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Racialisation in Canada: A Case Study

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Canada is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, boasting some of the highest standards of living and highest quality of life. Canada also prides itself as a 'world leader in respect of human rights' (Grand Council of the Crees 2001:3). It heralds itself as being a 'cultural mosaic' and the metaphor of being a 'salad bowl' (Cornwell & Stoddard 2001: 323) - a place where ethnic and cultural diversity is encouraged and accepted - has frequently been associated with Canada (Hutchings [no date]). This idea of a 'mosaic' constructs the impression 'that in (English) Canada there is no set culture into which to integrate; cultural diversity is Canada's identity' (Cornwell & Stoddard 2001: 323). However, this image is not one of reality (Grand Council of the Crees 2001: 3). There are vast inequalities between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Canada, characterised by discrimination and segregation. According to the Grand Council of the Crees, 'these ongoing disparities are the result of decades and centuries of historic and ongoing racism, dispossession, colonialism and discrimination against indigenous peoples by governments in Canada' (Grand Council of the Crees 2001: 3). Thus, the discrimination the Aborigines in Canada face, is fundamentally based on 'racial classification and differentiation in which one group dominates, or attempts to dominate, another, and, in the process, categories them as inferior' (McCaskill 2012: 4). This discrimination is pervasive and spans across virtually all areas of society. According to the 1996 Canadian Federal Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, Aboriginal Peoples in Canada are being 'pushed... to the edge of economic, cultural and political extinction' (Grand Council of the Crees 2001: 3) and consequently called for extensive reorganisation in Canada to prevent this. What is interesting here is that Canada refuses to acknowledge the reality of the continuous segregation and discrimination that the Aborigines in Canada face. Denial is a common theme in Canada and, more generally, is a common theme in contemporary racism and racial practices. Petrova (2000) argues that 'the denial of racism is gradually conquering the sphere of manifestations of racism and is gradually becoming the most typical and widespread modern form of appearance of racist attitudes, opinions, statements, actions and policies' (Petrova 2000). This denial is explicit and maintained, despite Canada's history of colonialism.

In 2009, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper claimed that 'We [also] have no history of colonialism. So we have all of the things that many people admire about the great powers but none of the things that threaten or bother them' (Camfield 2013). However, in reality there is an unmistakable history of settler colonialism in Canada. The main goal of settler colonialism, unlike other forms of colonialism, was 'focused on land and its resources' (Buckner 2008: 200), with land being used as a means of exploitation. Thus, according to Shawn Atleo, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, 'not only does Canada have a history of colonialism in its dealings with the original inhabitants of what is now Canadian territory... but its effects are still being felt today' (Drohan 2011). The history of colonialism in Canada involved the repossession of Indian land and enforced removals, the destruction of language and cultural practices, the longstanding deliberate impoverishment of Aboriginal communities and the denial of treaty and Aboriginal rights despite their recognition in the constitution (Drohan 2011). As stated by the OHRC, 'we must be aware of the events of the past in order to address contemporary manifestations of racial discrimination and racism' (OHRC 2013). Colonial discourse, 'is based on the historical representation of non-white peoples as inferior on the basis of race. Such assumptions have been used as a means of

legitimizing unequal and discriminatory behaviour in socially excluding racialised 'others' (Bourassa et al 2004: 24). Institutional racial discrimination occurs when such beliefs and ideologies are entrenched in the social structure and imbue some with advantage, while disadvantaging and marginalising Aboriginals and other visible minorities. Such a process 'allows a climate of racial discrimination to flourish in Canada' (Westhues & Wharf 2103: 101). Indeed, according to Activist Harsha Walia, 'In Canada every system of oppression is organised around settler colonialism' (Hadley 2014). Tyrell (2012) argues that Canada's Imperialist vision, which was built upon British identity, is responsible for the production of racist policies thereafter (Tyrell 2012: 7). A central aim of government policy since the 19th century has been to civilise and educate native peoples, based on the assumption that they were 'inferior' in comparison to Western cultures (McCaskill 2012: 7).

Another function of legislation where racism is concerned is that it defines conditions of membership to a group. According to Goldberg (2002), this is a feature of a 'racial state'. A racial state '*defines* populations into racially identified groups, and they do so more or less formally through census taking, law, and policy' (Goldberg 2002: 110). For example, The Indian Act (1876) 'defined Indian identity and prescribed what "Indianness" meant' (Bourassa et al 2004: 25) and were further marked by difference in terms of being granted 'aboriginal rights', which were for 'aboriginal people' (Grand Council of the Crees 2001: 10). In defining Aboriginal identity by way of constructing legal and non-legal categories that have consequences for rights and privileges, serves as a means of controlling Aboriginal identity by the state (Bourassa et al 2004: 25). The Indian Act was an assimilationist policy in that the aim of this legislation was to 'advance the government's policy of genocide through the process of enfranchisement: the removal of Indian status from an individual' (Bourassa et al 2004: 25). This was to be achieved by enforcing Canadian citizenship upon enfranchised Indians and consequently, 'they relinquished their collective ties to their Indian communities' (Lawrence 1999) (Bourassa et al 2004: 25). Thus, under the Indian Act, Aboriginals faced restrictive regulations, characterised by assimilationist tactics, as well as the destruction of their cultural practices. The Enfranchisement Act (1867) legally allowed assimilation enforced by Indian Act.

However, it is important to note that there have been a number of changes in government policy over the years. As a result of the Aboriginal Rights Movement which took place between 1951 and 1981, the Canadian government reassessed its attitudes towards and treatment of Aboriginals, as a result of signing the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The Indian Act was revised in 1951, lifting bans on cultural ceremonies (Indigenous Foundations). Also, Aboriginals were now able to take legal action against the government over land claims and were given more autonomy in determining Indian status. However, the government still possessed significant power. Aboriginals were also granted the right to vote in 1960. Also, in assessing Canada's legislative framework, it should be noted that its 'comprehensive multicultural policy' (Hutchings [no date]) was an important step taken as a means of addressing issues with regards to racism and discrimination and has been some changes have been made. Academics frequently make reference to the White Paper (1976) on multiculturalism and the Multiculturalism Act (1988) to evidence that Canadians are accepting of diversity. The Multiculturalism Act sought to preserve the languages and cultures of people of all ethnic backgrounds while integrating such peoples into Canadian life. 'Canada was the first Western country to enact a multiculturalism policy' (the Canadian Multiculturalism Act 1985) 'and has an international reputation as a tolerant country that has strong human rights policies and respects cultural differences' (Westhues & Wharf 2013: 95). An additional important development was the Ontario Human Rights Code. According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2005), 'Under the Code, every person has the right to be free from racial discrimination and harassment in the social areas of employment, services, goods, facilities, housing accommodation, contracts and membership in trade and vocational associations. You should not be treated differently because of your

race or other related grounds, such as your ancestry, ethnicity, religion or place of origin' (OHRC 2005).

Anti-discrimination laws offer legal protection of basic human rights, the most important of which are; the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms ('the supreme law of Canada – takes precedence over all other laws, policies and legislations'); Canadian Human Rights Act ('federal anti-discrimination legislation'); Employment Equity Act (equality in terms of employment for minority groups) (Galabuzi 2006 : 35). Thus, it appears that, 'on the surface... human rights are entrenched in Canadian society' (Galabuzi 2006: 35). However, despite these 'good intentions' it does not appear that these policies have been effective in reducing discrimination (Westhues & Wharf 2013: 96), which raises the question of 'why' discrimination persists in virtually all areas of Canadian life and society. There is evidence of 'institutional racism' across numerous sectors of society, for example, in; education, housing, employment and so on – also known as 'modern racism'. According to the OHRC, examples of modern racism in the workplace include; 'Exclusion from formal or informal networks; Disproportionate blame for an incident; Assignment to less desirable positions or job duties; Treating normal differences of opinion as confrontational or insubordinate' (OHRC 2005). In other words, modern racism equates to subtle, more covert acts of racism and racist practices, for example; the act of stereotyping – assuming all members of an ethnic group are the same. This means that discrimination on the basis of race persists, albeit it is manifested in a different way to that of the past.

A new campaign began in 2013 to urge the United Nations to declare the treatment of First Nation peoples by Canada as 'genocide'. The argument is based on the recognition that a number of crimes directed towards the Aboriginal peoples in Canada 'qualify as genocide under the post second world war Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG)' (Bolen 2013). According to the definition of genocide outlined in the Constitution, 'at least three actions on the part of Canadian governments constitute genocide under those rules'. These are; (i) 'Sir John A. MacDonald's policy of deliberately starving First Nations people to make way for settlers in the Canadian west. (ii) The residential school system and especially the decision of Department of Indian Affairs chief Duncan Campbell Scott not to address rampant tuberculosis among students. (iii) The forcible removal of aboriginal children from their homes for the purpose of adoption by white families. Estimates put the number of children removed between the 1960s and the mid-1980s at around 20,000' (Bolen 2013).

The representation of Aboriginals in the criminal justice system is an additional key issue where 'race' is concerned. Aboriginals experience 'disproportionately high rates of crime, victimization, are over-represented in the court and the correctional system, and further, feel a deep alienation from a justice system that is foreign to them and inaccessible, and reflects both overt and systemic racism' (Grand Council of the Crees 2001: 22). Howard Sapers, Canada's correctional investigator stated in his annual report that 'disproportionate numbers of minorities in comparison to their share of the population is a persistent and growing problem' (Barrett 2013). Figures from Saper's report show that; in the last 10 years the overall Aboriginal population in prisons increased by 46%, while the population of Caucasian inmates decreased by around 3% (Barrett 2013). Furthermore, 'Aboriginals account for nearly one-quarter of all prisoners but comprise four per cent of the Canadian population' (Barrett 2013). Sapers report concluded that there was a need to introduce a more culturally sensitive approach, one which focused on alleviating language barriers and provided support for members of ethnic minority groups. In December 1995, The Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System issued a 450 page report, which is to date 'the most comprehensive report on the issue of systemic racism in Ontario's criminal justice system' (OHRC 2013). The report 'confirmed the perception of racialized groups that they are not treated equally by criminal justice institutions. Moreover, the findings also showed that the concern was not limited to police' (OHRC 2013).

Goldberg's discussion of the effect of 'raceless' narratives emphasises the ways in which Canada's multicultural ideology 'alchemises the structural into the individual' (Goldberg 2009: 344 cited in Martak 2012). Consequently, differences in terms of race appear to be due to individual choice rather than the formative historical forces of processes (still ongoing) like colonialism. Thus raceless narratives disguise the racisms in legislation and legal processes and institutions. Goldberg explains that legislation works to control certain populations because states (and their dominant ideologies) determine the actions that are properly criminalised. Goldberg's theorising uncovers how the passing of the Omnibus Bill will function in a way that 'controls race and maintain the structural racism of colonialism in Canada' (Martak 2012) and hence has racist implications. According to Goldberg, legislation regulates certain social groups as the state controls what acts are to be defined as criminal in a way that exercises their dominant ideologies, in neither an explicit nor overt way. Goldberg contends that 'raceless states.. silently extend the structure of social arrangement historically fashioned through race by setting agendas for what counts as a crime, who is marked as criminal, where criminal acts largely take place, and how they are punished' (Goldberg 2009: 233 cited in Martak 2012). Therefore, certain acts will be distinguished as criminal in a way such that particular races are targeted. For example, the increase in the sentence for possession or supplying of drugs of up to 14 years will effect under Bill C-10. This will have a greater impact upon impoverished communities, in which drugs are more commonly used and access to rehab services are slight. While other crime, such as white corporate crime, goes largely unpunished. Such racial implications are covered up by Canada's refusal to acknowledge the history of racism and the multicultural ideology of Canada today. As Goldberg (2002) contends, 'whiteness is enacted in subtle and overt ways in institutions and social spaces and is organised to maintain "a world racial order of white dominance"' (Dua et al 2005).

The marked inequalities Aboriginals face in relation to the rest of the Canadian population is reflected in their disproportionate levels of educational achievement, stemming principally from unequal educational opportunities. Such inequality, like most faced by Aboriginals, can also be traced back to the colonial period. A key amendment to the Indian Act (1884) was that the Act permitted the enforced removal of children to Residential schools and stripped Indians achieving a University Education or Ordination of their rights (Grand Council of the Crees 2001). Following the theme of the perception, held by the nineteenth century government at this time, that Aboriginals and their culture were inferior to Canada's and unable to adapt, the Canadian Government enacted their policy aimed at addressing this issue. Under the policy, attendance at church run, government funded 'residential schools' became compulsory. Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their communities as a result. Residential schools were 'designed to perform an assimilative function' (Harding 2006: 208). Ultimately, Aboriginals face marginalisation, as they have not been equipped with sufficient knowledge and skills in order for them to integrate into mainstream society (McCaskill 2012: 7). While the last Indian residential school closed in 1996, the legacy of residential schools, as part of the legacy of colonialism persists today (Hadley 2014). A 'new form of residential schooling' has been recognised. For example Downtown Eastside has a disproportionate number of Aboriginals as part of ongoing colonialism in Canada and the deliberate impoverishment of Aboriginals. Also, there are even more Aboriginal children in state care than there were in residential schools (Hadley 2014).

However, education, or the apparent lack of, is not only a problem for Aboriginal peoples, but also for non-Aboriginal peoples, in that non-Aboriginals receive insufficient education of Aboriginals culture. The Interim Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2012) suggests '...non-Aboriginal Canadians have been denied a proper education as to the nature of Aboriginal societies and the history of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Canadians generally have been led to believe – by what they have been taught and not taught in schools – that Aboriginal people were and are uncivilized, primitive

and inferior, and continue to need to be civilized...They have not been well informed about the nature of the relationship that was established initially between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and the way that relationship has been shaped by colonialism and racism. This lack of education and misfortune has led to misunderstanding and, in some cases, hostility between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians...' (McCaskill 2012: 21). However, education informing non-Aborigines about Aboriginals and their culture does seem to have improved somewhat and there appears to have been a positive change in attitudes towards Aboriginals. The 2010 UAPS report found that '25% of respondents agreed that Aboriginal history and culture is very important 'or important (42%) in defining Canada, especially among young people. In addition, the majority of urban non-Aboriginal people in the study recognize the contributions that Aboriginal people have made to the environment, culture and arts and national identity with 36% from all cities saying they have made a major contribution and 38% a moderate contribution' (UAPS 2010)(McCaskill 2012).

As part of the 'colonial drive' to civilise the Aboriginals and segregate them from mainstream society, Reserve systems were established, governed by the Indian Act. On reserves, Aboriginals had limited access to resources (Indigenous Foundations). According to Tanya Navaneelan, an MSc student in epidemiology, the colonisation of Aboriginals has been identified as an essential factor in the determination of health by the World Health Organization. The loss of land which occurred during colonisation had significant consequences in terms of socio-cultural and economic practices, which in turn impacted upon health. The history of colonialism in Canada included 'the creation of the reserve system, forced relocation, forced placement of children in schools far from their families and communities, inadequate services to those living on reserves, racism, and a lack of vision as to the effects of these experiences'. From the Aboriginal perspective, it refers to the loss of lands, resources, and self-direction and to the severe disturbance of cultural ways and values' ("Historical Determinants of Health Status of Aboriginal People in Canada" 2013). There are marked differences between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals across various areas of health, such as life expectancy and chronic diseases. 'First Nations people living off reserve, Métis, and Inuit reported poorer health compared with non-Aboriginal people based on Canadian Community Health Survey data from 2007 to 2010. The poorer self-reported health among First Nations people and Métis was partly a result of higher rates of chronic conditions. About 56% of First Nations and 55% of Métis reported being diagnosed with one or more chronic conditions, compared with 48% of non-Aboriginal people' (Statistics Canada 2013). Also, life expectancy of First Nations Peoples is on average 7 years less than Canadians (Grand Council of the Crees 2001: 7); infant mortality rates average at 13.8 per 1000 live births for First Nations Peoples compared to 5.5 deaths per 1000 live births for Canadians. High rates of suicide are also evident, especially among the Aboriginal youth – of which, the underlying problems are 'hopeless conditions: desperate poverty, poor and crowded housing, the absence of a consistent primary care-giver for children, lack of healthy recreational activities, lack of employment opportunities, isolation, easy access to alcohol and drugs' (Grand Council of the Crees 2001: 18). Reasons frequently given as to why people are choosing to take their own lives include; the legacy of colonialism and dispossession and their lasting negative effects, racism, segregation, discrimination and the devaluing of aboriginal identity. Such outcomes have been attributed as being part of the effects of the residential school system and colonialism (OHRC 2005).

Many of the chronic health conditions Aboriginal people face, such as diabetes, cancer and coronary heart disease, are due to the enforced acculturation of Aboriginal peoples (Young 1994). However, violence, poor income and low social status are also contributory factors to poor health for Aboriginal women (Bourassa et al 2004: 23). Aboriginal health is also affected due to their experience of stereotypes, racism and discrimination in the health care setting. A recent report published by The Health Council of Canada, an independent national agency, 'Empathy, dignity and respect: Creating cultural safety for Aboriginal people in urban healthcare', suggests that the Aborigines of Canada regularly face racial discrimination and

prejudice when using healthcare systems, resulting in some avoiding using the services altogether (Mehta 2012). The report states that, while factors like poverty and the effects of colonization are recognised as having an impact on the health of Aboriginals, a 'Western approach to healthcare' often reinforces stereotypes and prejudices held about Aboriginals, which isolate and threaten some patients (Mehta 2012). An example of stereotyping and discrimination taken from the report, which exemplifies the detrimental effects of stereotyping in the healthcare setting, is that of an Aboriginal man. The man was beaten and in a poor state when he arrived at the emergency room but was not allowed to lie down on a bed. The nurse responsible for his care explained to the doctor that the man was not granted permission to lie down as he was 'dirty' and would 'return to the streets and engage in the same risky behaviour that had landed him in hospital'. The report however showed the patient was 'employed, owned a home and had been attacked on his way home from work' (Mehta 2012), utterly disproving the stereotype. Thus, racism in government policy may be seen to be reinforced by cultural attitudes; certain associations with aboriginals e.g. dirtiness, uncleanliness, addiction to drugs and alcohol and laziness, are generalisations often made and thus serve as evidence of racism in Canada. According to Goldberg (2002), '... racial violence perpetrated in the name of and by the state invariably assumes gender-specific expression, and state-shaped racially figured labour policies and practices are almost always contoured to reproduce a state of gendered effects' (Goldberg 2002: 100). Thus, Aboriginal women face discrimination, not only on the basis of their race but also on the basis of their gender. Aboriginal women in Canada experience a disproportionate affliction of poor health. Aboriginal women have lower life expectancy, elevated morbidity rates, and elevated suicide rates in comparison to non-Aboriginal women (Bourassa et al 2004: 23).

Media representations are both a significant source and agency of reinforcement of such perceptions and stereotypes held about Aboriginals. Harding (2006) concludes from his study that news discourse about Aboriginal people has remained more or less constant over the last 150 years. He explains; 'in the 1990s, these issues were framed, much as they were in colonial times, in ways that protect dominant interests and signify aboriginal people as a threat' (Harding 2006: 205). Common framings of Aboriginals include; 'aboriginal people as inferior', 'aboriginal people as child-like' (Harding 2006: 209) and positioned as threats to civilised Canadian society justifies the differential and discriminatory treatment of Aboriginals. In forging the link between Canada's colonial past and contemporary racial practices, Harding (2006) states: 'the media play a decisive role in promulgating racist ideology and in maintaining white dominance in Canada' (Harding 2006: 206). For example, a news article from the British Columbian (1893) justified the need for 'corrective action', following a programme of 'forced assimilation' on the premise that 'aboriginal people are inferior and in need of protection and guidance; settlers have a 'moral obligation' to the aggrieved 'original inhabitants' to 'undertake the arduous.... task of elevating, socially and religiously, those who are fast dispossessing of their fair country' (Harding 2006: 214). Furthermore, a recent study by the JHR, 'Canada's leading media development organisation', analysed media coverage and portrayals of Aboriginal Peoples in Ontario from 2010-2013 and found that only 0.15% of all news stories produced overall centred on Aboriginal people and issues of their concern (Pierro 2013: 4). Thus there is a serious issue of underrepresentation of Aboriginals in the news media, which perhaps accounts for, or at the very least significantly contributes to, non-Aboriginals lack of knowledge of Aboriginal culture. Gerbner's (1972) concept of 'symbolic annihilation' addresses the issue of representation (or lack of) in the media; 'representation in the fictional world signifies existence; absence means symbolic annihilation' (Gerbner 1972 : 182, cited in Ross 2011 : 366). Gerbner's concept has been extended to the 'symbolic annihilation of race', which can be applied to the Canadian context. These examples support the arguments being made throughout the length of this case study, that the legacy of colonialism remains tangible today. According to Harding (2006), more accurate and comprehensive representation is needed in order to achieve social justice for Aboriginal people (Harding 2006: 231).

It is clear then, that representation in the media of Aboriginals is a complex issue; they face under-representation, over-representation and misrepresentation, all in areas which accordingly serve to perpetuate a negative image of Aboriginals. As McCaskill (2012) explains: 'The presentation of an image of urban Aboriginal people suffering from a myriad of social problems and possessing special rights' is thus 'a double-edged sword' (McCaskill 2012: 30). On one hand, presenting Aboriginals as facing various issues, such as; poverty, housing problems, lack of education and employment serves to validate the claim that they are a disadvantaged group in need of social support and encourages allocation of government resources to address the problem. On the other hand however, overemphasis of this image can lead to negative perceptions, fuelling stereotypes and prejudice, keeping Aboriginals in a state of 'victimisation' (McCaskill 2012: 30). Representational issues for Aboriginals are part of their broader 'struggle against colonialism' (OHRC 2013).

This case study is far from a comprehensive analysis of racism in Canada as it continues to persist on such a wide scale. However, what has been demonstrated is that Aboriginals in Canada face enduring disadvantage and inequality in virtually all aspects of social life. There are a number of indicators which highlight the racial discrimination that Aboriginals in Canada face, including, but not limited to; barriers to accessing healthcare, education and employment, overrepresentation in the prison population and disproportionate impoverishment (OHRC 2013). Aboriginals in Canada therefore experience racism at the individual, institutional and organisational level and this racial discrimination continues despite the supposed establishment and implementation of anti-racist policy. It should have been evidenced through the numerous examples cited throughout however, that anti-racism in policy does not always, or rarely, equates to anti-racism in practice. By focusing on the voices and perspectives of Aboriginals in Canada it is clear to see this; The Urban Aboriginal Task Force (UATF), a study conducted in 2007 of Aboriginal people in five cities in Ontario (Ottawa, Barrie/Midland/Orillia, Sudbury, Thunder Bay and Kenora) found that 78% of respondents from all five cities felt that racism between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in those cities was a problem' (McCaskill 2012: 12). According to Westhues and Wharf (2013) racism persists due to personal biases and ignorance, but its key motivators are institutional policies, programs and practices. Initially scientific racism was used to justify racism; it was suggested that Aboriginal and racialised people were inherently inferior to non-racialised people (Winant 2000). While it has since been evidenced that there is no scientific, biological basis to race, 'the results have allowed Western society to create a hierarchy – with 'white' at the top – to distinguish those termed 'civilised' from those labelled 'barbaric' (Westhues & Wharf 2013: 101). Denial is a strong theme in racism in contemporary Canada and it serves as a means of distancing the 'us' of today from 'them' of the past. Also, if racism doesn't exist then why do strategies addressing racism need to be implemented? It appears then that the content of racial discourse in Canada has changed from 'legal racism' to covert racism (Roy [No date]). Again, this fits with what Goldberg describes as 'racial states'; 'Historically, it has been the business of racial states to assert themselves - to state their conditions - racially. It has been their business to generate the possibilities of their boundaries in no more or less than racial terms'. However 'the institutionalization of race by the state, its routinized assumption in the structure of state institutions, has made it possible for contemporary states to assert themselves racially without explicit invocation of racial terms' (Goldberg 2002: 119).

However, in more recent years, a number of changes have been apparent. According to Satzewich (2004), from 1923-1963 Canada would not look to have changed all that significantly as colonial mentality was still tangible. Government policy and various organizations still perceived non-white immigrants and Aboriginal peoples 'as groups who posed "racial" problems for the processes of nation building and state formation' (Satzewich 2004). However, Satzewich maintains that the period between 1963 and 2003 has been characterised by change. Satzewich identifies four significant areas of change that have occurred in this time; firstly, is the claim that 'Canadian institutions and organizations are

now less likely to overtly racially and ethnically discriminate' (Satzewich 2004). However, the key word here is 'overtly'; discrimination on the basis of race is no longer lawfully permitted due to policy changes. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms and human-rights legislation were enacted in order to make racial discrimination more difficult to get away with and less tolerable; secondly, changes in immigration policy have seen racist policies regarding immigration of the 1960s mostly abolished; thirdly, 'the symbolic order of race and ethnicity is changing', with the recognition that Canada 'is no longer made up mainly of "white" Europeans'; and finally, that social inequality is no longer solely attributable to racial discrimination. Other factors, such as gender, religion, social class and employment status also affect patterns of social disadvantage (Satzewich 2004). Also, there has been a change in social attitudes. Findings from various research studies evidence that there is a general consensus that discrimination towards Aboriginals in Canadian society does exist. Aboriginals are more likely to view this as more of a problem than non-Aboriginals but non-Aboriginals are nevertheless aware there is an issue here (McCaskill 2012: 28).

The case that has been made throughout is that racism in Canada persists, despite anti-racist policies, due to the legacy of colonialism. Such practices are still evident in Canadian society today, with colonial mentality being used as justification for the ongoing discrimination Aboriginals in Canada face. Thus, it has been argued that Canadian 'multiculturalism' is a 'myth' (Tyrell 2012: 1). According to Tyrell (2012), racism persists today in Canadian society due to the inability of equality/ anti-racism and anti-discrimination laws to address the 'structural inequalities that are inherited from Canada's colonial past' (Tyrell 2012: 1). In order to challenge racist ideologies in Canada, more than anti-racist policies are required. According to McCaskill (2012), cross cultural education and changes in legislation are needed. Where education is concerned, this includes direct education, for example developing public awareness through the media and indirect education, for example educating the public on aboriginals rights and issues (McCaskill 2012: 32).

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