has amplified the voices of many Indigenous scholars and authors, it could have been further enriched by seeking direct input from Indigenous individuals in the community. My research, while aimed at non-Indigenous people in education administration, is also beneficial for those, including Indigenous People, who want to make a difference. Further research to understand and evaluate the changes being made will be helpful to progress with this agenda.

10.3 Closing Notes

As I reflect on this research process, I note I have changed. In learning what is required to decolonise, I have taken steps to do so myself. Over the course of this research, I have engaged in the work on personal, academic, and professional levels. I have engaged in opportunities to move indigenisation forward within my own educational institution and have advocated for and amplified the voices of Indigenous employees and students. This research is my first step on an individual level. As I have shown, there is a need to disrupt and dismantle the current colonial postsecondary education construct in Canada in order to create a new vision that can herald reconciliation. This cannot be done on the backs of Indigenous People alone, nor can it be accomplished through academic research and policymaking. This good work needs to be done in community, in dialogue, and with genuine intent to create a new future for all people in Canada.

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Indigenous Education Protocol
for Colleges and Institutes

COLLEGES &
INSTITUTES
CANADA

The signatory institutions to this protocol recognize and affirm their responsibility and obligation to Indigenous education.

Colleges and institutes respect and recognize that Indigenous people include First Nation, Métis and Inuit people, having distinct cultures, languages, histories and contemporary perspectives.

Indigenous education emanates from the intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

Indigenous education will strengthen colleges' and institutes' contribution to improving the lives of learners and communities.

The signatory institution agrees to:

1. Commit to making Indigenous education a priority.

2. Ensure governance structures recognize and respect Indigenous peoples.

3. Implement intellectual and cultural traditions of Indigenous peoples through curriculum and learning approaches relevant to learners and communities.

4. Support students and employees to increase understanding and reciprocity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

5. Commit to increasing the number of Indigenous employees with ongoing appointments, throughout the institution, including Indigenous senior administrators.

6. Establish Indigenous-centred holistic services and learning environments for learner success.

7. Build relationships and be accountable to Indigenous communities in support of self-determination through education, training and applied research.

Signatories endorse the intent of these principles and are committed to developing policies, procedures and practices within their institutions.

_____

Institution

_____

Name

_____ _____ _____

Title   **Date**   **Signature**