Teaching Civility: How Teachers Negotiate Race, Culture and Citizenship in the Multicultural School

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
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Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

In this project, I ask: How do Ontario public schools participate in the construction and perpetuation of a racial hierarchy of Canadian citizenship? I argue that the discourse of white civility produces and organizes a governable Canadian populace that serves to legitimize the nation-state. Employing a critical anti-colonial, anti-racist framework, I analyze the narratives of teachers as they relate to the notions of citizenship, multiculturalism and professionalism. I aim to shed light on the role of the teacher within the circuits of power that serve to regulate ‘Canadian-ness’ and respectability. Through a discourse analysis of the statements of educators working with newcomer students, I illustrate some of the obstacles to equitable praxis. I conclude by challenging teachers to consider their investments in the systems that perpetuate oppression.
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This is dedicated with all my love to my niece, Maryam, and my nephew Abd al-Wakil.
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CHAPTER ONE
Introduction

The notion of civil society refers, in the West, to particular forms of constructing, legitimating, and resolving disputes in the public domain. But civil society is unthinkable without the existence of autonomous institutions, sites, and social coalitions capable of playing an intermediary role between the state and society.

Achille Mbembe, *On the Post-Colony*

The public school educator is, in one sense, an agent of the state, endowed with disseminating curricula sanctioned by government ministries. This task, in Canada, involves the promotion of national narratives that reinforce relations of racial domination. (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 296) It also involves the inculcation of national ideals, including the ideal of civility, which Achille Mbembe (2001) has linked to the development of civil society, as alluded to in the quote above. (p. 38) The line between the state and civil society has been greatly blurred since the eighteenth century of which Mbembe was writing, making the process through which a governable and civil populace is secured worth even greater scrutiny. In this light, we can see the role of the teacher as a mediator between the state and society. Public school teachers influence and shape the citizens who make up the civil sphere. The job of citizen-making is not limited to the terms prescribed by the government, however, nor is it defined by a single coherent national narrative. Teachers bring to the role varied understandings and interpretations of the narratives and ideals they are expected to promote. Moreover, through their particular subject positions, individual teachers embody distinctive relationships to the state that inevitably shape the sets of negotiations they must make between their deployment of notions of citizenship and the expectations of their profession. Nevertheless, as Thobani (2007) argues:

> All subject positions, even if oppositional to hegemonic formulations (and contesting notions) of community and culture, have to negotiate the power embedded in the discourse of multiculturalism, in the state bureaucracies and its agencies, and in the media and other institutions. (p. 165)

This study investigates how teachers of newcomer students negotiate the power within the various discourses that constitute and regulate elementary school public education. In particular, it examines how teachers who profess a commitment to equity are regulated in and through the discourse of the national project that Daniel Coleman (2006) terms ‘Canadian white civility.’
Coleman argues that English Canada is a cultural project organized around a form of whiteness based on the British model of civility. Whiteness, through its conflation with civility, is naturalized in the English Canadian identity. (p. 5) Multiculturalism, rather than disrupting white civility, functions with civility to privilege and normalize whiteness. It functions to signify Canadian progressiveness without de-centering the white English Canadian identity. (p. 7) Coleman goes on to write:

Civility operates as a mode of internal management: the subjects of the civil order discipline their conduct in order to participate in the civil realm, and they themselves gain or lose legitimacy in an internally striated civil society depending on the degree to which they conform to its ideals. (p. 11)

The project of white civility thus functions discursively to regulate bodies and conduct. This study employs the notion of white civility as a discourse to examine the identities and subjectivities produced in and through curricula and teacher narratives.

Within this study I address the following questions: What can schools tell us about the racial project of Canadian civility? How do teachers make sense of and deploy divergent and competing notions of citizenship within educational discourse and practice? How do teachers understand themselves as social agents? How do the particular social positions of individual teachers inform and shape the practices they employ to educate newcomer students about and for Canadian citizenship?

RATIONALE

My work within this project cannot be separated from my personal location as an Arab Muslim woman and a secondary school teacher. As a hijab-wearing, visibly identifiable Muslim woman who holds the formal status of ‘Canadian citizen,’ I am intimately aware of the ‘insider/outsider’ status of the ‘person of colour’ in the Canadian nation. (Bannerji, 2000) For example, my first thoughts after the 9/11 attacks were that I would be interned because of my appearance, my Arab ethnicity, and my Muslim name. While I was not physically interned, I have watched as Muslims have been, as Razack (2008) argues, increasingly subjected to legal and social “states of exception” and physical camps. (p. 12) Moreover, Muslims have been discursively confined to the realm of “pre-modernity” which has led to other evictions. (p. 16) Muslims, of course are not the only groups of people subjected to the “state of exception”; immigrants and refugees from around the world have been confined and expelled in and from Western nations in various ways. (p. 12) These expulsions point to what Razack calls “race
thinking” or “the denial of a common bond of humanity between people of European descent and those who are not.” (p. 6) It is worth noting that these colour lines have been drawn and enforced violently by the formal apparatuses of the state, first and foremost. As Goldberg (2009) argues, state violence and civility are mutually constituted. (p. 46) Increased civility in society enables the concentration of violence in the state and vice versa. This led me to wonder how race thinking at the state level constituted and was constituted by the production of civil citizens in schools. In that way, this study seeks to investigate how civility in schools enables and is enabled by a racial project.

The second aspect of my investment in this study comes from my location as a secondary school teacher who professes a commitment to anti-oppressive education. On one level, I benefit materially and socially from my job and the middle-class status it grants me. On the other hand, I am critical of many aspects of the school system in which I am employed, particularly of its role in perpetuating the colonization of Aboriginal peoples through the legitimization of the nation-state. Among the many challenges of anti-oppressive education is the difficulty of talking about racism at all. I have personally faced great resistance from my students when I have presented counter-narratives to my classes or raised discussions of racism. As Razack (1999) notes, “Canadians are outraged when racism, particularly indirect racism, is named, as it is not supposed to exist.” (p. 60) While I am not so naïve as to imagine that it would be easier to teach students younger than my own about racism, I have come to wonder about the educational processes at the elementary level that have functioned to produce such investments in Canadian white normativity, even among non-white students. Various scholars have argued that the notions of tolerance, civility and multiculturalism have served to foster a belief in Canadian pluralism that obscures the effects of racial domination. (Bannerji, 2000; Mackey, 1998; Thobani, 2007) This study is, therefore, an examination of how the denial of racism is accomplished in elementary public education.

My interest in elementary education is not to suggest that anti-colonial, anti-racist education would be easy if only elementary educators were doing a better job, nor do I mean to suggest that teaching counter-narratives in public schools is or could be easy. One need only consider the historical role of public schooling in cultural genocide and colonialism (see for example Bear Nicholas, 1996) and assimilation (Joshee, 2004) to appreciate the challenge of advancing an anti-oppressive pedagogy. My focus on elementary education derives from my awareness that educators at that level typically think of themselves, not as teachers of specific
subjects, but as role models and developers of citizens. This study examines notions of citizenship against policies of and commitments to equity that simultaneously inform educational practices in Ontario schools. The research examines the discourse of educators who profess a specific interest in equity in order to begin to trace the circuits of power that regulate ‘Canadian-ness.’

Several studies have examined questions of race as they relate the subjectivity of teachers or pre-service teachers. Most of these studies have been specific to white educators (see Sleeter, 1993; Schick, 2000; Schick & St. Denis, 2005) These important interventions in educational research have highlighted the ways that white teachers reproduce racism. Understanding the subjectivity of white teachers is valuable in light of their predominance within the North American teaching force, however, I argue that teachers of colour must contend with the power embedded in the same Canadian discourses as white teachers. Thobani (2007) makes just this point in the passage quoted above. (p. 165) I argue, moreover, that the pressures to conform to idealized notions of ‘Canadian-ness’ are greater for non-white teachers whose legitimacy as professionals is contingent on their ability to prove their suitability to be citizen-makers. I, therefore, examine the narratives of both teachers of colour and white teachers to gain insights into race and subjectivity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Race in Canada

Because of the complexity of analyzing questions of race and power within discussions of citizenship, I have assembled a critical interdisciplinary framework. This framework borrows from the fields of critical race feminism, postcolonial studies and whiteness studies. Canadian anti-racist feminist scholars have argued that Canadian colonialism is a continuing project requiring a perpetual legitimization of white entitlement to the land. (Razack, Smith & Thobani, 2010, p. 4) They have shown that the institution of citizenship in Canada is a formalized racial hierarchy that organizes the population. (Bannerji, 2000; Thobani, 2007). Scholars within this field have relied on an “interlocking” system of analysis to argue that forms of domination are mutually constituted and come to have meaning only through one another. (Razack, 1999, p. 12) Thus, while this thesis primarily examines the issues of race and culture, I contend that it is not possible to fully conceptualize racial oppression without recognizing the ways that gender, class, sexuality, and ability function in constituting it.
The narratives analyzed in this thesis address questions of culture and religion as often as they address race, however I do not usually treat these categories as analytically distinct. Razack (1999) argues that contemporary racisms have been “culturalized” in order to conceal their operation. (p. 60) In this way, it is possible for the nation to accept or reject people on the basis of their ‘cultural difference’ without acknowledging how power serves to constitute ‘difference’ or how those constituted as different have continued to experience oppression. This point is relevant within several of the teacher narratives in which the concerns of and about Muslims were salient. Razack (2008) argues that culture talk since 9/11 has focused largely on Muslims and has centered on the idea that Muslims pose a threat to Western civilization. (p. 173) The culturalization of racism is one of the ways that Muslims and other ‘brown’ or ‘Third World’ peoples can be cast as “pre-modern” and in need of assistance into modernity. As I will address in chapters four, five and six, this rationality underlies some of the teachers’ comments about appropriate Canadian behaviour.

Theories of whiteness, civility and civilizing new Canadians

This study also relies on the work of several theorists working within the field of whiteness studies to highlight the invisible position of dominance, power and privilege of the unmarked ‘Canadian’ identity. (Mackey, 1998; Coleman, 2006) Daniel Coleman, (2006) points out that civility and another related concept, tolerance, are deeply intertwined in the Canadian project. His argument is that, while tolerance is merely the passive enduring of difference, civility must be learned and performed. (p. 21) Like Coleman, I argue that tolerance is one component of English Canadian white civility and that civility, as a discourse, functions in various ways in the governance of the population. In my analysis of education, I argue that white civility informs curricula as well as the roles of white and non-white teachers.

David Theo Goldberg (2009), also working within the frames of critical race and whiteness studies, further develops the notion of civility. He points out that the borders implied within the very term civility are, on the one hand natural, presumed, and “commonsensical,” while on the other hand they are normative, prescriptive and imposed. (p. 36) What is deemed civil is natural and sensible only to those who fall within its boundaries. As such, civility is a marker for what is interior and included. Goldberg writes of those outside the circle of civility, “the different become at once differentiated, and the differentiated divorceable, the alien and excludable, in the self-perpetuating logic or pragmatics of differentiation.” (p. 38) Coleman
(2006) cites a speech on civic and character education delivered after the Winnipeg general strike in 1919 by the president of the University of Washington in which the president argues that unruly “enemy aliens” can be controlled through violence or through education. The advantage of controlling “the alien” through ideas is the he learns to govern himself, becomes a citizen, and is able to participate in liberal democracy as an equal. (p. 11) This example calls attention once more to the relationship between the state, civil society, education, and civility. As Goldberg (2009), building on Mbembe, has noted, civil society has come to be understood as that which is not the state, “always outside of and in contrast with the state.” (p. 39)

Coleman’s (2006) argument suggests that civility and civilizing have much in common. He emphasizes that civility has the moral-temporal element of “civilization as progress.” (p. 11) He argues that liberal Canadians in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries believed that all people had the potential to be civil but that whites were more advanced on the singular path to civility. (p. 11) Today, essentialized notions of culture have largely preserved this idea by permitting whiteness to stand for modernity and non-whiteness to stand for pre-modernity. Thus, whites are positioned as the saviours of nonwhites by virtue of their role as “assisters into modernity”. (Razack, 2008, p. 157) These points inform my analysis of the positions of both white and non-white teachers in ushering newcomer students towards Canadian ideals.

Coleman’s (2006) analysis overlooks the relationship between space and civility, but it is worth noting the spatial component of Canadian civility. The so-called “Third World” stands as a space of incivility against which Canada can measure its superiority. As Edward Said (1979) has famously argued, the West has long constituted itself against representations of the Orient. These representations have not merely misrepresented a “truth” about the non-West, they have functioned as “cultural apparatuses” with material effects on those constituted as Orientals. (p. 204) Similarly, in Canada, the “Third World” is constituted as a space of disorder and lawlessness, enabling not only an imaginary of civility and order within the territory of Canada, but as well, the production of deficient immigrants in need of instruction in Canadian values. This can be seen to inform how teachers are positioned in relation to their newcomer students.

**Foucault: power, discourse, subjectivity and governmentality**

Central to this thesis is Michel Foucault’s elaboration of discourse, power, subjectivity, and governmentality. Sara Mills has summarized Foucauldian discourse as a set of statements that exist “because of a complex set of practices which try to keep them in circulation and other
practices which try to fence them off from others and keep those other statements out of circulation.” (Mills, 2003, p. 54) Foucault was interested in the way power functions to produce, organize, restrict, and control what is sayable and knowable within a system of knowledge. He did not believe, however, that discourse is exclusively negative or repressive. (p. 64) While discourses “always contain within them conflicting sets of statements,” when taken collectively they produce specific effects. (p. 65) Thus, I employ Foucault to the examination of civility, citizenship, and national narratives as discourses in order to evaluate the systems of statements that condition understandings of ‘Canadian-ness.’

In his essay “The Subject and Power,” Foucault (1982) discusses two meanings of the word ‘subject.’ He writes that to be a subject is to be “subject to someone else by control and dependence and to be tied to (one’s) own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.” (p. 30) Within this thesis, I draw heavily on Sunera Thobani’s (2007) discussion of the Canadian national subject as an effect of power in the Foucauldian sense. (p. 8) Thobani argues that the position of the national subject is an “exalted” status. This exaltation is a technique of power that produces the nation and secures the state’s ability to govern its citizens. Foucault’s notion of subjectivity provides a way of conceptualizing participant statements without focusing on liberal notions of freedom and individual choice, but instead on the way power operates to determine the available positions through which participants can constitute themselves. Thobani’s work identifies and elaborates some specific subject positions available within the Canadian context.

My argument also draws on and modifies Foucauldian governmentality, as will be addressed in greater detail in chapter six. I will summarize here by saying that we can think of governmentality as a set of tactics, rationalities and technologies that serve to organize the population and disperse power beyond state institutions. (Foucault, 1978, pp. 102-3) This concept has significant relevance in examining civility and the role of the teacher. Goldberg (2009) points out that civil society is dependent upon the state for its conceptualization and becomes a form of “privatizing institutional governmentality.” The governmentality of the citizen is accomplished through the assimilation of those characteristics known under the umbrella of civility. “Policing, schooling, and emphasis on legality as modes of social order came to displace raw physical violence as principal modes of civil and state control,” writes Goldberg. (p. 41) Goldberg’s discussion of the place of civil society within the nation helps us understand the figure of the teacher. The teacher is the one who imparts order and, by doing so, governmentalizes civil control.
Multiculturalism, tolerance and the figure of the stranger

I also draw on Sara Ahmed’s (2000) work in post-colonial theory, specifically her analysis of the concept of ‘the stranger.’ Ahmed argues for a reconsideration of the one deemed “alien, other, or strange.” Her position refutes the notion that strangers are merely those we don’t recognize and argues that strangers are those already recognized as strange. (p. 3) She notes that notion of the stranger has been fetishized by granting it a pre-existing ontology. This fetishization, she argues, has concealed the processes that mark some bodies as stranger or more dangerous than others. (p.4) To put it another way, accepting the stranger as having an ontological existence cements the figure of the stranger as the origin of danger or difference, which Ahmed disputes. (p. 6) She also argues that the encounter with the stranger as the moment that brings the stranger into being. The subject cannot be wholly constituted without encountering the stranger. (p. 7) Ahmed’s argument that “nations become imagined and contested through the recognition of strangers” is particularly important to my analysis of Canadian multiculturalism in schools.

Thobani (2007) builds on Ahmed’s work to examine the role of immigrants in Canadian society. She summarizes one of Ahmed’s central arguments to say that “the subject is not only formed in its recognition by the Other, but also by its differentiation among the various others it encounters.” (p. 15) While “immigrants-as-strangers” are most often characterized as threatening to the nation, both Ahmed and Thobani note that strangers can be tolerated as the origin of difference that permits the nation to re-imagine itself as tolerant. Thobani argues that the notion of multicultural tolerance served to “rescue whiteness” within the Canadian national identity after a “crisis of legitimacy” in the 1960s. With global decolonization and the relative economic success of immigrants within Canada the “hegemonic self-regard” of whites, she argues, was challenged. (pp. 150-1) Multiculturalism allowed for a reconstitution of Canadian whiteness as tolerant, pluralist, and racially innocent. It also permitted the nation to continue to be imagined as white, as Ghassan Hage (2000) has argued in reference to Australia. (p. 18)

Drawing on Thobani, I consider the subjectivity of the immigrant in my analysis of the narratives of school teachers. I argue that multiculturalism constitutes immigrants (or non-white, non-Aboriginals) as particular types of human beings who observe themselves “through the eyes of the nation.” (p. 162) The immigrant can be compelled to disavow specific cultural practices or to engage in self-distancing from other immigrants in the pursuit of a greater share of whiteness. Thobani writes: “The immigrant who longs for acceptance into the national fold can project, with
external support, the caricatured cultural self onto other immigrants as the real bearers of the devalued cultural practices.” (p. 171) This is useful in considering some of the gestures of disavowal made by non-white teachers toward their newcomer students.

**Anti-colonial, anti-racist education**

I have chosen to use the terms anti-colonial, anti-racist education to describe the pedagogical approach I am advocating within this study. Dei (2006) defines anti-colonial education as:

an approach to theorizing colonial and re-colonial relations and the implications of imperial structures on the processes of knowledge production and validation, the understanding of indigeneity, and the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics. (p. 20)

While I am unable to address certain aspects of anti-colonial thought within this thesis, such as Dei’s call for anchoring knowledge in indigenous ways of knowing (p. 5), I deploy the term with particular attention to Lawrence and Dua’s (2005) critique of anti-racism. They argue that anti-racist scholars have “failed to take Aboriginal decolonization” seriously. (p. 120) I therefore suggest that decolonization must be at the centre of any project of racial justice in Canada. As a consequence, anti-colonial and anti-racist education must go hand in hand. George Dei (1996) defines anti-racism education as “an action-oriented strategy for institutional, systemic change to address racism and the interlocking systems of social oppression.” (p. 25) Schick (2010) reminds us that anti-racist education demands the disruption of hegemonic narratives that serve to reinforce systems of domination. She argues that “the narratives of people who experience disadvantage are central to understanding and addressing the issues that affect their lives.” (p. 48) Finally, central to my analysis is Schick and St. Denis’s (2005) argument that anti-oppressive education must take into account the production of racial identities of educators. It is through this assemblage of theoretical lenses that I approach the analysis of teacher narratives throughout this study.

**RESEARCH PROCESS AND DESIGN**

As stated, the purpose of this study is to examine subjectivity and power in the making of Canadian citizens. For this reason, I chose schools as the sites of inquiry and teachers as participants. Schools, as constructed spaces that become naturalized to the people who work or study within them, can tell us perhaps more than any other site about the pedagogies of
citizenship that circulate within society. Teachers, in turn, can tell us how power is exerted and resisted. They can tell us how individuals are regulated and self-regulating. To pursue these issues, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews that would allow teachers to offer detailed narratives about practices and understandings that inform citizenship education.

Recruitment of participants

I focused on schools with majority newcomer populations in the hope that such a context would facilitate the discussion of citizenship, race and culture. I sought teachers with an interest in equity work because of a tension I surmised between citizenship and equity as discourses. While citizenship discourse is normative and invested in social cohesion, Ontario school boards are simultaneously required to address equity. I was interested in how teachers who are committed to notions of equity understand the possible tensions between these discourses. I therefore sent an email (see Appendix A) to colleagues and friends involved in equity initiatives in several school boards in Southern Ontario. The email was an invitation for interested participants to contact me. Because I wanted to hear about teachers’ own experiences of belonging and citizenship in Canada, I also restricted participation to Canadian citizens.

I heard from around fifteen people who said they might be able to participate. I did not screen participants in any way, but simply began scheduling interviews on the basis of who was available soonest. After the seventh interview I felt had sufficient information for the needs of this research so I ceased scheduling meetings.

Participant information

I have chosen pseudonyms for each of the seven participants and have attempted to conceal distinguishing characteristics to protect their anonymity. While there are many aspects of identity that inform subjectivity and that could have a bearing on the narratives of participants, I have emphasized those relating to race, ethnicity and country of birth because of this project’s focus. Religion came to take on importance as more than half of the teachers who volunteered for the study were Muslims. Although it was not by design, Muslim teachers and teachers with large Muslim populations in their schools seemed most interested in my project. Four of the seven participants identified as Muslims. All of the teachers except one said that their schools had large Muslim populations. The disproportionate interest of Muslim teachers may have been a result of the specific friends and colleagues who assisted with the distribution of my email.
It may also have been a result of the current salience of anti-Muslim racism. Or it may be because my Arabic name identifies me as Muslim. Nevertheless, the participation of so many Muslims and teachers who work in schools with many Muslim students resulted in a conspicuousness of Muslim issues within the research.

All of the participants were women. The participants came from varied racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. I asked teachers how they identified racially or ethnically and their responses revealed the complex relationship between race, ethnicity and religion. For example, one participant described herself as “Canadian, French Canadian, Acadian and Native Canadian.” Another described herself as “Muslim first, Canadian second, female third and then Indian last.” Because this research examines discourse pertaining to racialization it was necessary for me to consider, not only the terms that participants chose, but also the ways they are racialized within Canadian society. I will offer a simplified overview of the participants’ ethnic, racial and religious identifications here because later chapters address these issues in more depth. Of the seven participants, three were South Asian, two were white, one was black and one was biracial. Four said they were practicing Muslims, one said she was marginally Jewish, one said she identified with Buddhism and Catholicism, and one said she had no religious or philosophical identification. All identified themselves currently as middle class although their class backgrounds varied somewhat. Three were born outside of Canada but immigrated here when they were very young. The other four were born in Canada, within the Toronto area. One had just completed her teacher training and the others had been teaching between four and twenty years, with a median length of 10 years.

The teachers all worked in public schools in Southern Ontario and were from three different school boards. Some of the teachers had taught in more than one school or more than one board but the narratives all reflect experiences within public schools in the three Southern Ontario school boards.

Interview process

Interviews took place during the month of June, 2011. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in the Greater Toronto Area. I met with each participant individually in a public place. Interviews averaged about ninety minutes in length. They were semi-structured to allow participants some freedom to focus on those issues that most strongly resonated with them. The
structure also allowed me to ask follow-up questions in order to pursue some of the issues they raised in greater depth.

**Interview analysis**

As indicated, I have approached these interviews, not to assess the quality of the teachers, nor to determine their individual commitments to anti-racism. I do not seek to ascertain any ‘truths’ about their thoughts of feelings. Rather, I examine these narratives in order to analyze the discourses that work to condition what is sayable and knowable about race and citizenship in Canada. I have therefore treated teacher narratives as examples of the discursive effects of power.

**OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

In chapter two I review the literature on citizenship and civic education in Ontario to highlight the role of citizenship education as interpreted by scholars. I review studies of the formal curriculum, character education and the role of teachers in citizenship education. I argue that, while scholars are variably critical of the assimilationist tendencies within school curricula, they continue to rely on liberal notions of “good citizenship” that ultimately work to reinforce the nation-building aims of public schooling.

Chapter three begins with a theoretical critique of notions of citizenship then offers an analysis of Ontario’s social studies curriculum for grades one to five. I argue that the language of the policy presents de-politicized (civil) notions of citizenship and neoliberal conceptions of an entrepreneurial, competitive subject.

Through the analysis of teacher narratives in chapter four, I argue that teachers are variably positioned, through the discourse of Canadian citizenship, as either entitled white subjects who can take the benefits of citizenship for granted or supplicant immigrant subjects who must show their gratitude to the nation state. I then examine how citizenship discourse constitutes newcomer students as deficient and in need of behavioural regulation.

In chapter five I examine the teacher narratives as they relate to culture, multiculturalism and celebration in schools. I build on critiques of Canadian multiculturalism to illustrate how commitments to multicultural civility in schools function to undermine anti-racist praxis. Contestations over cultural dominance within school celebrations serve to direct teachers’ equity
commitments toward the goal of more ‘inclusive’ celebrations rather than toward more substantial anti-oppressive practices.

Finally, chapter six elaborates the argument that civility is a mode of Foucauldian governmentality. Examining notions of professionalism and respectability, I argue that teachers of colour, in particular, learn to constitute and perform themselves as competent, efficient, worthy role models and regulate their conduct according to masculininst, white ideals that function to constrain the possibilities for an anti-colonial anti-racist praxis.

These chapters highlight the discourses through which teachers must negotiate the performance of their jobs. While much of my analysis presents the challenges to anti-colonial and anti-racist pedagogies, the conclusion examines some of the points of resistance and suggests directions for teachers who wish to advance equity in schools by contesting the project of civility that functions to legitimize Canada as a white settler state.
CHAPTER TWO

Citizenship education in Ontario: A literature review

In order to situate my study on discourses of race, culture and citizenship in Ontario elementary schools, I begin with a review of some literature on citizenship education in the province. While there is an abundance of research relating to citizenship in Canada, analyzing relevant studies is a significant challenge. Citizenship as a concept is multivalent - it signifies varied understandings and is mobilized for distinct purposes within educational theory, policy, and practice. Because citizenship is a normative concept, commanding a moral viewpoint, citizenship education is a deeply contested field. (Sears, 2004, p. 93) Most research has focused on a solitary dimension of citizenship and analyzed it in relation to a specific desired democratic value. It is also noteworthy that there is significantly more research on citizenship at the secondary level than the elementary and more research on theory and policy than on practice.

In this review I address studies of policy and curriculum in order to point to the way citizenship education is conceptualized by academics and policy-makers. I then examine the growing concern over the conflation of citizenship education and character education. I review the few studies that address the role of the teacher in delivering citizenship education. Finally, I propose the areas for consideration necessary in situating citizenship education within an anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogy.

Sears, Clarke and Hughes (1999) argue that, on one level, there is near consensus in provincial and territorial policy about the notion of citizenship or civic education in Canada. They claim that education policies in all regions of the country aim to promote active and concerned civic involvement in communities - from the local to the global. They argue as well that there is a clear commitment to developing a “pluralistic ideal” within educational policy. (p. 113) The terms ‘civics’ or ‘civic education’ are often used interchangeably with the term ‘citizenship education’ but tend to signify a slightly a more specific field that includes the study of government along with preparation for practices of democratic and community participation.

Scholars point to different directions in the field of citizenship education. According to Osborne (1996) Canadian education for citizen development can be traced as far back as the early 1890s. In the contemporary context, Mundy (1997) argues that interest in citizenship education on the part of policy-makers and academics waned in the 1980s and 1990s as
ministries took a “back to basics” approach to education for economic competitiveness. Over the last ten to fifteen years, however, there has been a resurgent interest in education for citizenship in Canada. At the level of formal curricula, scholars have examined ministry and school board policies in order to analyze official approaches to democracy, activism, peace and conflict and global education. Academics acknowledge that addressing curriculum without consideration of the way it is interpreted and applied by schools and teachers offers only a partial picture of how students are prepared for citizenship. (Bickmore, 2006; Clausen, Horton & Lemisko, 2008; Sears & Hughes, 1996) Nevertheless, citizenship policy reflects “assumed consensus” among educators who are often consulted in policy design and trained in its implementation. (Bickmore, 2006, p. 364) The following section will examine some key studies on notions of citizenship and democracy as they are reflected in Ontario’s curriculum.

**Citizenship Education as Policy**

Scholars consistently acknowledge a tension within citizenship educational policy relating to the implicit orientation to democratic participation. Sears and Hughes’ widely cited 1996 study characterizes a spectrum of orientations to democratic participation within provincial policy, ranging from elitist to activist. Elitist orientations aim to produce a passive, law-abiding, deferent citizenry with a narrow view of national culture, while activist orientations aim to produce citizens who engage in political processes and are “supportive of pluralism.” (p. 134) Sears and Hughes argue that while Canada has a history of promoting elitist notions of citizenship, their study of school curricula across Canada reveals an increasing activist orientation. (p. 134) More recent studies, however, question whether elitist orientations linger. Several studies suggest that current citizenship policy may promote uncritical loyalty to the state and serve to undermine values of liberal democracy, including pluralism. (Bickmore, 2006; Osborne, 2004; Sears & Hughes, 2006)

A close look at some of the studies referenced above highlights the particular ways Ontario’s curriculum encourages passive, undemocratic or assimilationist notions of citizenship. Kathy Bickmore’s 2006 study of curriculum guidelines in three provinces, for example, surveys language around notions such as conflict, peace, violence and cooperation to assess whether the discourse on “social cohesion” promotes a more democratic or a more assimilationist objective for citizenship. She argues that even though the policies are not uniformly conflict-avoidant in terms of the voices and perspectives presented, there is an underlying approach that seeks to
create a socially cohesive “we” which precedes engagement with diverse voices. (p. 382) She argues: “Citizenship education that begins by marginalizing conflicting voices is unlikely to provide a solid foundation for a more pluralistic democracy.” (p. 382) Her conclusion suggests that even though there is some attention to conflict, most particularly interpersonal communication and conflict-management skills, the approach of Ontario’s curriculum does not promote democratic understandings and skills necessary for a well-functioning pluralistic society. She notes that there is room for resistance to the homogenizing discourses within the curricula, however it is up to individual educators to teach about social conflict in order to prepare students for democratic agency.

In a similar study, Clausen, Horton and Lemisko (2008) examine documents from grades 1-10 in Saskatchewan and Ontario to reveal orientations to democracy along a continuum adapted from the work of Sears and Hughes. Their typology addresses three conceptions of democracy in the curricula: elitist, liberal, and global/social justice democracy. These orientations reflect the degree to which student-citizens are prepared for: engaging in political decision-making; understanding the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; critiquing and/or being deferent to authority; recognizing diversity and multiple identities; participating in political dialogue and conflict; and developing loyalty to national and/or supra-national communities. (p. 38-39)

Like Bickmore (2006), Clausen and his colleagues find that democratic pluralism is undermined by the curriculum, in this case through a narrative about the progressive extension of rights. The authors show that the curriculum presents a “progressive march forward toward inclusion and tolerance.” This approach silences the injustice and inequity that persists in Canada and suggests that “the evolution of Canadian democracy is complete.” Furthermore, it serves to marginalize those whose experiences are erased by this narrative. (p. 45)

Clausen, Horton and Lemisko argue as well that the Ontario curriculum presents a conservative notion of rights and responsibilities. They demonstrate that where the word “rights” appears in the curriculum, it is almost always coupled with the word “responsibilities,” suggesting that “democratic rights are merely a counterbalance to the responsibilities of citizenship.” (p. 43) Rather than emphasizing the inalienable rights and protections citizens have from the state, this approach implies that citizens have equivalent duties to the state or an obligation to participate in activities that support the state. An even less democratic implication may be that citizens must earn their rights by participating responsibly in society. This argument
about the conception of citizen responsibility in education policy offers a useful challenge to Sears and Hughes contention that contemporary curricula are more activist than elitist. Attention not just to the language of participation but to the specific forms of participation advocated tells us whether students are being encouraged to uphold the status quo or to engage in politics for social change. School curricula that encourage responsible participation in civic duties aim to produce a deferent citizenry rather than a politically mobilized citizenry capable of deploying rights. Clausen, Horton and Lemisko note that activism is only encouraged within “particular confined parameters.” (p. 48) Students are rarely, if ever, urged to engage in radical forms of political participation. I will return to this point in my discussion of civil citizenship.

Clausen and his colleagues note, finally, that civic education and democracy are addressed directly in only two grades: grade five and grade ten. They show that the grade five unit “deals with the more structural procedures of a democratic state,” focusing on the electoral process, the steps to becoming a citizen, civic ceremonies, becoming a member of parliament, and law-making. (p. 41) Osborne (2004) has persuasively argued that this procedural form of civic education “fails to grip students” as they do not see it having much personal relevance. (p. 14) Although Clausen and his colleagues (2008) argue that Ontario’s civic education program has a more global/social justice orientation when it is approached for the second time - in grade ten, (p. 41) Osborne (2004) points out that it is more difficult to inspire student interest at the secondary level, even with a more engaging curriculum, because by high school students see education as a “custodial credentialing machine in which education becomes little more than the accumulation of credits.” (p. 15) If passivity and apathy have already been instilled, a curriculum that promotes political participation may not meet its objectives. Clausen, Horton and Lemisko also argue that since notions of democracy are only directly addressed in two grades, there is nothing to compel teachers to pursue them at other times, limiting students’ ability to develop the critical thinking skills necessary for democratic participation. (p. 47)

Karen Mundy’s 2007 study conducted on behalf of UNICEF, elucidates another dimension of citizenship education: global education. While global education can be seen as instruction about and engagement with international issues, Mundy outlines some of the other inflections associated with the term. She notes that its evolution has been closely aligned with peace education, Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy, the UN’s “education for international understanding and human rights.” (p. 7-8) Global education relates to themes such as: global interdependence, human rights, social and economic equality, cultural diversity, individual
action, child-centric pedagogy, and environmentalism and sustainability. (p. 9) As another normative concept, global education faces a range of implicit tensions that mirror the tensions found within citizenship education more broadly. Mundy notes, for example, that an approach to global citizenship that emphasizes attention to social injustices and conflicts competes with the consensus approach to education critiqued by Bickmore above. Global education also suffers from an ambiguity of definition that lends it to differing interpretations. For example, it is sometimes taken up as education for individual and national economic competitiveness, which Mundy argues is an interpretation opposed by most global educators but supported by parents and educational leaders. (pp. 8-9) Her analysis of Ontario’s elementary social studies curriculum finds just this – an interpretation of global education that supports global economic competitiveness. (p. 75)

In their study of global citizenship education, Evans, Ingram, Macdonald and Weber (2009) make the important point, largely neglected by Mundy, that what constitutes global education in Canada very often amounts to the presentation of global themes in light of national self-interest. (p. 30) As British academic Schweisfurth argues: “the Canadian preoccupation with national identity, and Canada’s place in the global arena, suffuses all areas of the curriculum, not the least the subject area of Civics and its (global education) components.” (p. 44) Thus, while global educators may aim to promote social justice at home and abroad, without a careful critique of the Canadian state, power relations, and Canadian social identities, global education may easily serve an uncritical nationalist discourse.

In an interesting study of curriculum language around the concept of responsibility, Yvonne Hebert (2009) examines curricula in three provinces to show tensions between neoliberal conceptions of citizenship and democratic ones. (p. 4) She argues that curricular reforms since the late nineties have advocated a greater sense of collective responsibility than did the curricula of the previous decades. This is important and necessary, she notes, in righting the wrongs experienced by Aboriginal, Francophone, racial, religious and ethnic minority groups and so on. (p. 7) An examination of the language about responsibilities for learners, however, suggests a prevailing neoliberal understanding of the individual – one who is autonomous, rational, and self-interested. (p. 10) Furthermore, neoliberal reforms in education leave teachers and students without necessary economic supports for resources and assistance, thereby reinforcing a sense of isolation and undermining the collective. (p. 8) She argues that the curricular policies examined promote notions of community as “sources of understanding of self
and others” in which “relationships are to be established upon mutual recognition and the exchange of trust.” (p.13) She expresses apprehension, however, about the ability of self-interested individuals to somehow find a sense of inclusion in the collective. Her conclusion indicates that educational reformers, while potentially proceeding effectively in the trend toward active democratic citizenship, should proceed with caution about the potential of neoliberal notions regarding responsibility to undermine “a globally engaged, socially liberal, and culturally diverse” Canada. (p. 14)

The section above highlights the debates within citizenship education at the level of official curricula in Ontario. It reveals the way that scholars have sought to classify the concepts that underpin the complex and normative notion of citizenship. Within these studies, researchers have explored notions such as peace and conflict, elitism and activism, democracy and global education to expound the types of citizenship that are advocated through policy. While most studies seem cautiously optimistic about the direction of citizenship education, this review has found that notions of conservative, elitist, and passive citizenship predominate, with an interest in promoting a sense of social cohesion and consensus. Because educational scholars seem primarily interested in the development of students as future participants in a democratic society, they do not scrutinize the nation-building aims of citizenship education. The questions interrogated in the studies above are important for encouraging anti-colonial, anti-racist education since pluralism and participation are important elements of an anti-oppressive curriculum. Alone, however, they are not sufficient. I will return to questions of social identity, power relations, and cultural dominance below.

**Citizenship Education as Character**

One dimension of citizenship that warrants special attention is character education. Once considered part of the hidden curriculum, character education is increasingly becoming an explicit and prescribed component of Canadian schooling. Some theorists would argue that character education and citizenship education are discrete subjects, however schools and school boards across North America have developed programs and practices derived from the assumption that character education is, at the very least, one component of citizenship education. (Winton, 2007; Boyd, 2010) Osborne (2004) argues that the conflation of citizenship education and character education is an (often deliberate) attempt to depoliticize citizenship by equating the “good citizen” with the “good person.” This problem, he argues, undermines the ability of
schools to prepare students for active democratic engagement by emphasizing traits such as helpfulness, respectfulness and loyalty. (pp. 13-4) Osborne’s position is that these traits are valuable and necessary for the functioning of any society, however they are not the traits that produce “informed and principled engagement in and with the public affairs of one’s society.” (p. 14)

Winton (2007) examines the policy of character development in the York Region District School Board (YRDSB) in Southern Ontario to determine whether it supports or undermines the stated goals of citizenship education in the province. The York Region program, entitled Character Matters! focuses on the promotion of ten specific attributes of desirable character. As has been shown, the goals of citizenship education are highly contested; nevertheless Winton argues, as do the studies above, that superficially there is consensus in Canada about three components of citizenship education: 1) preparing students to be knowledgeable citizens 2) preparing students to participate actively in civic life and 3) encouraging a commitment to pluralism. (p. 4) As the studies previously examined illustrate, varied conceptions of knowledge, participation, and pluralism have been found within educational theory and policy. An examination of the YRDSB character education policy reveals similar tensions and directions.

If one of the aims of citizenship education is fostering a knowledgeable citizenry, it is worth considering what kinds of knowledge are promoted within character education policy. Winton finds that the character education policy of the YRDSB primarily promotes knowledge of the ten attributes of character education themselves, in conjunction with some interpersonal skills necessary to practice them. (p. 7) The policy does not promote teaching other forms of political or historical knowledge that would enhance civic participation. (p. 7) Winton also finds that, while the Character Matters! offers some support for teaching and learning about justice, the goal of such instruction is for the development of individual self rather than for the development of society. (p. 8)

With regard to active participation, Winton argues that Character Matters! encourages “activities that support the state, its agencies, and the status quo much more frequently and emphatically than it encourages students to participate in activities that challenge the social and

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1 For a valuable elaboration on this point, see Kennelly (2009) in which she examines a highly touted form of citizen-activism promoted in Ontario that relies on voluntarism for self-development. Kennelly notes that rather promoting social justice, such initiatives promote neoliberal notions of the citizen-as-consumer. (p. 132)
political systems of inequity.” (p. 10) She notes that while there is a degree of support for social justice initiatives, they are usually among long lists of initiatives that support school programs but are not specifically related to justice. (p. 14) Like the social studies curriculum, therefore, character education promotes initiatives that have more to do with the status quo than with contesting politics and power relations. With regard to the final component of citizenship education – commitment to pluralism – Winton illustrates that, despite claiming to encourage students to value diversity, the program casts diversity as something that must be “overcome” rather than something that should be valued in and of itself. (p. 16) Moreover, the policy defines diversity narrowly - excluding mention of anything other than race, religion and ethnicity. (p. 15) The program’s emphasis on conformity to behavioural expectations and standardization of values is unlikely to foster a commitment to pluralism. (p. 16) Ultimately, the effect of these policies is to promote an assimilationist approach to social cohesion and to support a passive form of citizenship that initiates students to “fit into Canadian society rather than change it.” (p. 17)

Dwight Boyd (2010) provides a complex and nuanced analysis of the harms of the “doctrine” of character education, drawing similar conclusions to Winton’s. One aspect of his critique centres on the underlying assumption within character development programs that there exist universally accepted virtues that can and should be taught. Boyd’s writes:

When the context is public schools and the development of the next generation of liberal citizens, failure to exhibit appropriate epistemological humility in conceptualizing character education is tantamount to disenfranchising a significant portion of the body politic by letting some citizens’ views of what constitutes the ‘correct’ interpretation of the ‘good person’ override those of others. (p. 386)

The assumption that all peoples have the same notions of virtue and the same interpretations of even those attributes they may describe in similar terms, Boyd argues, can have a “cancerous” effect on liberal democracy by undermining the recognition of difference. (p. 386) The larger argument Boyd makes is that character education glosses over the paradox within liberalism that affirms the legitimacy of different viewpoints while simultaneously claiming that there is a common moral perspective urging them all to respect each other. He argues that approaches to character education often gloss over one side or another and worse, serve to “protect the dominant viewpoint.” (pp. 390-1) In the paragraphs that follow, I examine some of Boyd’s specific criticisms of Character Matters!, the York Region District School Board policy mentioned above.
To begin with, Boyd offers a critique of the process that was undertaken by the board in determining the desired character education attributes. He argues that the approach, not unusual in North America, fosters a willful blindness to difference that is even more problematic than the imposition of “universal” virtues. (p. 386) The specific process of the YRDSB began with the selection of representatives from various community groups to identify potential attributes. Once the long list of attributes was formed, the same participants had to arrive at unanimous agreement on the inclusion of each attribute. If any individual disagreed, the attribute was removed from the list. (p. 387) Boyd points out that this approach, by focusing on those attributes that gained agreement, removes from view those attributes that were not unanimously accepted. Moreover, the fact that they were given definitions only after being selected makes the impression of consensus even more disquieting. As disagreement and difference are crucial to the functioning of a democratic society, these attempts to produce and highlight a sense of harmony should raise concern.

Boyd points out the notable omission of “justice” from goals of character education. He notes, furthermore, that the failure of character education to distinguish between the philosophical concepts of “the good” and the “the right” promotes a hegemonic view of “the good” that undermines pluralism in a liberal democracy. That is, if we understand “the good” as a concept open to individual interpretation and pursuable as an end in itself and “the right” as the principle necessary to regulate social cooperation, it is clear that blurring the distinction undermines justice and pluralistic respect. (pp. 388-389) Boyd concludes that the doctrine of character education results in “a shallow, conservative, Christian, capitalist, a-political view of the good person” (p. 391) that undermines political participation in liberal democratic society.

Insights into character education are particularly important for understanding citizenship at the elementary level in Ontario since the conflation of character and citizenship are even more evident in the earlier grades. For anti-colonial, anti-racist educators it is useful to note that the conservative or neoconservative motives for the introduction of character education are well-documented. (Boyd, 2010; Winton, 2008) Winton (2008) demonstrates that character education is related to “insecurities about students’ academic achievement, economic competitiveness, civic engagement, personal safety, moral decline, and a loss of common culture.” (p. 305) The intersection between neoconservative and neoliberal forces in education reveal a trend towards “consumer-citizenship” in which students are directed to develop individually beneficial competencies, participate in state-supporting civic activities, conform to expectations and
standards, and assimilate into a narrowly-defined hegemonic social body. The outcomes of character education undermine most of the democratic values emphasized within the liberal understandings of citizenship education addressed in the first section of this review. Nevertheless, the normalization and depoliticization that occurs in the earlier grades deserves even greater scrutiny. I now turn to literature on the roles of teachers to provide a more complete picture of citizenship education as it is practiced in schools.

**Teachers as Citizen-Makers**

The rise in interest in civic and citizenship education internationally has led to significant studies and comparative works in a variety of countries. The International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has undertaken several large international comparative projects, including some studies of teachers’ roles, over its 52 year history. (see Mintrop, 2002) Within individual countries, scholars have pursued broad studies of citizenship and the roles of educators. (e.g. Davies, Gregory, & Riley, 1999) In Canada A.B. Hodgetts’ famous 1968 study remains the only systematic study of classroom practice. (Sears, 2004, p. 100) Studies specifically of teachers’ roles in delivering citizenship education in Canada have been rare and limited in scope. (Evans, 2006) Plagued by the same ambiguities as studies of theory and policy, moreover, analyses of teacher narratives demonstrate “a certain lack of clarity about what is being practiced in the name of citizenship education in classrooms and schools.” (p. 412) In Canada those studies that do exist tend to focus on characterizations of citizenship education by specialist secondary school Civics educators rather than elementary teachers. (e.g. Evans, 2006; Shugurensky & Myers, 2003; Shweisfurth, 2006) The underlying imperative of research on the role of the teacher appears to be the improvement of citizenship education pedagogy, taking for granted many normative assumptions about its value and concealing the contestations within the field itself. Moreover this approach fails to consider the other complexities of the teacher’s role in citizenship and civic education, such as the way the teacher’s identity and subject position informs and is informed by notions of citizenship.

Some Canadian evidence suggests that teachers see their roles as “implementers of government-initiated policies rather than as active agents of change.” (Schweisfurth, 2006, p. 43) Evans’s (2006) study of specialist secondary school teachers in England and Canada (Ontario) provides insights into how some of the curricular themes addressed above are taken up in the classroom. His findings reveal that most teachers take a liberal approach to citizenship education
that moves beyond traditional or conservative understandings. (p. 418) Teachers emphasize knowledge acquisition in a broad range of areas and Canadian teachers in particular emphasize more action-oriented civic skills such as negotiation and mediation rather than simply academic skills. (p. 418-419) Canadian teachers also emphasize beliefs and values necessary for decision-making such as those “related to a culturally diverse milieu” (p. 419), presumably notions such as respect and tolerance. Evans notes that several Canadian teachers interviewed expressed activist goals for student participation in civic life. It is important to note that most teachers see schools and classrooms as the primary sites for civic participation. (p.419) This point reinforces the argument made above that teachers see citizenship as something used to support the status quo within the school. Teachers emphasize classroom practices such as discussion, involvement, choice and voting to develop democratic skills. Teachers also discuss using classroom space to display articles, community resources, and student work related to themes of citizenship to foster skills of citizenship. (p. 420-421) They describe the use of performance-based instructional practices that to help students integrate the skills, knowledge and attitudes of citizenship. According to Evans, however, several democratic practices were not as evident during classroom visits as they were in teacher self-accounts. Specifically, teachers rarely use student-directed classroom practices although they did use cooperative classroom practices. They did not use lessons or instructional techniques during classroom visits to foster understandings of social justice although they claimed to. Finally assessment and evaluation methods, according to Evans, were almost exclusively traditional. (p. 423)

Evans’s findings therefore indicate that although teachers talk about innovative and participatory approaches to civic education, they do not always practice them. In order to analyze the approaches undertaken by teachers, Evans uses a typology he describes as revealing transmissonal, transactional, or transformational tendencies. (p. 427) The implication is that transactional approaches are traditional, teacher-centered and offer limited skills necessary for democratic participation, whereas transformational orientations are student-centered, participatory, and foster radical political engagement. He argues that most teachers rely on an eclectic combination of approaches, revealing that they may approach their jobs from a range of frameworks and curricular perspectives. He finds that most educators rely on a transmission/transactional approach while a few employed a transactional/transformational orientation. (p. 430) He concludes that pedagogical approaches to citizenship education need to be conceptualized in more deeply integrated ways in order to foster democratic citizenship.
Shugurensky and Myers’ 2003 study of the civic education of civics teachers has some relevance here. Referencing the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) study, Shugurensky and Myers note that the preparation of teachers for fostering citizenship education has largely been inadequate. (p. 348) They find that formal education (specifically elementary, secondary, and teacher preparation programs) does not typically serve as a significant site in the acquisition of civic values and competencies. (p. 347-348) The one exception noted is university undergraduate and graduate school. The most significant sites of citizenship education are families as well as direct action in civic matters. (p. 348) While the goal of their study is to uncover directions for lifelong civic education, their findings about the sources of civic learning support Evans’s (2006) conclusion that more methodical and integrated pedagogical approaches to citizenship education would be beneficial to teachers.

In a very different approach to studying the role of secondary school teachers in citizenship education, Schweisfurth (2006) analyzes interviews and classroom practices of teachers who claim that their main priority as educators is to promote social justice and global education. (p. 46) These teachers understand the curriculum as a tool they must interpret and manipulate while simultaneously ensuring that they conform to its requirements. The most salient point here is that the teachers acknowledge approaching their role as educators of global citizenship with specific pedagogical priorities that are not always aligned with the status quo. This excerpt from Shweisfurth’s study makes the point:

As one teacher put it, there is a ‘wealth of opportunity’ to ‘use’ the expectations to drive a global citizenship agenda in any subject area. It was a question of constantly relating what is taught to the official curriculum in order to ‘cover yourself’, but none of the teachers felt that it stretched their imaginations to interpret the curriculum expectations in this way. (p. 47)

In this study, teachers saw themselves promoting social justice values through a creative and justifiable deployment of the curriculum. It reveals how the prescriptive nature of curriculum as well as the climate of accountability shapes teachers’ approaches to citizenship education but also reveals the way teachers who advocate social justice are able to find ways to do so.

These small studies only hint at the ways teachers prepare for, engage in, and understand citizenship education. Moreover, because these studies focus on secondary educators of a very specific civics course, they do not address many of the complexities examined within the curriculum throughout the grades and including character education. Davies, Gregory, and Riley
(1999), referring to a large case study in England, note that most teachers characterize good citizenship as relating to three broad areas: social concern, knowledge, and conservative role characteristics. (p. 45) Davies and his colleagues’ findings support the concern outlined above by critics of character education that the conflation of character and citizenship leads to a depoliticized and anti-democratic conceptualization of citizenship.

**Implications: Civil Citizenship**

Because so many of these studies approach citizenship from the assumption that teaching students to be “good citizens” is desirable and beneficial, some overriding concerns get only cursory attention. One aspect of citizenship that deserves greater scrutiny relates to the role of the school in society. Evans (2006) notes in passing that schools are “institutions where stated goals and ethos may conflict with expected goals and practices. Schools, organizationally, have tended to reinforce norms of hierarchical control and in doing so have undermined…democratic citizenship.” (p. 429) Whether Evans sees this hierarchical control as merely a legacy of educational tradition or as a goal of schooling in society is unclear. Nevertheless, it points to the need for a greater consideration of the way policy, the hidden curriculum, teachers, and the institution of schooling at large produce civil, cooperative citizens. It is perhaps not surprising that the most important components of citizenship have come to be obeying the law (Osborne, 2004) and the maintenance of order (Clausen, Horton & Lemisko, 2008) since schools routinely enforce these norms. As noted above, there is nothing inherently radical about “active” citizens. Clausen, Horton & Lemisko (2008) mention that the curriculum promotes “non-confrontational” forms of participation in citizen life such as: food and clothing drives, visiting seniors, and participating in festivals and celebrations. (p. 46) These cultural trends within schooling reveal the relationship between the production of a civil citizenry and support for a neoliberal state through private, charitable action. Civil, governable citizens who are increasingly socialized within standardized norms of good character are unlikely to challenge the status quo.

An anti-racist, anti-colonial pedagogy of citizenship demands a radical re-conceptualization of the relationships between the state, people and the land. What is absent in most liberal studies of citizenship is the relationship between the state, the institution of citizenship and racial identifications. As explored in the studies reviewed, various orientations to citizenship may encourage greater or lesser degrees of pluralistic “tolerance” or the extension of rights to more people but they do nothing to deconstruct racial dominance necessary for the
survival of a white settler colonial state. If we are to take anti-racist, anti-colonial pedagogies seriously, therefore, it is necessary to more deeply problematize the very institution of citizenship. Sunera Thobani (2007), for example, argues that political identities in Canada have been formed along racial lines through the institution of formal citizenship, as I will discuss in more depth in the next chapter. (p. 75) These political identities serve to legitimate Anglo-white ownership of the land, Aboriginal dispossession, and the genocide of Aboriginal peoples. They serve as well to “naturalize the right of citizens to have rights” and to “protect these from the encroachments of outsiders.” (p. 102) A consideration of the way political identities are formed is, therefore, integral to a critical approach to citizenship. As Schick and St. Denis (2005) argue, the failure to be critical of power relations in the formation of racial identifications serves to reinforce relations of domination. They argue that preservice teachers (and faculty) need to engage in an analysis of racism and race privilege, along with their complicity in systems of domination, in order to reverse the effects of colonialism. (p. 296)

A second, related, consideration demanded by an anti-racist, anti-colonial approach to citizenship is the role of education in producing cultural hegemony and enabling cultural genocide. As Andrea Bear Nicholas (1996) notes, the exploitation of indigenous peoples was and continues to be accomplished largely through the process of education, whereby indigenous peoples are coerced into accepting the “values and assumptions of the colonizer” and into accepting “domination and subjecthood.” (p. 60) She argues, as have many others, that colonial states commit cultural genocide through their educational policies toward indigenous peoples. (p. 61) While most analyses of Anglo-white cultural domination in Canada consider the role of residential schools, it is worth giving some attention to the way cultural norms continue to be imposed within contemporary Canadian public education systems.

Finally, a critical approach to citizenship education demands greater consideration of the nation-building aims of the Canadian state. Mahrouse (2006) notes that even potentially critical and progressive programs of citizenship education, such as peace education, can serve the goal of reinforcing racialized social identities. Greater attention to hierarchies of power and Canada’s role within the international system are necessary to challenge notions of peacefulness (Mahrouse, 2006) and innocence (Razack, 2004) that have produced racialized identities and legitimated Canadian violence and imperialism globally.
CHAPTER THREE

Citizenship and civic education in Ontario social studies

As an educator committed to anti-oppressive education, I have gradually developed a pedagogical approach that urges students to consider their positions and investments within the Canadian nation-state. It is likely unsurprising that students resist understanding themselves within social relations and largely see themselves as good and innocent social agents. With some work, however, students begin to understand that we are all complicit and accountable in various ways for social inequalities. How students come to understand themselves as external to social and political dynamics is one of the questions that informs this exploration of civic education. Before turning to this matter, I begin with an anecdote to help frame some of the other ideas that emerge in the theories of citizenship and civics education.

Within my position at the Toronto alternative high school where I teach is the responsibility for organizing weekly “town hall” meetings with the student body to discuss issues of concern for the general student population. Teachers, students, and other staff members put forth ideas for discussions that are either handled directly by the group or introduced by experts. One year, Remembrance Day happened to fall on the day of our scheduled town hall meeting so staff decided to open the meeting to a discussion of the meanings of Remembrance Day. The goal was to encourage students to consider what kind of a nation is advanced through this type of remembering, what kinds of nationalist ideas support it, what our personal experiences with Remembrance Day have been, and so on. I understood what we were doing as a specific kind of civic education that involved helping students become critical by considering how nationalism works and what kinds of citizens it produces. Of course, not all students are comfortable with troubling national ideals. Some were patriotic and expressed loyalty to the nation and their desire to respect soldiers. Some expressed misgivings about the discussion as a whole. Others did not participate at all. The most outspoken pupils, however, were critical ones who were attuned to the way schools were drafting students into a specific political project through the use of Remembrance Day. It happened that our school’s superintendent was visiting that day, and attended a portion of the discussion. As we got ready to wrap up, she asked to make a final remark. She said, “One thing that nobody talked about, and that we have to keep in mind, is that one of the important reasons for Remembrance Day is to acculturate new Canadians to the
country. Learning about Remembrance Day is an important way people from other cultures learn about Canada.”

This event highlights a variety of issues this chapter seeks to examine within the areas of citizenship, civic education, and educational practice. It presents a range of tensions that exist within the pedagogy of citizenship, tensions that I am certainly not the first to raise. As Davies and Issitt (2005) point out, the contestations within citizenship and civic education are “almost a cliché.” The simple example from my teaching practice exposes in a small way the tensions discussed in earlier chapters between “activist citizenship” and “elitist citizenship.” Activist citizenship aims to nurture student interest and engagement with democracy and a commitment to pluralism. Elitist citizenship, on the other hand, encourages a deference to authority, a respect for tradition, and assimilation into a narrowly-defined social body. The Remembrance Day example reveals how the same concept (civic education) can be mobilized to encourage students to question their positions in Canada’s historical narrative or can be used in the interest of nation-building and the production of communal ideals. The superintendent’s remarks also hint, perhaps, at the way common values serve to mark those interior to the nation as distinct from those who are external and in need of assimilation. The very question of assimilation indicates the tensions inherent in notions of culture and, by extension, often race. One point that is absent from the story, however, is how civics functions to legitimize citizenship and the nation-state. I argue that without a far more radical set of questions, all civic education, with its relationship to citizenship, detracts attention from the elemental Canadian question – Canada’s ongoing colonialism.

In this chapter I build on some of the debates within citizenship theory and civic education to put forth a different set of questions in the interest of advancing an anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogy. Some of the questions are: What are the norms upon which citizenship theory is built and how do these norms resist a radical re-conceptualization of the relationship between the state, subjects, and territory in the White settler society? How has Canada legitimized white entitlement to the land through the institution of citizenship? How have racialization and racial identifications served to sustain this project? How has contemporary civics education assisted the project further? What possibilities exist for an anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogy of civics? In the opening section, I examine citizenship theory, in particular some of Mouffe (1992) and Benhabib’s (2004) arguments to show the limits of existing thought within the field. I use Thobani (2007) to argue that citizenship is not just constituted against an
outside, against Others. Citizenship within the modern nation-state constitutes the outside and its Others (including the Others inside the nation). Any theory that takes as its starting point a sovereign political entity without recognizing the relations through which it has produced itself and produced its Others cannot claim an ethical or just position.

Reviewing citizenship theory

Speaking most broadly, citizenship is the legal membership within a state or a political body. (McCowan, 2005, p. 5) Drawing on McCowan’s mapping of citizenship, I briefly outline some of the tensions and questions that have formed the field of citizenship theory. One axis for conceptualizing approaches to citizenship has been defined through the notions of liberalism and civic republicanism. The main tension within this axis is related to the relative emphasis on rights owed by the state to the citizen, in liberalism, or responsibilities owed by the citizen to the state, in civic republicanism. Describing it as an axis, however, is simplifying since there are varied positions within each concept. Civic republicanism contains differing orientations to participation, with some theorists arguing for “the need for social coherence, patriotism, and assimilation of minority groups,” and others arguing for a greater emphasis on civic participation. (p. 6) Within the liberal position, McCowan points out, there are varied opinions about the range and types of rights advocated. (p. 6) Apart from liberalism and civic republicanism, McCowan indicates a third framework for distinguishing between orientations to citizenship. Developed by Torney-Purta et. al., this framework distinguishes between the institutions through which an individual interacts with the state or participates in liberal democratic decision-making. The distinction is between those who use conventional institutions and political practices and those who focus on direct mobilization to enact change. (p. 7) I will revisit some of these distinctions in my examination of civic education in Ontario.

Some theorists, most notably feminists, have challenged a few core assumptions at the heart of citizenship theory such as: the public/private binary and assumptions of universalism or rationalism. (p. 11) Chantal Mouffe (1992), for example, has argued for a “radical democratic citizenship” that conceptualizes a pluralist form of political community in which social agents are bound together through anti-essentialized subject positions directed toward varied goals but always informed by a concern for equality and liberty. (pp. 237-238) This postmodernist re-conceptualization of citizenship resists a political unity identified as a community and resists the public/private binary. Without considering the type of state in which this radical democratic
citizen is participating, however, there remains a gap in the theory. Seyla Benhabib (2004) considers “the rights of Others” within her theorizing of citizenship. She puts forth ethical arguments for “moral universalism” and “cosmopolitan federalism.” Challenging the claims of communitarians who define morality through the demands of “particular ethical, cultural, and political communities” (p. 15) or postmodernists, who are “skeptical that political norms can ever be made subordinate to moral ones” (pp. 15-16), Benhabib argues for a moral universalism - a “mediation” between the moral and the ethical and the moral and the political. She defines cosmopolitan federalism as “a vision of global justice which is also democratic and which proceeds from the interdependence of democracy and distribution.” (p. 16) Benhabib’s theory, while attentive to some of the practical considerations of those constituted as Others, does not go very far in challenging who come to be the moral arbiters and how.

Canadian scholar Sunera Thobani (2007), in her incisive critique of Benhabib’s analysis contends that it “is based largely on an ‘internal’ discussion within the political community, with strangers being cast largely as supplicants dependent on the responsibly exercised largesse of nationals.” (p. 70) Thobani argues that anti-colonial, critical race, and third world thinkers have contested the very sovereignty that Benhabib resists critiquing, by arguing that it is the heart of the very order that maintains a “powerful community of enfranchised citizens.”” (p. 70) In contrast with Mouffe’s formulation of radical citizenship, Thobani examines the institution from the perspective of “constitutive outside,” rather than simply acknowledging it. She reminds us that those who present themselves at the borders of First World countries are those whose lands have been appropriated and colonized and those whose lands are the sites for hypercapitalist expansion. (p. 71) This leads to the crucial point that “it is the racialization of persons-on-the-move that is central to their ontologization as aliens by exalted citizens, who claim inalienable rights for themselves while helping to destroy those of Others.” (p. 72) Attention to the process through which citizens come to be exalted and racialized peoples come to be supplicants undermines the “ethical” project of citizenship as advocated by Benhabib. Evident in Thobani’s argument is the work of Sara Ahmed (2000). Ahmed, as noted in the introduction, argues that the one understood as the stranger is not simply the migrant or the racialized Other, the person who is new or unrecognized. Rather the stranger must already be recognized as a stranger. (p. 4) The significance of this point is twofold. The first is that the stranger has already been constituted as such. Thus, in Thobani’s example, it is not that the migrant simply appears at the border, disconnected from history. Both Ahmed and Thobani are making the point that we must be
attentive to the histories that produce the stranger as strange, Other, or different. When the stranger comes to be fetishized as the origin of difference, social processes are concealed and the Otherness of the stranger is naturalized. The second point of relevance to my argument is that the subject comes to be constituted through the recognition of the stranger, through encounters with strangers. The reason, then, that many theories of citizenship fall short is that they are abstracted from how states and citizens come to be constituted and continue to constitute themselves through that which is constituted as outside.

**Citizenship as a Canadian institution**

Thobani argues that citizenship is the very institution that has organized the entitlement and alienation of various subjects within the Canadian nation-state. While many theorists, including Benhabib, focus on the way citizenship naturalizes a specific political community and, unfortunately, alienates those outside of it, Thobani points out that in settler colonies such as Canada, citizenship naturalizes certain peoples (people she refers to as “nationals”) as insiders only by marking indigenous peoples for “physical and cultural extinction”. (pp. 74-75) By examining “social contracts” or “political communities” in this light, we are forced to remember the fundamental act of violence in the formation of the nation and our implication within it.

Thobani illustrates the way that Canada has been both a colonial state and a racial state by examining the formation of political identities through the institution of citizenship. While Canada did not have its own formal citizenship until 1947, British and French Europeans, united through the notion of whiteness, became the “true” subjects of the nation” before Confederation. (p. 75) Coleman (2006) points out that among the early Loyalist settlers were Iroquois, Black, and various ethnicities of non-British Europeans, however British civility served as the unifying project through which Anglo whiteness became hegemonic. Thobani argues that the potential existed for Asians and Blacks, for example, to dramatically shape the type of political entity Canada would eventually become, but it was through racial policies that Anglo hegemony was sustained. (p. 77) A series of laws enacted at the time of the nation’s founding, including the Indian Act (1867), the Chinese Immigration Act (1885), the Continuous Passage Act (1908), and the Immigration Act (1910), attest to the molding of a racial state. (p. 90) The 1947 Citizenship Act sought to eliminate collective land ownership by Aboriginal peoples, who were considered ‘wards of the state’, by offering them citizenship only if they agreed to renounce Indian status. (p. 82) Thobani draws attention to the fact that citizens were divided into three categories: those
who were natural born, those who were naturalized, and those who were granted a certificate of citizenship. (p. 88) Most crucial to Thobani’s argument is that people within the latter two categories could have their citizenship rescinded for treason while the natural born citizen could not. The argument underpinning the irrevocability of citizenship for the ‘natural born’ related to the dangers inherent in the condition of statelessness. That those within other two categories could also be rendered stateless did not influence the argument. (p. 88)

Racialized immigration policies and the imperative to “Keep Canada White” remained official policy until the 1960s. Several shifts worked to conceal the ongoing forms of racialization inherent within Canadian citizenship. The first was the removal of preferential treatment for British subjects in 1963. A second was the points system for determining suitability, which afforded citizenship to a much higher percentage of non-Europeans. (p. 97) Thobani argues, however, that these policies did not end colonialism and further marginalized Aboriginal peoples through “the deployment of citizenship to confer an (abstract) ‘equality’ on all subjects, including Aboriginal peoples.” This construction enables the perception of Aboriginal peoples as people who demand special rights or more than their fair share. (p. 98)

Immigration policies, for their part, continue to deny equality in other ways. Thobani points out that resources for the recruitment of immigrants have been disproportionately allocated to developed countries. Furthermore, much evidence exists to show that immigration continued to produce an unequal status for immigrants. Sponsorship regulations for immigrants denied dependents access to social benefits until they acquired full citizenship and regulations for the entry of domestic workers maintained their dependency on their employers. (pp. 99-100) The deportation clause for naturalized citizens persisted, illustrating that only the “real national subject” had a guaranteed right to citizenship. (p. 96)

A final dimension of the institution of citizenship in Canada relates to diversity and multiculturalism. Without getting into the specifics of multiculturalism as an official policy, I want to contest some of the ways multiculturalism and diversity have been popularly conceived within the field of citizenship. Many Canadians have lauded Canada’s approach to multiculturalism as an indication of the nation’s post-racial inclusiveness. Ahmed (2000) makes several important arguments about Australian multiculturalism that are also relevant in the Canadian context. She argues, as Bannerji (2000) and Thobani (2007) have similarly argued with regard to Canada, that strangers have allowed Australia to reconstitute itself as a place tolerant of difference. (p. 95) Settler colonial states benefit from this legitimization in order to re-
imagine themselves, not as racial projects, but as liberal democracies. (Bannerji, 2000, p. 74) Multiculturalism, Ahmed (2000) further argues, serves to mark out those differences that are assimilable (generally superficial or private ones) thereby refusing other kinds of differences. (p. 104) Canadians can, for example wear hijabs or turbans, so long as they act Canadian. The idea that one can wear anything is more than tokenistic. It puts a regulatory pressure on behaviour. The more one’s culture is evident, the more one must be sure to act Canadian. This can operate at the level of governmentality by disseminating a pressure to present oneself as the right kind of citizen. Collectively, these points by Bannerji, Ahmed and Thobani, indicate the ways in which multiculturalism has legitimized the white settler colonial state by admitting the figure of the internal stranger as the origin of difference, and difference as the problem in need of management by the state.

In this section, I have sought to show, using Thobani, that the institution of citizenship produced Anglo European entitlement to and dominance over the territory. As it became formalized, citizenship functioned as a strategy for the elimination of Aboriginality. Moreover, through citizenship, Immigrants were, and continue to be neo-settlers by enabling Aboriginal dispossession. Multiculturalism as a dimension of contemporary citizenship has enabled the state to legitimize itself by appearing to transcend race, but has in fact served to produce a new order of assimilationism and to cast the management of difference as an imperative of the state. Thobani’s profound critique of citizenship reminds us that in Canada there is a need for a thorough reconsideration of the relationship between the territory, the populations, and the government. The entitlements of citizenship have served as inducements allotted unequally in an oppressive project. Civic education, therefore, cannot take even the notion of citizenship for granted. In the next section, I consider the roles of tolerance and civility in education.

**Tolerance and civility in education**

Wendy Brown (2006) argues that the notion of tolerance, so central to multicultural social order, “produces and positions subjects, orchestrates meanings and practices of identity, marks bodies, and conditions political subjectivities.” (p. 4) She argues that tolerance discourse has numerous modalities and is tied with specific cultural norms, but conceals itself as universal, and works to regulate those produced as Other. Daniel Coleman (2006) makes a similar argument about civility in the Canadian context. Through a genealogy of specific allegorical figures in Canadian literature, Coleman posits that what has come to be known as English
Canada has been a cultural project formed through a specific notion of whiteness based on a British model of civility. (p. 5) Drawing on Balibar’s concept of a ‘fictive ethnicity’ (the constructed history of a diverse peoples that serves to naturalize them as a community), Coleman argues that early Canadian settlers produced the homogeneous Britishness through the notion of civility. “‘Britishness’ – as a form of government, as a union of formerly hostile peoples, as a civilization – demonstrated that former enemies could set aside their differences and, in a spirit of disinterested objectivity, work cooperatively together in a common enterprise.” (p. 19) As noted in chapter one, Coleman and Brown both acknowledge the close relationship between tolerance and civility, although Coleman argues that the project of civility goes beyond tolerance to include progressive civilization, modernity, and the notion of order. (p. 21) Considering tolerance as a discourse (as Brown does) or civility as a project (as Coleman does) leads to similar points about race, culture, and civilization. Multiculturalism serves as a part of the progressive thrust of civility and does not undermine but assists in the construction of a Canadian cultural superiority. This has great relevance for education since civility must be taught and learned. As Coleman writes:

Education in civility shepherds people onto the path of progress because it names a future ideal as if it were a present norm. It projects an ideal of social interaction (all members of society should be freely included and accorded equal respect) as something to which individuals should aspire: if you wish to join the egalitarian progressive company, you must be willing to improve yourself, to become worthy of the respect that characterizes the civil group. (p. 11)

One may read this quote and imagine it to characterize citizenship education in the early twentieth century, but what of citizenship and civic education today? With the diversity of students who attend public schools, how might they be educated in citizenship and to what ends? Are they, too, being acculturated into the civil?

**Ontario social studies: neoliberal civility**

In this section, I examine citizenship and civic discourse, as presented in the Ontario curriculum to illustrate how the citizen is imagined and produced through policy. Drawing on the work of Davies and Issett (2005), I distinguish between citizenship education - the education to produce governable subjects - and civics education - a form of education that advocates some degree of engagement in the political system. While the distinction can be useful, engagement can take many forms, from voting to volunteering to civil disobedience, each of which indicates
different relationships between the individual, the state, and society. Joshee (2004) argues that the relationship between citizenship and managing cultural diversity has been central to the task of nation building and assimilation since Canada’s founding. (p. 131) This is evident in some of laws and policies discussed above.

In their piece “Troubling National Discourses”, Schick and St. Denis (2005) argue that racial identifications are produced through national discourses with whiteness as invisible, innocent, and peaceful, and racial inequalities as cultural differences to be celebrated. Schick and St. Denis’s argument has influenced my reading of the Ontario Social Studies Curriculum, 2004, Grades 1-6. I will use the Ontario policy document to offer some analysis of the ways the curriculum addresses social relations and produces social subjects.

The curriculum identifies five key concepts: change, culture, environment, power, and the dynamics of the marketplace. (Ontario, 2004, p. 2) The document outlines the roles of students, teachers, parents, and principals in the educational process. Students have the responsibility of putting the effort into learning. While the document acknowledges that these responsibilities will increase as students advance through the grades, and that some students will find this more difficult based on their situations, “taking responsibility for their own progress and learning is an important part of education for all students, regardless of their circumstances.” (p. 5) This statement makes clear that the largest portion of the onus is on the student and not on the teacher, the school, the parent, the board or any other group or agency to create circumstances most conducive to learning. Parents are reminded that they can support student learning by familiarizing themselves with the curriculum and participating in school life. The most interesting statement with regard to citizenship in this section is:

Parents can also provide valuable support for their children’s learning by taking an active interest in their out of school activities. This might include encouraging their children to participate in activities that develop responsible citizenship, such as reading to a younger child, running errands for a senior citizen, helping a local volunteer organization, or participating in an environmental clean-up program in their neighbourhood. (p. 5)

This example is notable for its advocacy of specific forms of responsibility. It casts the student as someone who engages in acts of volunteering such as tutoring, running errands and cleaning in the interests of other community members, groups, or the environment. These activities support the status quo and are consistent with a civic republican or elitist orientation to citizenship. While these activities are not necessarily in conflict with liberal or activist orientations citizenship, which emphasize participation in public affairs and social transformation (Sears & Hughes,
1996, pp. 127-128), they reflect the priorities of policy-makers. As Davies, Gregory and Riley (1999) note, community service initiatives can be viewed with skepticism if they aim to promote the free labour of young people in order to replace government services. (p. 4)

Another introductory component of the curriculum is called “Considerations for Program and Planning,” which addresses topics such as cross-curricular planning, special education, ESL, and “antidiscrimination.” The choice of the term antidiscrimination is itself noteworthy since the term ‘discrimination’ assumes that the problem being opposed resides in people’s attitudes, and not in oppressive relations within the social order. Teachers are reminded that social studies are to teach students “‘habits of mind’ essential in a complex democratic society.” This statement is consistent with the title addressed above. It implies an inevitability to discrimination as inherent in complex societies. As was highlighted earlier, Ahmed (2000) argues that contemporary approaches to diversity make strangers the origin of difference and make difference the problem in need of management. The statement goes on to say, “Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship, as well as a willingness to show [italics added] respect, tolerance, and understanding towards” individuals, groups, and cultures. (p. 17) The statement begins by implying that understanding citizenship is, in itself, a safeguard against discrimination at least when accompanied by a willingness to show respect and tolerance. The qualifiers are rather alarming. The goal is not to have students be respectful and tolerant, arguably a minimal goal in the orientation one should have toward other human beings. The goal is not even to have them show respect and tolerance, which may simply involve suppressing derision. Rather the goal is that students be willing to show respect and tolerance. Whether they succeed or not does not seem to be an issue of significance. These statements about antidiscrimination serve to place emphasis on individual direct, personal relationships. Students are not being taught to think of themselves as experiencing varying degrees of benefit or harm within unequal social relations. It is worth considering what is being naturalized. In this case, students are learning to understand themselves as individuals who may harbour contempt or hatred, who may benefit or suffer from exploitation and oppression, but who must merely be willing to show respect and tolerance.

A second paragraph in the antidiscrimination section says that learning activities should be inclusive and should reflect diverse viewpoints “to enable students to become more sensitive to the experiences and perceptions of others.” (p. 17) Inclusiveness and diverse viewpoints are not pursued in the interest of contesting dominant viewpoints or exclusionary and marginalizing
practices, but are pursued to create greater sensitivity. The statement allows no room for the recognition of power difference. Like tolerance, sensitivity permits the one exercising it to remain in the dominant position, in this case to acknowledge the experiences and perceptions of others. The final statement of the paragraph says, “Students also learn that protecting human rights and taking a stand against racism and other expressions of hatred and discrimination are essential components of responsible citizenship.” (p. 17) This is the only place in which the terms “human rights” or “racism” appear in the document. Since students are to be taught to take “a stand against” as opposed to being taught to recognize the way they themselves are implicated in and affected by racism and human rights violations, there is an implicit distancing taking place. This language can imply to students that racism and human rights violations are perpetrated by and experienced by others.

The social studies curriculum is divided into two strands: Heritage and Citizenship and Canadian and World Connections. The strands are organized into general topics, with “overall expectations” and “specific expectations” for each grade. Table one lays out the topics by strand and grade.

Table 1

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Heritage and Citizenship</th>
<th>Canadian and World Connections</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>Relationships, Rules and Responsibilities</td>
<td>The Local Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>Traditions and Celebrations</td>
<td>Features of Communities Around the World</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Early Settlements in Upper Canada</td>
<td>Urban and Rural Communities</td>
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<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Medieval Times</td>
<td>Canada’s Provinces, Territories, and Regions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Early Civilizations</td>
<td>Aspects of Citizenship and Government in Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>First Nations Peoples and European Explorers</td>
<td>Canada’s Links to the World</td>
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I will touch on the points most directly related to citizenship. In grade one, students learn about relationships, rules, and responsibility to help them “understand the basis of citizenship.” (p. 21) Students are to “draw conclusions about why rules and responsibilities are important in the relationships of their daily lives.” One can make a case for the value of teaching students about
rules or about responsibilities, but the framing of the priority as the basis of citizenship provides insight into how students, through their earliest formal educational experiences, learn about the relationship between obedience, order, and their roles as citizens.

In grade two students study traditions and celebrations within the heritage and citizenship component of the curriculum. The overall expectations involve examining the cultures and traditions that “coexist” in Canada and reporting on the way cultural traditions “enrich” Canadian society. (p. 23) As Sara Ahmed (2000) argues, multiculturalism identifies and accepts only those differences that can be claimed by the nation. She also argues consumable differences are the ones most valued. (p. 117) It is not surprising, therefore, to find a specific expectation that says, “identify examples that show the participation of various cultures in the community” (p. 24) with examples that include restaurants and styles of dress. What is never addressed is that while traditions may coexist, they do not coexist equally. The positive picture of equal cultures conceals the way some cultural practices are naturalized and invisible and other conceptions of culture have functioned as a mode of racialization, as a means of casting certain peoples as premodern. (Mamdani, 2004, p. 18) The depiction of culture through celebrations alone does not allow students to think about the scales for weighing the value and acceptability attached to various cultural practices. Furthermore, the celebratory approach to culture serves to cast an image for students of a happy and festive Canada. In her book The Promise of Happiness, Sara Ahmed (2010) argues that multiculturalism has come to be characterized as the cause of unhappiness, as that which ended the happiness of a white social cohesion that is imagined to have once existed. She argues that diversity can also become happy when “loyalty is expressed as ‘giving’ diversity to the nation.” (p. 122) Happy multiculturalism is multiculturalism that is bound up with national ideals. In Canada one of those ideals has become multiculturalism itself. Thus, it is perhaps not a great surprise that students learn in grade two to celebrate this simplified form of diversity.

In grade three students learn about the early settlements in Upper Canada. The story is an English Canadian one and abruptly begins in 1800. Settlers and First Nations are described simply as different communities living in separate areas. Students are asked to explain “how early settlers valued, used, and looked after natural resources.” (p. 25) First Nations are people who helped settlers learn how to adapt to their environment. Women are explicitly mentioned for the first time in an expectation that instructs students to describe the different roles played by men and women. In several expectations students are asked to compare aspects of their lives with
those of settlers and First Nations. (p. 26) This fragment of early Canadian history is the story of European settlement with some acknowledgement of Aboriginal existence and help. It is the story of men, with only one mention of women. It is the story of English Canadians with only one mention that there were African Americans living in Chatham. (p. 25) This perspective urges students to think of themselves as the heirs of these pioneers though not in the sense of complicity in colonialism. Rather students are invited to admire how these resolute architects established the nation that “we” have inherited. This reading of the grade three curriculum lends support to Schick and St. Denis’s (2005) argument that racial identifications are produced through national narratives. Students, regardless of race, are invited to this white, male perspective on early Canadian history, although depending on their positions, students will experience varying degrees of entitlement.

The grade six Heritage and Citizenship strand revisits First Nations and Europeans, except this time the emphasis is on explorers. The first expectation reads:

Describe characteristics of pre-contact First Nations cultures across Canada, including the close relationship of First Nations peoples with the natural environment; the motivations and attitudes of the European explorers; and the effects of contact on both the receiving and incoming groups. (p. 31)

First Nations are defined through their cultures, in particular the aspects of their cultures that relate to nature. Europeans are not associated with any culture at all. While students are invited to consider the cultures of First Nations, they are invited to consider the mindsets of Europeans. This significance of this construction - of First Nations as peoples bound by traditions, cultures, and the land in contrast with Europeans who are unbounded, who travel, explore, and think – cannot be overstated. Mohanram (1999) argues that knowledges and identities have been constructed spatially. (p. xvi) Specifically, she illustrates the way native bodies have been discursively linked with nature, thereby representing them as marked, static and immobile, enabling the construction of the white body as unmarked, disembodied and free. “The unmarked man’s body comes into being only within metaphysical space, whereas the black (male) body can be located only within fauna and flora.” (p. xvi) Whiteness has the ability to contemplate and abstract, whereas blackness (a term she uses to refer to the discursive practice that enables the production of whiteness), does not. In the Ontario grade six curriculum, the learning expectations continue to rely on these modes of representation that have long been deployed to naturalize colonialism.
This is the first section of the curriculum in which conflict is introduced. The approach to addressing confrontations between Aboriginal peoples and explorers is to ask students to “Identify and report on the effects of cooperation and the reasons for disagreements.” (p. 31) There is no acknowledgement of any violence or coercion. There is no real attempt to have students explore the meaning of first contact for Europeans or for Aboriginal peoples in what would become Canada. There is not even an engagement with the question of land ownership and property. The effects of diseases on Aboriginal populations are only alluded to in an example. Throughout the expectations, Europeans are associated with: exploration, technology, trading companies, trading posts, and maps. Aboriginal peoples are associated with: the natural environment, language, agriculture and hunting, arts, storytelling, villages. The concern here is not only with stereotyping or misrepresentation. Drawing on Ahmed (2000), it is my argument that Aboriginal peoples have come to be produced as strangers, thereby concealing the processes that have served to mark them as the origin of difference. Because the European is unmarked, is produced as the universal subject, students come to identify with this figure. Students therefore come to constitute themselves through the image of the Aboriginal.

The final section of the Ontario social studies curriculum I will examine is “Aspects of Citizenship and Government” in the Canadian and World Connections strand addressed in grade five. The overall expectations are: that students summarize the functions of the three levels of government and identify Canadian symbols; that they gather and analyze information about government processes, rights, and responsibilities; and that they explain how government plays a role in society. (p. 44) “Citizenship” is always preceded with the adjective “responsible.” In one expectation, students are expected to identify the responsibilities that accompany rights. An interesting example is “freedom from discrimination and harassment/the responsibility to treat people with fairness and respect.” The decision to mention freedom from discrimination but not mention before the law, as it is articulated in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, personalizes the matter and allows for the corresponding responsibility. Students are also expected to explain the process through which immigrants become citizens, which may reinforce the idea of citizenship as privilege. There is an emphasis on important political figures, symbols, and civic buildings, (pp. 44-45) an approach that is linked with reverence and patriotism. The kinds of participation invoked are: participating in the electoral process, participating in a citizenship ceremony, researching how citizens can have an influence on government decision making,
engaging in democratic class meetings, and participating in heritage day events. (pp. 45-46) Ken Osborne, writing in 1985, as cited in Davies and Issett (2005) says:

Civics meant little more than a factual knowledge of government and political institutions with a sprinkling of desirable social virtues…Civics portrays a consensus view of politics in which questions of conflict and power play little part. (p. 400)

This is clearly the approach in the Ontario social studies curriculum that forms the guideline for classroom practices today. This approach falls well within a conservative conceptualization of civic republicanism. I will turn to a discussion of neoliberalism before addressing the types of citizen-subjects produced through this curriculum.

As mentioned above, one of the key concepts advanced in the curriculum is an understanding of the “dynamics of the marketplace.” Among the considerations for program planning is to align guidance and career education with social studies so that students “learn to work independently, cooperate with others, resolve conflicts, participate in class, solve problems, and set goals to improve their work.” Teachers are encouraged to invite guest speakers, take students to career conferences, and involve students in activities related to “career exploration.” (p. 18) Joshee (2004) argues that neoliberalism has led to what she calls a social cohesion paradigm of civic education that “recognizes diversity” but aims to build shared citizenship values. (p. 148) She argues that this leads to an assimilationist form of citizenship and a charity-based system for addressing social inequities. (p. 150) It is not difficult to see her concerns realized in the current Ontario curriculum.

To summarize this section, students are constructed through the curriculum as a very specific kind of citizen-subject. They are responsible in the sense of engaging in volunteer work and a few conventional forms of political participation. They are obedient and respectful. They are tolerant and sensitive to differences, or they try to be. They celebrate a diversity of cultures. They are apolitical in that they only engage in understanding disagreements at the most superficial levels and never participate in activism or political opposition. They respect the country’s heritage and understand citizenship as a privilege. They are self-regulating neoliberal subjects who take responsibility for their circumstances, prepare for their careers and never consider relations of power. These students are models of civility.

These citizen-subjects are barely aware of the contested nature of the national project by the end of grade six, if they are aware at all. They understand themselves as the inheritors of an Anglo Canadian country that has welcomed other cultures. They understand immigrants as those
who brought the other cultures that ‘we’ enjoy and celebrate. Immigrants have to go through a process to become citizens, but this is just one example of how Canadians learn and show responsibility. Citizen-subjects understand Aboriginal peoples as people who helped and welcomed explorers and settlers. For the most part they understand themselves to inhabit a colourless nation.

Of course, students have embodied experiences of the nation that position them differently with regard to the narrative. The narrative alone cannot tell them who they are in the national project. This is most obvious with regard to Aboriginal students. Because their “group” is present in the story and because whiteness is constituted through them, they are positioned as abject. Non-white students and immigrant students have a different set of negotiations to make. They are constituted as the origin of difference in another way and must understand what this “colourblind” apolitical story is saying to them and about them. Furthermore students learn about citizenship in a multitude of other ways. It is only my intention to show, through the thrust of the policy, the way the discourse of citizenship and the pedagogy of civics are functioning ideologically at this moment.

After thinking about civic education in teacher’s college and teaching civics within all of my courses, I came to realize that focusing on political engagement, even activist engagement, was not enough in helping secondary school students pursue anti-oppressive social justice in their learning and in their lives. It was necessary, I realized, as Schick and St. Denis (2005) have argued, to have my students consider their investments in systems of colonial and racial domination. This involves thinking with them about the ways we are each complicit in and accountable for inequalities within our social worlds. These are very difficult conversations. Some might say these are inappropriate conversations to have with students younger than mine. Examining the elementary curriculum, however, it becomes apparent that students are disciplined through educational approaches in a way that makes them even more resistant to these discussions. The civics education practices that can be summed up as neoliberal civility make the barriers to addressing colonialism, racism and other inequities formidable indeed. While citizenship, I have argued, is the nation-building project that has enabled colonialism, we who are granted the entitlements of citizenship have the most power in advancing a radical restructuring of the relationship between the territory, populations, and government. An anti-colonial, anti-racist education that urges students to consider how they are invested and implicated in systems of domination is one starting point.
CHAPTER FOUR
Lessons in civility: How teachers negotiate citizenship

As discussed in chapter two, Canadian scholarship on the role of the teacher in delivering citizenship education is limited. Moreover, research on the pedagogy of citizenship assumes that promoting “good citizenship” should be a goal of educational practice. Most existing research therefore aims to enhance pedagogical sophistication around civics and citizenship education. (Evans, 2006) This chapter, instead, begins from the premise that the institution of citizenship in Canada functions to produce a racial hierarchy of entitlement to the land and to rights extended by the state. (Thobani, 2007) As a consequence, I argue that citizenship education must be problematized rather than enhanced. I examine citizenship discourse in schools to illustrate its racializing effects. I use the concept of Canadian white civility as delineated by Coleman (2006) to point to the unspoken colour-line buried within the discourse of citizenship. When teachers perform civility they are aspiring to the ideal of whiteness. As they impart and enforce civility in their classrooms they are inculcating white ideals in their students and legitimizing the Canadian national project. The seven teachers whose narratives have been offered for this study profess a commitment to equity in education. An examination of the tensions expressed through their narratives, however, exposes profound challenges to anti-colonial, anti-racist education.

Like all Canadians, teachers are constituted within the national imaginary as one of three kinds of subjects: “nationals”, “immigrants” or “Indians.” (Thobani, 2007, p. 4) As subjects in the Foucauldian sense, they are both constituted by and constitute themselves through citizenship discourse. The implications of teacher subjectivity are great for their students. The teachers in this study, having taught in elementary schools comprised predominantly of recent migrants to Canada, have the added role of introducing students to notions of Canadian citizenship for, perhaps, the first time. The teacher narratives, thus, offer insights into their deployment of and investments in citizenship discourse. In this chapter I examine teacher characterizations of the term “citizenship” to highlight its varying connotations and effects. I then examine their discussions of civic education in the grade five curriculum to demonstrate the operation of normative understandings of rights and freedoms in advancing newcomer students along the path to civility. I examine the challenges described by teachers in addressing Canada’s colonial history to show the intractability of the master narrative and the impulse to civility that sustains
it. In the final section of this chapter, I examine teacher narratives about the regulation of newcomer student attitudes and behaviour in the classroom to show how the “culturalization” of race (Razack, 1998) and the imperative of teaching civility serve as powerful impediments to anti-colonial and anti-racist schooling.

The meanings of citizenship: entitlement and appreciation

In spite of the centrality of citizenship to Ontario educational policy and rhetoric, teachers are provided minimal direction or instruction about addressing topics typically associated with citizenship. (Sears, 2004, p. 101) One teacher, Zaida, teacher told me:

I don’t remember ever really thinking about it or talking about it when I was studying to be a teacher or when I was working as a teacher -- other than whether to use this booklet or that booklet in thinking about heritage and culture. I think it’s really personal. It’s about what I think my role is. I mean, I think we get that odd article in the College of Teachers telling me that citizenship is bringing up students to be good citizens of Canada or citizens of the world.

Zaida effectively sums up what my interviews revealed: most teachers do not explicitly emphasize notions of citizenship in describing their teaching practice; interpretations of the term are “personal” and vary broadly; and citizenship is vaguely related to being good members of a national or global community. A Foucauldian understanding of subjectivity demonstrates why citizenship is “personal” for teachers. Individuals are both subject to the regulation of others (including institutions and the state) and are self-constituting. (Foucault, 1982, p. 30) Teachers, therefore, come to understand themselves as distinct kinds of racial citizen-subjects and learn to perform their citizenship differently. This section examines how each teacher took up the notion of citizenship in defining it. By highlighting the ways teachers of varied racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds are constituted and constitute themselves differently through the idea of citizenship some of the term’s racial underpinnings become apparent.

Anne, who did not choose the racial designation ‘white’, but rather described herself as “Canadian, French Canadian, Acadian, and Native Canadian,” visibly appeared white. While it may seem presumptuous for me to assign her a racial identifier she did not claim, the fact that she appeared white is noteworthy for this analysis, especially in light of the North American social context in which white people often view themselves as “nonracial” or “racially neutral.” (Frankenburg, 1993) Anne described her experience of citizenship in the following way:
For me, being Canadian is having the advantages I have now, having the advantages that my father was able to have based on the fact that we were Canadian and that we were able to do things within the country – we were able to travel, we were able to go places, we were able to vote freely.

This statement highlights the freedoms and benefits implicit in the notion of citizenship. Her emphasis on how she benefitted from citizenship is noteworthy when contrasted with Zaida’s description of the opportunities of citizenship. Zaida described herself racially as South Asian/brown, was born in South Africa, and moved to Canada as an infant. She said:

For us it was really about opportunity, so for us citizenship meant being part of a place where you got a chance at things and - a fair and equal chance, or more fair than back home. And it was about opportunity for education and that’s what’s important for my parents. But then now citizenship for me is about, I would hope it’s about equality. But I don’t feel that it is.

Like Anne, Zaida emphasized advantages but her statements were more conditional and more uncertain. The opportunity and fairness of citizenship were presented in relation to “back home” - Apartheid South Africa. She only hoped that citizenship in Canada offers a chance at equality but added that she does not feel she experiences equality. Thus, while Anne’s description highlights the benefits she does claim from citizenship, Zaida’s highlights the potential for these benefits and an uncertainty about whether or not she experiences them.

Joan, a white Jewish teacher of Russian ancestry, talked about never having given much thought to citizenship since her parents were North American-born citizens of Canada. She said, “It was never really anything I considered…. It means I carry a Canadian passport, it means I’m entitled to certain things under the law. That’s really about it.” For Joan, citizenship has meaning only as a set of legal entitlements. It is something she can take for granted and even disavow. She stressed that, “It doesn’t define me in any way as a person.”

Three Muslim teachers of colour emphasized the importance of “contributing” within their characterizations of citizenship. Rahana was born in Guyana and described herself racially as mixed African and Portuguese. She said: “Citizenship to me is being involved and being a part of society and bettering things for others and working towards the betterment of the community, of society as a whole.” Yasmine, who was born in India, avoided racial identifiers when asked about race and ethnicity but described herself as “Muslim first, Canadian second, female third, and Indian last.” She emphasized “being involved in Canadian life, Canadian politics, being aware of economics and participating in the growth of Canada as a holistic thing.”
Mariam, a South Asian teacher who was born in Canada, emphasized contribution to society and respect for other people. She said she understands citizenship as “obeying the laws and being respectful of others’ rights. Being respectful of people in general.” She went on to say, “I’m trying to contribute in a small way.” These three Muslim teachers, rather than emphasizing what they receive and expect from the state in their understandings of citizenship, emphasized what they feel they want to offer to the community or society at large.

Rahana, Yasmine, and Zaida also discussed aspects of citizenship for which they are grateful. Yasmine said:

I’m proud of Canada. I will root for Canada in any kind of Olympics team sport, that kind of thing, against any other country in the world. I really appreciate being a Canadian and more so when I’ve travelled and returned because of the fact that it gives me the freedom to be who it is that I want to be.

Rahana commented, “When you travel to other countries and you see what you have here in Canada, you have to be grateful for it.” And Zaida said, “Canada allows me to be Canadian and something else and that duality is very important to me.” Yasmine’s comment emphasizes loyalty and appreciation as well as a sense that the freedoms Canada offers are unique. Rahana’s statement is not specific about what it is Canada provides although elsewhere in the interview she mentioned experiencing less racism and better health care in Canada than in a Scandinavian country where she lived for a time. Zaida indicated that appreciates her sense that Canada does not require her to surrender other national or cultural affiliations she has. These teachers, therefore, in stark contrast to Anne and Joan do not take citizenship for granted. They perform themselves as contributing, appreciative citizens.

Sarah, who was born in Canada and described herself as black and Caribbean, emphasized ideas of home and identity in her narrative. She said citizenship is “just where you identify with the most.” For her, both Trinidad and Canada are home and therefore, even though she “checks the box” for Canada when asked about nationality, she does not want to be confined to just one category of citizenship. She explained that that she came to her understanding of citizenship as a child:

Unfortunately…a common thing with minority children is that somebody else makes you aware of your difference. Yeah, obviously I know that my skin colour looks different to other people or something like that, but it’s only when somebody else makes you aware of it, that’s when I start to get into the notion of what is identity, what is citizenship?
Sarah said that she never had a “crisis” about where she belonged but her narrative indicates that she was made to feel that her skin colour was “different” and through that awareness she began to question notions of belonging.

I offer such a detailed account of the seven responses to the question “what does citizenship mean to you?” in order to introduce the subject positions of each of the participants. While only Sarah’s response explicitly addresses race, all of the responses indicate the way subjects are constituted racially through the discourse of citizenship. Thobani (2007) argues that state policies and popular practices produce “certain subjects as exalted (nationals), others are marked for physical and cultural extinction or utter marginalization (Indians), and yet others for perpetual estrangement or conditional inclusion as supplicants (immigrants, migrants, and refugees).” (p. 6) Within their narratives, the participants demonstrate that the discourse of citizenship is mobilized differently by individuals based on their subject positions. While white subjects can assume and accept the entitlements of citizenship, non-white “immigrants” often reveal their tenuous positions in relation to the notion by emphasizing behaviours (contribution to society, civil obedience), values (gratitude, patriotism), or by questioning their sense of belonging and whether they receive the full benefits of citizenship. These narratives illustrate the need for anti-racist educators to scrutinize their own subjectivities. (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 299) Schick and St. Denis argue that white teachers must examine the ways dominant cultural practices are naturalized to their benefit at the expense of non-dominant groups. My argument is that non-white teachers, who have accumulated a degree of “national capital” (Hage, 2000) and privilege, must also scrutinize the ways their positionalities function to help them approximate the ideals of white civility. The particular ways teachers deploy citizenship discourse has implications for their Aboriginal and newcomer students. Both white and non-white teachers must scrutinize their investments in and mobilizations of Canadian narratives and citizenship discourse in order to enhance the potential for anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogy.

**Citizenship in the classroom**

Civics, the aspect of citizenship education most often discussed in academic literature, was not described as a source of tension by any of the teachers. Rather, teachers described addressing that part of the curriculum in normative terms. The narratives illustrate the ways civic education can serve to perpetuate Canadian white civility and the racial hierarchy of citizenship. Sarah, a recent graduate of a pre-service teaching program, described teaching “the types of
government, what each is responsible for, the House of Commons.” She led the students in a mock student vote and aimed to teach them about “rights and responsibilities.” Anne offered a similar description of grade five civics:

They go through the political parties - so the political parties that exist in Canada - so how the parties are run, how you vote, what you do to vote, the constitution, the freedoms you have based on the constitution, some of the history of Canada like when Canada was established, that’s very basic. It’s more of how governments run.

Unlike other components of the social studies curriculum where teachers were critical, their approaches to civics reveal a certain orthodoxy about Canada as a political project. The political system simply exists as is, the constitution unproblematically ensures rights and freedoms and the country’s establishment was uncontested. This approach reinforces hegemonic white entitlement to the land and ignores the unequal extension of citizenship rights.

Several teachers employed the “counterbalancing” approach to teaching about rights and responsibilities critiqued in chapter two. Joan, for example, said:

When I’ve taught (grade five) I’ve started off with what are your rights, what are your responsibilities? Those are things that balance. Concomitance, is that how you say it? You know, you have a right and you have a responsibility. So I start from there: your right is to have your own bedroom, your responsibility is to keep it neat… So at some point we talk about the rights of being a Canadian citizen but again for me, what I tell them is you need to be good people.

This statement reflects Osborne’s (2004) critique of depoliticized civic education in which being “good people” is conflated with citizenship. More pertinent to this analysis is Clausen, Horton and Lemisko’s (2008) argument that this approach implies that rights are not absolute or inalienable. This implication does not only undermine democratic ideals and the claims that individuals have over the state, it functions to further marginalize non-white students whose entitlements are already constituted as more conditional than those of white students. The lesson that rights are contingent upon responsibilities is more likely to resonate with students whose citizenship is constituted as provisional.

The following lengthy quote from Yasmine’s narrative highlights the way civic education can serve to cast Canada as “the redeemer” (Roman and Stanley, 1997) and newcomer students as grateful supplicants:

Whenever we talk about Canadian citizenship or being a Canadian I often try to really highlight and emphasize the rights they have as Canadians and how we should be in the ideal world, in the ideal Canadian society, be able to achieve anything we want based on…and I often tell…like this one grade eight student, we just had this conversation a
week and a half ago…I said ‘you know the thing about Canada is that you can actually do anything you want due to your merit as opposed to who you are, what religion you follow, what god you believe in, and you know all these things, because this is all (in the Charter)’ and I showed it to him and he’s like ‘oh’ and he was actually a little surprised.

Yasmine went on to say of her newcomer students who are mostly from India, “I almost have to make them see that they’re so lucky to be here, that they don’t have the same appreciation.” Idealized rights and freedoms function to produce a Canadian nation-state that redeems newcomers and commands their gratitude. The notion of “rights and freedoms” also functions to teach students that in Canada success depends upon “merit” alone, unlike in other places where “who you are” determines your opportunity for success. The discourse of goodness, gratitude and responsibility underlying the last two examples is also relevant in regulating student behaviour, a point which will be addressed in the final section of this chapter.

Mariam, who does not teach grade five but who teaches in a school where civics discourse is prevalent because of a high concentration of very recent migrants to Canada, offered comments indicative of a normative approach to civic education. She said she teaches citizenship by reviewing the types of questions found on the citizenship test. “You know, who is the Prime Minister and basic things like awareness of your government and of the laws and the lay of the land.” She explained that in the grade four curriculum citizenship focuses on providing students with a sense of the physical geography of the country which relates to citizenship because: “They get to see how large the country is. If you’re studying Nunavut, Iqaluit, the North, they may see pictures and they see that Canadians are different.” Like the previous examples, political, historical and geographic knowledge is presented as factual and uncontested. Her newcomer students are being initiated into a political project that is a fait accompli and must memorize requisite knowledge in order to gain admission. Within Mariam’s narrative, diversity simply exists unproblematically in Canada (“Canadians are different”) and newcomer students are taught to recognize diversity by looking at pictures of people in Nunavut who serve as fetishized symbols of Canadian diversity. Mariam’s approach to civic education and the examples before it highlight what Coleman has argued about civility, “it names a future ideal as if it were a present norm.” (p. 11) Teachers, in order to claim legitimacy within the realm of the civil, must conform to its ideals by practicing and imparting civility.
Unlike civics units which were addressed with a great deal of deference to the official narrative, teachers described other citizenship-related units with varying degrees of resistance. Zaida, for example, described citizenship in the grade two curriculum in this way:

We had particular things about citizenship in geography when we were trying to teach kids about parts of the world…what does it mean to be in Canada? So I remember specific lessons about things like “these are symbols of Canada” so what the coins had on them and why the beaver was important to Canada and Canada’s history. Normally you wouldn’t teach a seven year old about settlement of Canada and the fur trade but it came up. It was part of our story and we wanted kids to know that. I never had any Aboriginal kids at that school, I did later in another school and that was important to me because I thought ‘oh that changes the whole story. They might have a different perspective on Canada.’

It was only in retrospect that Zaida realized that the curriculum’s narrative of settlement would be contested by Aboriginal students. She did not seem to extend that recognition to all students or indicate an awareness that most, if not all, symbols of Canada’s settler history secure positions and marginalize students of all backgrounds differently. Zaida’s quote also indicates an apprehension about addressing topics like “settlement and the fur trade” with “seven year olds,” implying perhaps that age or grade level determine the kind of historical material deemed appropriate. In fact she later said, “I don’t run into (tensions over historical narratives) in the younger curriculum because so little has to do with the real world, with history and world events.” These comments point to Roman and Stanley’s (1997) argument that an anti-oppressive pedagogy depends on a critique of popular notions of children as subjects who “live in simple universes untainted by social divisions and conflicts.” (p. 206) Zaida’s quotes present two competing ideas – that the implicit narrative underlying an apparently simple unit on Canadian symbols is in fact political and marginalizing and that the curriculum at that grade level has little to do with the “real world.” Zaida’s comments about the grade two curriculum illustrate that anti-racist educators must, from the earliest grades, resist the “optimistic assertions of civility” that sustain the stories and symbols of Canada’s settler history. (Coleman, 2006, 29)

Joan talked at length about the challenges in addressing ‘first contact’ in the grade six curriculum. She said: “We started off by talking about Aboriginal cultures and then I looked at explorers and talked about their beliefs and their cultures and then we looked at what happens when those collide and I didn’t get to do enough of that part.” Along with the time constraint in addressing the material sufficiently, she also mentioned her lack of knowledge about Aboriginal histories. “I constantly feel I don’t know enough about it.” Furthermore, she said “I mean it’s
hard not to make Europeans the bad guys because I guess basically I believe they are, and it’s really hard not to and I don’t want to send the kids home embarrassed about their European heritage.” An anti-colonial, anti-racist approach, therefore, is constrained by the teacher’s knowledge and the fear of making students feel “embarrassed” or guilty for their white privilege. As Schick and St. Denis (2005) argue, however, discomfort reveals just how much is at stake for white Canadians in the troubling of national discourses. This discomfort is necessary for contesting white dominance. Joan’s concerns about unsettling the privileges of her white students are particularly noteworthy in light of the popular idea about racism, reflected even within these narratives, that “the one who feels the negative effects of inequality is the one who is burdened with overcoming the discrimination.” (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 296)

Rahana approached citizenship in her grade three classroom with a high degree of cynicism. She emphasized the importance of introducing students to “the history of immigration and the different peoples here in Canada” in order to illustrate that Canadian history is a history of “struggles.” She characterized her approach as a critique of the “pioneers” unit in grade three:

You will find that a lot of teachers will focus on European pioneers, ok? In my…first year of teaching grade three, I refused to that to do that and I talked about, we first looked at Native Canadians, the Anishnaabe…mainly in the Ontario area and then we looked at Europeans of different backgrounds because even Europeans themselves, did they all identify with each other?”

Her description of this unit explicitly emphasized the “history of racism in Canada” and highlighted various groups of people who were killed or exploited based on race in order that newcomer students would “see that their experience is not new.” She said “the curriculum is still based on certain heroes and holidays and to teach outside of that is, you’re really really going against the grain.” Rahana’s pedagogy aims to prepare students for citizenship in a pluralistic Canada through an approach that actively contests dominant discourses of civility and citizenship. It is noteworthy that this pedagogy relies on a knowledge of Canadian history that is outside of mainstream narratives. Unlike Rahana who has enough knowledge to contest the conventional approaches to pioneers, many teachers who are committed to anti-racist principles may lack the resources to offer a counter-hegemonic view of history.

A look at some of the reasons Rahana offered for her pedagogical approach may indicate other challenges to anti-colonial, anti-racist education. She said:
…suffering is not just something that people of colour… people of all nationalities, all people suffer. White people suffered too. So like all the French, look at history. I think history is very important. So you try to present things in a more inclusive way.

She also said she approached citizenship in this way because students “enjoy” and “appreciate” it and because she wants students to think about “what can we do to avoid this?” These explanations reveal a possible disjunction between the methods and the effects of her pedagogical approach. An emphasis on “inclusion” that assumes that all groups suffered equally can occlude a serious consideration of power differentials between dominant white European groups and racialized groups. Furthermore, while it is certainly useful to have students consider their stakes in systemic racism, the question ‘what can we do to avoid this?’ may indicate that she is deploying history lessons to teach about individual discrimination, thereby undermining the attempt to challenge hegemonic narratives. There is also a danger in presenting such a narrative because students “enjoy” or “appreciate” it if the story of conflict is simply more exciting than traditional ones. Instead, teachers should be prepared for counter-narratives to be unsettling. Finally, and most importantly, this approach can further undermine Aboriginal sovereignty by failing to make colonization foundational or by presenting indigenous peoples as just one interest group among many. (Lawrence & Dua, 2005)

These examples of the tensions encountered by teachers in addressing Canada’s colonialisist history demonstrate a range of obstacles to an anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogy. These narratives reinforce the many ways the curriculum itself tells a story about Canada that centres Anglo white interests and marginalizes Aboriginal peoples and newcomers or people of colour. The narratives highlight some of the ways the curriculum can work to fetishize non-white peoples as the origin of difference, concealing the social processes that work to make specific differences salient. The teachers also indicated the practical constraints on their delivery of an anti-racist pedagogy such as the availability of time and necessary resources. Some of the teachers’ remarks reveal that, in spite of their professed commitments to equity, teachers struggle over whether they should teach counter-narratives because students may be too young to hear them or made uncomfortable by them. These teacher narratives remind us that even the presentation of a critical counter-narrative can be undermined by a failure to consider power relations and our investments in them. All of these obstacles point to the difficulty of resisting the project of civility in schools. The orderly school demands the regulation of teachers’ time and
resources. Teachers, in turn, produce governable students by following the status quo or presenting palatable material.

**Teaching civility: regulating student attitudes and behaviour**

As Coleman (2006) has shown, “civility involves manners and behaviours that must be learned and performed.” (p. 21) Teachers hold a great deal of responsibility for regulating and directing practices of civility among their newcomer students. As was apparent in many of the earlier quotes, educators often understand their role vis-à-vis citizenship education as teaching students to be “good people,” teaching them to feel responsible for their success, and teaching them to be grateful for what Canada has given them. As Goldberg (2009) notes, schooling is one of the institutions that has functioned to privatize civil and state control. (p. 41) Since the boundaries of civility are racially determined, the correction of the cultural practices of racialized students is one of the means through which the inculcation of white civility is accomplished. As was discussed in chapter three, character education that assumes “universal” values and norms has been critiqued for its potential to disenfranchise those who do not share a commitment to the same virtues. (Boyd, 2010, p. 386) Literature that critiques the conflation of citizenship education and character education is typically concerned with the de-politicization of citizenship and the weakening of pluralistic values. (Osbourne, 2004; Boyd, 2010) This section extends these critiques. Behavioural regulation, far more ubiquitous than formal character education programs, does more than undermine pluralism. It teaches students how to approximate Canadian white ideals. It reinforces and naturalizes dominant cultural norms and inferiorizes norms attributable to “other” cultures. What is learned is the governmentality of whiteness.

The seven teacher narratives revealed a tension between how teachers explained their role in behaviour regulation and how they described instances in which they have advanced cultural norms. For the most part, teachers resisted the idea that they personally inculcate “Canadian behaviour.” In contrast with some of the research (Osborne, 2004), teachers were reluctant to explicitly associate behaviour and citizenship discourse in any way. Instead, almost all of them implied that teaching students to be “good people” is beyond citizenship – more important and more noble – as was illustrated in Joan’s quote about rights and responsibilities cited above. One teacher, Anne, articulated the relationship between behavioural regulation, acculturation and citizenship in revealing terms. “I don’t really think we put it under the guise of Canadian citizenship, I think we put it in the guise of this what you do in school, this is how you behave in
school....” Thus, rather than directing student behaviour by attributing behavioural standards to Canadian norms, Anne’s statement suggests that culturally appropriate student behaviour is inculcated in reference to school expectations. Only Mariam’s narrative explicitly emphasized citizenship discourse in relation to behavioural expectations and the desire for order in schools. It is useful to note that Mariam teaches in a school populated overwhelmingly by recent migrants from India, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Your’re trying to run a class of 20 or 30 students and it’s a mini country. People have their rules. There are laws within the classroom. Teaching how to be a good classmate, I guess, extends to teaching about Canadian citizenship.

This quote suggests that the most salient aspect of learning to be a good classmate and citizen is learning to obey the rules/laws. Like in Anne’s statement, this quote suggests that newcomer students are Canadianized in so far as they are obedient to the social order in school.

Mariam’s narrative also makes explicit the degree to which white supremacy is embedded in civil virtues. She explained that she teaches students the importance of “…being good people and being fair and just and not lying and cheating. Just trying to, you know, succeed at whatever it is you’re doing. Trying to contribute to society and doing good things.” The relationship between these virtues, race/culture and citizenship is made explicit in a remark Mariam made a few minutes later:

Going back to what I was saying earlier about being respectful and fair and just. You know, some of these kids are coming from countries where they don’t see order. It may be chaotic. Something as simple as driving rules. It’s not the same. Right, so in Canada, yes. Do people run the red lights or stop signs? The do. But they get caught and there’s some sort of consequence.

In this statement newcomer students are constituted as deficient on a number of counts. They must learn respect and fairness, they must learn to understand order and consequences. In other words, they are learning civility because they lack it. The relational nature of her example provides insights into the constitution of a civil Canada. It is a place of order in contrast with the students’ countries of origin that are characterized as disorderly and chaotic. Canada is a place where there are consistent, immediate, and direct consequences for violations of order, in contrast with places, where one can infer, there are no such consequences. The borders between the civil nation and the uncivil outside are produced and are produced relationally. She imparts this sense of civility and associates it with the nation.
Several teachers expressed uneasiness about how to appropriately direct and regulate children’s behaviour and attitudes. Zaida, for example, mentioned the challenge of teaching informal notions of Canadian citizenship to her grade two and ESL students:

…a lot of the teachers have an agenda that we inculcate how to be part of the group. And little things that culturally might have been appropriate for children who are not …teach them not to spit outside or not to spit in school hallways because where they came from in China that was okay but when they came here other people were getting so upset. And teachers didn’t understand that this was culturally appropriate for kids. They’re not trying to be rude and nasty. But here that’s what we decided good behaviour is. And so as the ESL teacher, especially with older kids, I had to show them what was okay to do in Canada versus what they could do back home. Including with violence…

In this example, the standards for behavioural regulation derive from other teachers or from people who get upset about “inappropriate” behaviour. Zaida indicated that she didn’t see the behaviours as offensive, however, she “had to show them” what was acceptable in Canada. The statement affirms the way school functions as a site where the borders around the civil are drawn. A second statement offered later by Zaida indicates how regulating behaviour can serve as a border marking the interior and exterior of Canadian civility. (Coleman, 2006, p. 9)

I think my job is to teach them about being respectful and kind…I grew up here so I was taught you don’t punch someone in the face no matter what they did. Some of the kids come from a place where that’s exactly what you would do. ‘You disrespect me or my sister, I’m going to punch you in the face.’ I’m not sure if that’s what it is to be Canadian but I think that to be Canadian is just to be respectful.

This short excerpt from Zaida’s statement does not capture any of the ambivalence she expressed about the way Canadians, including politicians, do not live up to the ideal of Canadian respectfulness. Nevertheless, her comments support the discourse of civility. Canadians are respectful and, in order to be Canadian, students must embrace this ideal and use it to govern their own behaviour. While Zaida’s comments appear to imply a sympathy for the distinct “cultural” practices of her students, they also signal the innocence of Canadian white civility in contrast with those norms that register as “other cultural practices.”

Joan emphasized the importance of teaching her students to be “good people” throughout her interview. “I’m much more concerned with their moral state than with what country they happen to hold a passport of.” In one quote, she stressed that she does not place a value judgment on cultural difference but offered one example of when she is required to direct students toward more Canadian norms:
I have said to the young kids from Jamaica, guys you know what, speak the dialect at home - the Patois - at home, you speak it with your friends but I have to teach you to read and write standard Canadian English because the bottom line is that’s how people are going to judge you in this country.

She described this type of behavioural regulation as “giving them a tool they need,” however rather than discussing with her students why it is that a particular dialect might cause people to “judge you in this country,” she said she tells them “that’s how it is folks.” Thus, while she does not place a value judgment on cultural norms, the failure to do so can perpetuate injustice by allowing the racist implications of civility to go unchallenged.

Anne was careful about attributing differences to culture and emphasized that often what may seem to be cultural may in fact be the practice of a particular family. She did offer one example of teaching students and their families appropriate Canadian behaviour. “We had students from some countries whose family was not sending them to school.” She explained that it was:

…difficult for some of them to understand what has to be done, but it’s a wide cultural gap in the sense that it’s not been something that has been expected in some places, so now that they have it expected it’s becoming - it’s going to be a long learning curve…

The assumption that certain people do not “understand” the expectation of regular school attendance and that the school simply needs to teach them how to behave appropriately in Canada suggests a patronizing or paternalistic approach to dialogue about distinct cultural norms. The comments are an indication of the way Canadian civility “shepherds people on the path of progress.” (Coleman, 2006, p. 11)

While most of the teachers conveyed some ambivalence in describing how to address cultural difference, discussions of contending with religious accommodations were perhaps the most conflicted. Joan acknowledged that she encounters tensions between cultural or religious norms she takes for granted and those that students may bring. For example, she questioned “what do you do with the child who comes in, who’s been at a Muslim school and she wears a hijab…and she says ‘I’m not allowed to sit next to or work with boys?’” The phrasing of the question as a rhetorical one indicates an unwillingness to state a position. Anne discussed Muslim families in her school who had made requests for religious accommodations relating to music and physical education. She said:

You try to accommodate as best as possible but you also need to let the family know, within this realm, within what we do, I’m not the one who can ok that. You need to speak
to the vice principal or the principal. Within my reality this is how things have to happen but you’re well within your rights to ask…

Both narratives reveal the ways teachers perform civility. On the one hand Anne and Joan both expressed a degree of tolerance, a central pillar of Canadian nationhood. (Mackey, 1998) Anne said she tells parents their requests are “understandable” and Joan said “you want to accommodate.” The apprehension about the requests, on the other hand, indicates the challenge teachers undergo when they are asked to accommodate non-dominant norms. Tolerance, however, demands that teachers not express judgments so, rather than discussing their opinions about the requests or elaborating on the reasons for their apprehension, the teachers shifted the discussions to protocol. Anne emphasized the importance of administrative support. Joan said she could not accommodate requests pertaining to the curriculum because she is legally obligated to teach it. Whereas most norms that register as cultural can either be celebrated as symbols of Canadian diversity or corrected as un-Canadian, religious norms present a greater challenge. As these requests indicate, parents often advocate strongly for religious accommodations. Teachers must therefore perform tolerance while simultaneously struggling about what practices cross the line to ‘incivility.’

Mariam, a Muslim teacher working in a predominantly Muslim school was more overt about her handling of sex segregation requests by Muslim parents.

I reassure the parents or the kids, I won’t force them to hold hands or hug or do any sort of physical touching but if they are sitting at a desk in a group, they’re in their own chair. I haven’t gone out of my way to do girls only or boys only because they all have to know how to get along with each other and part of that is sitting next to each other without touching each other or being offensive to one another. It’s more about being civil to one another in the classroom.

Perhaps Mariam was stating what Joan was uncomfortable acknowledging – that teaching newcomer students to work with students of the opposite sex is deemed necessary in promoting Canadian civility, in acculturating migrant students to Canadian norms. The statement also reveals the work the notion of tolerance does in upholding dominant culture. As Wendy Brown (2006) argues, tolerance talk functions on varying scales and in various registers to serve as a mode of governmentality. (p. 11) In this case, tolerance operates within the discourse of civility to organize the way students are expected to relate to one another (sitting side by side and working together). The intolerance toward the request for religious/cultural accommodation is justified by a commitment to an unspoken dominant cultural norm. By upholding civility,
teachers induct students into the Canadian national project, reminding them of the practices that are intolerable in Canada and directing them progressively toward an approximation of white ideals.

These honest narratives about the negotiations teachers make in approaching the subject of citizenship in their classrooms signal a number of challenges to anti-colonial and anti-racist pedagogies. Because teachers are constituted as different kinds of citizens and take up the notion of citizenship differently, they tend to reproduce the racializing effects of citizenship discourse even as they resist them. Teachers of colour, who learn to perform themselves as morally deserving and grateful immigrants may impart similar notions to their students. White teachers, who are constituted as entitled and who can take the notion of citizenship for granted, can overlook the dominant cultural assumptions inherent in citizenship. All of the teachers tended to ignore the racializing effects of civic education and promoted an image of a fair Canada that offers freedoms and rights to all. While teachers were somewhat critical of the formal curriculum, their attempts at resisting it were constrained by time, resources and ambivalent ideas about the degree of criticality that was appropriate. It was in regulating student behaviour that the most profound challenges to anti-colonialism and anti-racism emerged. As those responsible for both performing and imparting civility, teachers reinforced white ideals and directed students in the governmentality of Canadian whiteness. These narratives highlight the need for teachers to scrutinize the way their subject positions and their commitments to civility secure their place in the nation. Only by divesting from the project of civility will teachers have a chance at advancing an anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogy.
CHAPTER FIVE

Multiculturalism and the contestation of holidays in schools

Multicultural tolerance has been a central pillar in the construction of white civility, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Mackey (1998) argues that the ‘myth’ of Canadian tolerance that emerged in the early 1900s was attributed to the superiority of British justice. (p. 14) Coleman (2006) asserts that Canadian white civility is more than a myth, it is a cultural project built on British commitments to order, peace, tolerance and the rejection of American warmongering. (p. 5) It is through these associations with British white superiority and tolerance that Canada distinguished itself from America and organized itself as a political community. Tolerance has functioned more recently within the discourse of multiculturalism to allow Canada to “transcend” its settler colonial racist past and recast itself as a true liberal democracy. (Bannerji, 2000, p. 74) Multicultural tolerance has allowed the state to legitimize itself through the position of mediator and arbiter of “partisan” claims, such as Aboriginal land claims and Quebec sovereignty. This recasting, rather than producing a more just and equitable state, has enabled the hegemony of Anglo Canadian whiteness. Multicultural tolerance has produced and supported a dominant Anglo white ‘core culture’ that permits, consumes, and organizes those constituted as ‘strangers’ and ‘others’. (Mackey, 1998; Bannerji, 2000; Ahmed, 2000) Thus, while multiculturalism is popularly viewed as emblematic of Canada and laudable for its tolerance and civility, it has been widely critiqued by anti-racist scholars and activists. (Bannerji, 2000, p. 74)

Attention to the discourse of culture is central to an analysis of race in contemporary schools because, as Razack (1998) argues, ‘cultural difference’ has come to conceal and stand in for contemporary forms of racism. (p. 60) Moreover, as Bhandar (2009) points out, the idea of culture has become ontologized, fixing notions of cultural identity and ethnic difference. (Bhandar, 2009, p. 333) Non-white students are therefore easily cast as specific types of racial ‘others’ through the discourses of culture and multiculturalism. Ahmed (2000) makes the similar argument that multiculturalism produces a fetishized figure of ‘the stranger’ as the one who can be taken in to the nation, thereby ‘othering’ through the act of inclusion. (p. 97)

Of particular relevance to this chapter is the conflation of ‘celebrating difference’ and ‘equitable’ practices within multicultural discourse. Moodley (1983) has argued that multiculturalism promotes “a festive aura of imagined consensus.” (as cited in Mackey, 1998, p.
In elementary schools, this has meant the deployment of celebrations and festivals to promote a range of cultural norms under the guise of multiculturalism. Even those events constituted as traditional North American mainstream holidays, such as Christmas, Halloween and Valentine’s Day, have, according to Solomon (1996), been redefined or altered to reflect greater diversity and inclusiveness. His interviews with teachers indicate that these events have been, and continue to be, a preoccupation for educators but have shifted in response to multicultural discourse. (p. 69) The interviews examined here offer a detailed picture of the cultural battles underlying the push toward multicultural recognition. While traditional events are sometimes given untraditional names and altered to include more ‘cultural groups’, they are cherished and protected as part of a Canadian ‘core culture.’ (Mackey, 1998, p. 15) They are sometimes also overtly deployed to foster a greater commitment to Canada among newcomer students. Additional events are included to recognize student diversity and to celebrate multiculturalism. The narratives analyzed below highlight a variety of tensions experienced by teachers interested in equitable practices. This chapter builds on the work of Mackey (1998), Coleman (2006), Brown (2006) and Thobani (2007) to show how multiculturalism continues to enable nation-building and the centering of an invisible Anglo white culture in schools. While some teachers, it is clear, advocate for more equitable forms of cultural pluralism, the tensions expressed highlight the continued predominance of Anglo white norms and modes of citizenship.

**Multicultural civility**

Coleman (2006) argues that Canadian white civility, as a discursive project, functions through flexibility and ambiguity to organize diverse populations around notions of whiteness, masculinity and Britishness. (p. 10) This section examines teacher reflections about the meanings of multiculturalism to illustrate how claims, tensions and contradictions operate collectively to lend support to the nation-building project of white civility. Mariam, for example, characterized Canada’s notion of multiculturalism in the following way:

The feeling in the States is that it’s a melting pot, you assimilate. Whereas here it’s maybe a cultural mosaic where you are an independent individual with your own unique ideas and practices and whatnot and you come to Canada where it should be accepted. And the general theme is acceptance and understanding that there’s diversity. Not necessarily having to assimilate to it but understanding that it exists. And respect that your neighbour doesn’t come from the same background as you but we’re in a common space and we all have certain rights in a common space.
Mariam’s statement supports Mackey’s (1998) finding that multiculturalism serves popularly to differentiate Canada from the United States. (p. 15) It suggests that, whereas American public and political culture emphasizes assimilation, Canada emphasizes acceptance of difference and respect. The statement may betray a misgiving about the reality of multicultural tolerance in the comment that cultural practices “should be accepted” and not are accepted, but Mariam shifted quickly back to the general “theme” of acceptance. Mariam’s statement is noteworthy for its emphasis on individualism and private expression. People are individuals with unique ideas and practices, as opposed to members of communities with collective ideas and practices. They are also required to respect collective rights in public space, relegating cultural practice to the individual and the private. Mariam made explicit what Brown (2006) argues about the discourse of tolerance: that those constituted as “different” can only be tolerated so long as their they live and practice difference in a private and depoliticized form. (p. 171) In Mariam’s characterization, multiculturalism makes Canada more accepting and perhaps superior to the United States, it allows people to do what they like in private, but it does not disturb the “common space” of the nation.

Zaida offered a long comment about the ambiguity of multiculturalism that bears quoting in full:

I think that’s a word people don’t use so much anymore. I remember hearing it a lot when I was younger but that’s one of the words that has shifted; so before it used to be multiculturalism now I think inclusion would be a pretty word and it’s all politically correct but before I think that meant… I think for a lot of people it meant being separate from Americans in that it’s not a melting pot so keeping some difference and that was okay. And I still kind of like that feeling about Canada, and I think that’s important for me. That’s what it is to be Canadian, that I can be what I am and be Canadian, that I don’t have to assimilate. But I think assimilation is more what we’re pushing our kids into. But I think the multicultural [sic] was on the surface which is why I had issue with all these assemblies. It was all: What’s your clothing? What’s your food? What’s your language? And I think it’s so much more than the sum of somebody’s food, clothing or language. [sic] Any of us are. Because so many of us have so much more of a complicated history.

Zaida observed that the language around cultural recognition and equity has shifted so that the term ‘inclusion’ currently seems more prevalent. Her description of ‘inclusion’ as a “pretty word” and “politically correct” suggests that the notion of multiculturalism has historically been rife with tensions. Sara Ahmed (2000), in her analysis of the Australian multicultural policy illustrates that multiculturalism serves to incorporate strangers into the nation by, among other things, erasing distinctions between racialized groups. (p. 95) The word ‘inclusion’ in Zaida’s
example does much the same work. An inclusive nation can allow certain differences to be incorporated into the collective of the nation but can simultaneously conceal those differences. Zaida commented, like Mariam and others, that multiculturalism serves to differentiate Canadian approaches to cultural integration from perceived American assimilationism. She noted that she has appreciated “the feeling” that it is acceptable in Canada to maintain a sense of cultural distinctiveness but then indicated in passing that she feels “kids” are “pushed” into assimilation. Once again, this exposes the discursive work of multiculturalism in that the “feeling” that difference is acceptable is maintained in spite of her own observation that assimilation may, in fact, be what is practiced. Multiculturalism allows Zaida, and all of the teachers, to feel good about Canada’s tolerance and civility and in doing so strengthens their commitment to the nation. Zaida’s final comments recall Thobani’s (2007) point that multiculturalism over-determines culture as a mode of self-identification. (p. 175)

Joan’s characterization of multiculturalism also emphasizes Canadian distinctiveness as compared to the United States but she begins to connect multicultural ideals to social justice.

...America sees itself as the great melting pot, which is: everybody becomes an American, everybody acts like an American. Whereas I think we are, at least in Toronto, we try to get more of a multicultural thing. I don’t know where it came from in me, it’s just the social justice bit. I’m not a confrontational person, I don’t do well in confrontations so I don’t usually go to, like the teacher who said to this little girl ‘I don’t care if you think you’re not supposed to sit next to boys, you sit where I tell you and that’s next to a boy.’ Rather than trying to address the child on her level and saying ‘here the expectation is that everybody works together, I understand that it may be odd for you if you’ve never done this before but here this is the expectation and when you get a job in the real world that will also be the expectation.’

This example presents a teacher who forces a female child to sit next to boys in class (in spite of the child or family’s culture-related objections) as analogous to America forcing people to act American. In the example Joan is aligned with Canada or “at least Toronto,” which has a more multicultural approach. The implication of the example is that the multicultural approach is preferable to her, personally, because of her aversion to confrontation. There is also an implication that her approach is superior because it shows more respect and understanding in “address(ing) the child on her level.” Canada, in this example, is more gentle and less aggressive than America. Rather than imposing a dominant culture on those who have been culturally ‘othered’, multiculturalism respectfully ushers them towards the cultural expectations through
understanding and reason. Tolerance functions then, not to accept or maintain pluralistic differences, but to erase them gently.

Rahana, in a comment about the imposition of cultural norms on newcomer students, said:

So I think, yes, you can bring up things and teach them about things that are particular to Canada in certain areas and talk about symbols and certain cultural practices that have been a norm here to certain cultural groups. But then you have to look at other things too and you have to include their voices in the story, and their background, and their cultural tradition because that is Canada as far as I’m concerned.

When Rahana talked about the “cultural practices that have been a norm here to certain cultural groups,” she was in fact referring to the dominant group, i.e. Anglo whites. She was careful in her language not to talk about a Canadian “core culture.” She implied that she wanted to teach about the voices, stories and backgrounds of her students whom she didn’t feel were represented in the historical norms she referred to at the beginning of her comment. What was at issue for Rahana was not whether to teach the latter set of voices and stories but whether to teach the former, the ones that have been dominant. She argued that it is acceptable to inform newcomer students about these practices but later in the interview said she did not centre Christmas or other holidays in her classroom. “Do I have to make it the focal point of my curriculum? Absolutely not.” The interesting thing about a critical comment like Rahana’s is that it does not function discursively to contest the national project. As Bannerji has argued, those who are ‘othered’ are not entitled to “imagine” or “project the national imaginary.” (p. 65) Thus, while Rahana’s reading of multiculturalism makes more room for herself and her students within the nation, they are discursively included in a tolerant multicultural Canada at the same time as they are excluded from a state that “constantly creates ‘Canadians’ and ‘others’.” (p. 72)

The statements above highlight the flexibility and inconsistency of multicultural discourse. The teachers deploy the term for a wide range of positions from gentle assimilationism to private expression to critical pluralism. As Zaida argued overtly, and Mariam’s comment suggested, the discourse of Canadian multiculturalism may be undergoing a broad shift. While multiculturalism continues to constitute immigrants as “others” and to organize them socially and politically, the discourse of inclusion and notions of privatized difference may be functioning to further detach groups from histories of social struggle. In all cases, however, multiculturalism serves to bind subjects to the state through a commitment to Canadian tolerance and civility.
Christmas and colour lines in multicultural schools

In his 1996 study of teacher perspectives on multicultural and anti-racist education, Solomon found that teachers typically emphasize “ethnocultural celebrations” and “intergroup harmony” in their approach to multicultural education. (p. 68) As noted above, Solomon also found that traditional or mainstream North American holidays have been adapted to reflect greater inclusiveness. There are several salient questions about multicultural celebration as practice and discourse that are not addressed in Solomon’s research, however. If Canadian holidays have been altered or redefined, to what degree has this been so? How have these transformations or shifts been contested or welcomed? What is the symbolic significance of these holidays in relation to other forms of cultural promotion or recognition in schools? These questions are considered here, not to dismiss the important critiques of celebration as a primary mode of multicultural recognition, but to acknowledge the ongoing deployment of celebrations in lieu of anti-racist practices. Moreover, a close examination of the discourse of celebratory multiculturalism offers insight into its modalities and implications. The narratives in this study reveal that some holidays continue to be constituted and promoted as part of a core Canadian culture while other holidays are permitted and tolerated in the name of multiculturalism and in the interests of recognizing and organizing difference. In all, the contestations over celebration, even inclusive celebrations, displace attention from other forms of equitable practice.

The teacher narratives examined here confirm how much elementary school pedagogy is integrated with or organized around holidays and celebrations. Some events are so ubiquitous that teachers did not bother to contextualize them; teachers assumed that I was familiar with events like “Halloween parades” or “Holiday/Christmas singalongs.” Rahana told me that “teachers will integrate Halloween things into the math unit, Christmas things into science…the library is all decorated in a certain way so the children are seeing it all throughout.” Thus, not only are these holidays and festivals acknowledged and celebrated, they are integrated thematically into other aspects of the curriculum so that learning and knowledge are often coloured by these events. Nevertheless, because the observation of holidays is “not in the curriculum,” as participants frequently pointed out, teachers are not legally obligated to participate in or promote them. This meant that teachers felt some degree of freedom in describing their opposition to the way holidays were taken up within their schools.
Several of the teachers expressed concern that “mainstream”, “typical” or “traditional” North American holidays were being deployed to assimilate newcomer students. Yasmine, for example, said that staff in her school were so committed to Christmas that the implicit message was: “kids don’t celebrate it at home then this is the only place they are going to learn about it so they better damn well learn about it.” As an ESL teacher in a school where over eighty percent of the students are newcomers from India, she said:

…as a teacher, ESL-wise, you should value culture and diversity and that kind of stuff and I know I value mine. But at the same time I kind of want them to see the value in the Canadian culture too and I feel a little bit stuck between a rock and a hard place because, while I agree with all the non-minority teachers, all the white teachers, in our school who are all rah-rah for the Halloween and for celebrating Christmas and only those things, the typical Canadian things that they’re aware of, because they think it’s important for the Canadian kids to learn about this. I agree, I do too. I want them to appreciate Canada. But I don’t think that’s just Canada. I think there’s more to it and I don’t like some of the agenda motivation that some people have with trying to push some of those, you know, celebrations…

At work in Yasmine’s statement is a tension analyzed by Wendy Brown in Regulating Aversion (2006). Building on the work of Mamdani, Brown argues that within liberal discourse “premoderns” are seen to be “driven by culture” whereas “moderns” “cherish and defend culture.” (p. 20) Yasmine seemed to recognize this asymmetry in some ways when she questioned the “agenda” behind white teachers “pushing” or defending specific forms of national celebration. At the same time she described “culture and diversity” as things that ESL teachers should value. This statement implies that newcomer ESL students embody culture and diversity. She was stuck, therefore between the desire to defend Canadian culture and the desire to respect ESL students, particularly in light of her sense that white teachers had an agenda. Her feeling of tension was explained further when she described a discussion among her colleagues about renaming the Christmas event:

…the celebration of lights or whatever it was, or holiday celebrations, and not actually calling it a Christmas concert. Things like that. And boy were some of those minority teachers beat down and silenced. And as soon as that happened no one ever said ‘boo’ again because it was a very strong political message to anyone who wasn’t white that this is how it’s going to be and this is what it means to, in our school, to learn to be Canadian.

Rahana had a similar debate with an administrator at her school in another region of the Toronto area. She paraphrased comments she made to her principal in the following way:

‘What is this? Come on, the majority of our kids are Muslim, ninety-five percent of them are Muslim. Holiday singalong?’ I said, ‘What is this about?’ And I put things very
politely and she said, ‘Well, you know, we felt that it was very important for the kids to learn about Canadian traditions.’

I argue that there are two possible readings of the contestations that occur over renaming and implementing “traditional” Canadian cultural events. One stems from Mackey’s (1998) argument that ‘core Canadian culture’ is “fragile and crisis-ridden.” (p. 22) ‘Core culture’, which is usually invisible, is named and enforced in schools when its dominance is threatened. Mackey argues that “tolerance can and does shift easily into intolerance and a defence of a white unmarked Canadian identity.” (p. 118) In Yasmine’s example, the confrontation over Christmas was overtly described as a colour line for “anyone who wasn’t white that this is how it’s going to be.” A second way of reading how Christmas functions in these narratives is as a means of inculcating tolerance. Christmas serves as a pedagogy of white civility by demanding a form of liberal tolerance believed to be alien to newcomer students. Participating in Christmas, or at least tolerating exposure to Christmas-related events, serves as a means of developing and showing Canadian-ness. As Brown (2006) argues liberal societies see themselves as “…producing the moral and intellectual autonomy of the individual to self-determine the extent of his or her participation in culture(s)…” (p. 167) Thus, by learning to tolerate Christmas, students are freeing themselves from the domination of “nonliberal” culture in order to be able to choose to participate in liberal culture(s).

Anne did not share Yasmine and Rahana’s concern that promoting Christmas was akin to assimilationism. She described an incident in which she came upon a Jewish teacher decorating the school Christmas tree along with her class of “new immigrants to Canada.” She described the incident as “funny” because the Jewish teacher was uncertain about whether or not she was decorating correctly. Anne said that the teacher wanted to decorate the tree with her class because, “She said, ‘it would be great for my students because I don’t know how many of them celebrate Christmas but it would be interesting for them to see, you know, if you celebrate Christmas this is what you do.’” While Yasmine and Rahana presented the imposition of Christmas festivities on their newcomer students as an “agenda” intended to force students into assimilation, Anne’s characterization presents participation in tree decorating as a valuable exposure to an unfamiliar practice. This exposes the challenge of protecting the rights of minority students not to be acculturated into dominant norms while still upholding a commitment to pluralism through cultural exchange.
Joan said she has always struggled with addressing Christmas in school because she is “marginally Jewish” and described her tensions in the following way:

“I’ve had this discussion/argument with many people saying, ‘Why do we have a Christmas tree in our lobby?’ ‘Well it’s just part of Canadian culture.’ ‘No it’s not, well it sort of is.’ …it doesn’t have a cross on the top. I guess that’s better than nothing. Well it’s all festive, well we have to be festive because it is a predominantly Christian culture. And I’m a little cynical and so I’ll actually say to the kids, ‘You know there’s a Christmas tree here, that’s because this culture is still predominantly Christian and the Christian holidays have kind of become the public holidays and even though Toronto anyway is not primarily a Christian city, that’s still the way it is.’ I’m not going to belabour the point because I’m not going take away their enjoyment or their desire to buy into the Sears Christmas stereotype and ask their parents for lots of presents. Nothing I say is going to affect the TV showing all these great new toys…”

Joan’s statement suggests an uncertainty about whether Christmas should be understood or taken up as part of ‘Canadian culture,’ unlike some of the earlier comments that argued that Christmas is particular to specific cultural and religious groups. Joan addressed the apparent contradiction of having a Christmas tree in a space with few Christians by drawing it to her students’ attention and explaining it as a tradition that may have lost its meaning. This was perhaps a way of distancing herself and her students from the pressure to identify with or value the tradition. She went on to say that she didn’t want to detract from her students’ pleasure in the commercial aspects of the holiday. In this narrative “core culture” is presented as “the way it is” and therefore uncontestable. At the same time, it has come to signify festiveness and enjoyment, which naturally she would not want to undermine. As Ahmed (2010) argues, “happiness” is a “technology of citizenship” that “binds migrants to the national ideal.” (p. 133) Ahmed’s analysis of the British film *Bend it Like Beckham* shows that migrants are discursively tied to customs that hinder their freedom whereas nationals are individualized and free. She argues that migrants are construed as melancholic because they “won’t let go of racism as a script that explains suffering.” (p. 143) The happy migrant is the one who puts racism behind as an explanation for suffering in exchange for loyalty to the nation. The reality of the migrant experience, of course, is more complex, as Joan’s comments about her students’ participation in Christmas may suggest. Migrants participate in dominant holidays or resist them in any number of ways and for any number of reasons. Joan’s comments highlight a particular concern for anti-racist educators, however. The implication that a politicized response to the Christmas tree will interfere with the enjoyment of presents, which is presumed to be universal, can serve to undermine the opportunity for greater criticism. The association of Christmas with pleasure and
pleasure with universalism can serve to conceal the political questions about which cultural norms are advanced by whom and to what ends.

Mackey (1998) argues that white Canadians who typically understand themselves as culturally unmarked, assert and mobilize their white identities when faced with minorities who cross a ‘fine line’ of cultural expression. (pp.117-8) In schools, the battle over whom to recognize and to what degree highlights the struggle over the management of difference in multicultural discourse. Anne argues that:

In my understanding if you’re going to recognize one over and above somebody else then that’s going to be an issue. You either have to recognize all of it, you have to mention all of it, or you have to recognize none. Because I can see many people getting upset with the fact that something that’s a tradition so-to-speak in North America is no longer recognized the way it was, yet they’re being asked to recognize everything else within that month period. So we’re downplaying Halloween but we’re up-playing [sic] x-y-z. So some people do get quite upset about it and it’s like, as I’ve said to people, it’s like if we’re going to recognize everything, that’s what we’re going to do. And that means we say, ‘In North America some people celebrate Halloween. They do this.’

Anne’s statement, like Mariam’s above, insists on cultural parity. Multiculturalism is recognizing everybody equally. The statement indicates that what is under threat, what is “downplayed”, is “North American” tradition. Teachers, according to Anne, are asked to recognize “everything else” and they consequently get upset. This concern is supported by Solomon’s (1996) data illustrating pervasive teacher concern about the encroachment of multiculturalism on Canadian culture. (p. 70) The fear that North American “tradition is no longer recognized the way that it was” can be read as a fear about the loss of dominance or centrality for Anglo white norms. While acknowledging everyone equally may appear to be a reasonable, fair and civil approach, its effect is to re-centre those holidays already produced throughout Canada as “typical” and “Canadian.”

**Cultural recognition: Halloween versus multicultures**

One of the interesting things about Anne’s narrative above is that it does not distinguish between forms of recognition. Her example about Halloween suggests that what takes place is simply the provision of information, “We say, ‘in North America some people celebrate Halloween. They do this.’” Anne’s narrative also raises the question of what is included in her claim to recognize ‘everything’. I asked her, for example, how Aboriginal histories and cultures were recognized and she mentioned some lesson plans related to specific strands of the
curriculum. In this section, therefore, I contrast the practices relating to Halloween, which every teacher mentioned as a source of contestation, with “multicultural” celebrations to highlight the varied modalities of cultural promotion and recognition. Mariam bluntly articulated her opposition to one Halloween-related practice:

   One thing that happens in the school that I don’t like is when they have Halloween costume parades. I think that puts pressure on the kids and the parents in the community thinking that that’s something they need to do. It’s not and it shouldn’t be something in the school that kids are expected to take part in.

This example makes clear that the ‘recognition’ of Halloween involves more than informing students about its practices. Rather, it includes requiring them to physically participate by wearing costumes and marching in a parade. Mariam contrasted Halloween with her school’s approach to Eid: “You know, I celebrate Eid. Ninety percent of the school celebrates Eid. We talk about it and the teachers in the school talk about it. They turn it into activities which is nice, but there’s no Eid parade.” The phrase “which is nice” within Mariam’s comment highlights the relationship between core culture and multicultures. Core culture is something that is presumed to be necessary and is actively enforced whereas the multicultural is acknowledged as a favour for which members of the acknowledged group are expected to be thankful. Mariam’s statement “there’s no Eid parade” also reinforces that the activities deployed to promote ‘multicultures’ in her school are not equal in scale to the activities deployed to promote ‘core culture’.

   Some of the teachers mentioned that their schools hold “Chinese dragon parades” in addition to Halloween parades, which might suggest that students are actively initiated into non-dominant cultural practices. It is worth scrutinizing the relative implications of these two events. The dragon parade is associated with China and is therefore presented as ‘different’. Thobani (2007), drawing on Hage, argues that nationals often participate in the consumption of ‘other’ cultures as a form of self-enrichment. (p. 169) Participation in the parade can thus be understood as the consumption of the ‘other’ within multiculturalism. Halloween, by contrast, operates like Christmas, as a mode of white civility, ushering students on the path to Canadian-ness. This is evident in the narratives of Zaida and Rahana who described separate incidents they witnessed in which a teacher forced a child to wear a costume in spite of the child’s nonobservance of the holiday. The tension between ‘core culture’ and ‘multicultures’ is further illustrated by an incident recounted by Sarah. She described a debate in the staffroom at her school that arose after teachers were asked by school administration not to dress up for Halloween. One teacher
said in frustration “they can wear their… costumes” in reference to the clothing worn by some newcomer students. These examples again highlight the difference between the enforcement of Canadian culture that takes place around holidays constituted as part of ‘Canadian core culture’ and other forms of recognition that occur for those events not constituted as part of ‘core culture.’

One additional point about the different modalities of cultural recognition was highlighted by Zaida who described being asked “What do you do to represent Muslims?” by teachers who were trying to do ‘inclusive’ activities with their classes. Zaida said that after consulting her, teachers began to include “a moon and star activity” in their arts classes. The question required Zaida to contrive and present some accessible version of her ‘culture’ simple enough for a small lesson. This example points to the way multiculturalism can empty notions of culture to reduce them mere symbolism. Mackey (1998) argues that multicultural policy in Canada constructed a core Canadian national culture as a ‘whole way of life’ and ‘multicultures’ that “exist as fragments of culture, only valued for the ways in which they contribute to this ‘whole way of life’ of the national core.” (p. 79) Zaida’s example highlights how cultures become tangible fragments and how these fragments function to augment the school/nation’s sense of itself as diverse and inclusive.

Several teachers mentioned that they individually refused to participate in Halloween celebrations with their classes to respect the students or families who would not be participating for religious or cultural reasons. I will briefly look at Zaida’s narrative to highlight some of the ways teachers resist the imposition of dominant culture. Zaida said:

I had two or three families who kept their children home because they didn’t want them around the whole Halloween thing. I said, ‘I don’t do Halloween in my classroom.’…I said, ‘I’m going to talk about the safety piece of it, if the children want to come dressed up, they can come dressed up and we’ll comment and enjoy their costumes and we’ll talk about what they’re dressed [sic] but I said I’m not doing a Halloween activity or a Halloween party in my classroom.’ But the other two classes were and they had a parade.

Rather than integrating Halloween into her curriculum with activities or actively celebrating it with festivities, Zaida used it as an opportunity to talk about safety. She permitted students to wear costumes and said she would take some time to acknowledge them. While this may seem like a minor act of resistance, it highlights the limited forms of action available to teachers who want to challenge the imposition of dominant white culture.
This section and the one above sought to map the discourses of culture, multiculturalism and tolerance in schools. These sections illustrate the way schools function in the production and organization of ‘Canadians’ and ‘others’. The narratives reveal that, in spite of professed commitments to multiculturalism, certain holidays continue to signify a ‘core Canadian culture’ that must be defended and promoted. These ‘core’ holidays are used to usher students on the path to civility by demanding the suppression of their ‘premodern’ cultural chauvinisms in the interests of commitment to liberal ideals. Core celebrations may also function through the ‘universalizing’ notions of pleasure and happiness, to sublimate concerns about racism or social inequality and to bind students to the nation.

While teachers, particularly teachers of colour, expressed a great of resistance to specific forms of cultural promotion and some advocated for equitable forms of cultural pluralism, I was surprised by how much of the discussions centered on ‘cultural recognition’. Bannerji (2000) critiques the pervasive use of the phrase “the politics of recognition” within the field of education for its commitment to “cultural sensitivity” and questions of identity as opposed to more critical forms of pedagogy. (p. 127) I argue that the emphasis on festive practices within public schools in combination with multiculturalism’s spirit of celebration determines the debate. In other words, if schools already teach culture through celebration, it is reasonable that teachers interested in equity will contest the specific modes of celebration and/or propose other forms of celebration. Thus prevailing school cultures and multiculturalism in particular determine cultural recognition as a primary mode of ‘equitable’ practice. The pedagogy of celebration becomes a series of contestations over dominant and non-dominant cultural practices. For many teachers of colour the challenge is how to negotiate the powerful notions of cultural parity, pleasure and consumerism that serve to conceal the dominance of Canadian core culture.

**Teachers of colour as multicultural advocates**

As has already been suggested, multiculturalism serves to reduce culture to the festive and the symbolic. Schools therefore most often recognize difference through dance, music, costumes and crafts. Sarah, for example, mentioned that her school’s “global focus” included “ballet Creole performances.” Zaida’s school had an African Canadian festival for African history month. Anne was not specific about how but said: “month by month we recognize so many different holidays and so many different traditions and so many different cultures that that’s sort of become Canadian.” These examples reinforce earlier critiques that difference is
constituted as consumable and self-enriching for the ‘un-different’. In light of the above discussion of the centrality of dominant white ‘core culture’, however, teachers of colour often feel a responsibility to advocate for greater recognition for non-dominant cultural norms. While such events can be significant for minoritized students, Solomon (1996), citing Quantz and O’Connor, they serve merely as a temporary suspension of dominant culture. (p. 69) This section examines the effects of these modes of cultural celebration on the teachers responsible for them.

According to the teacher participants who were interviewed, equity committees comprised largely of volunteer teachers of colour end up with the task of ensuring that (non-dominant) ‘cultural events’ are scheduled and coordinated. Some teachers said they were asked by administrators to join equity committees, while others said they were moved to do so because of a desire to see more ‘inclusive’ practices in their schools. Zaida described the difficult position she often found herself in spite of her involvement with the equity committee:

> Every year we look at the calendar and figure out when things are happening and I’m always the lone teacher who stands up and says can we not have…whatever big event because. It’s the end of Ramadan and the kids are all going to be away. You’re going to lose a percentage of your class including me and a few other staff members. And every year I have to have that conversation and every year I have to stand up and make a point of saying have you looked at the other calendars? … I always felt like I was the person…do I speak up or do I just stay quiet?

Zaida was in the position of having to remind her staff of significant events that might interfere with regular planning or that needed recognition. Her example highlights that these events are not at the forefront of school planning in the way ‘core cultural’ events obviously are.

Equity committees often function to pit non-white teachers, as defenders of “multicultures” against white teachers as defenders of ‘core culture’. Yasmine offered one overt example of such a contest:

> Olympics happened in February and during the same month of Black History. I happened to be on the Black History committee and we had come up with some ideas and events for that month. And we said we would like to hold an assembly, a concert kind of thing, at the end of the month to celebrate some of the stuff that we would be learning. And that was shot down because February was all about the big Olympics and since it was happening in Canada it had to take precedence over any kind of Black History initiatives. So that was that.

Because ‘equity’-related or multicultural celebrations depend on the receptiveness of colleagues outside the committees, they are contingent on staff willingness to surrender the necessary curricular time. According to participants, this was the usual source of contention about
‘multicultural’ events. In the case highlighted by Yasmine, however, it seems that white teachers who formed the majority sought to promote the Olympics as a ‘core cultural’ event, thereby dismissing ‘multicultural’ Black History celebrations as superfluous.

While Yasmine’s example presents an explicit struggle over the importance of ‘core’ versus ‘multicultural’ events, Zaida offered an example in which teachers did not want to hear about equity-related issues because of the time constraints of staff meetings.

There’s some staff that just think ‘don’t talk during a staff meeting because we just want to leave at four o’clock.’ And we never left at four o’clock but when you get up and say something you’re going to slow me down and they roll their eyes.

In this instance the mention of equity is a nuisance because it takes up time during meetings when teachers want to end their workday and go home. The implication is also that addressing equity is irrelevant or unnecessary.

Another obvious implication of relying on volunteer-based equity committees to defend ‘multicultural’ celebrations is that if there are no volunteers, the events will simply not happen. Anne noted that in her school: “There was a committee that basically recognized all the holidays and would have little assemblies and things and presentations and bulletin boards and things like that. So this year we didn’t have a committee for some reason.”

I offer one more comment from Zaida’s narrative to highlight the challenge of prioritizing equity events:

When I was on that equity committee, I started to understand how much money we spent for the… African Canadian festival and that was in January or February. The other part is, if you have these wonderful events, and some of them are wonderful, it takes away from something else. That means I didn’t teach my social studies my way, or I didn’t teach language, or I didn’t teach French - whatever hasn’t been taught. And there’s no way for them to make up that time. But this is important too … That’s the tension for me. It’s all important but is there really time for all of it? Are we really covering any of it in a decent way? Sure we can celebrate this and it’s nice but does it really help me understand what a person from Africa goes through? No. And we don’t feel like we can talk about the other side of it either, about how most of the people in Africa don’t have food and decent water. Not so great of a conversation with a six year old. And some of those six year olds are the kids who came from places…I had kids who didn’t have socks… I said, ‘Honey where are your socks?’ And this little one said, ‘I gave them to my sister.’ That to me is way more important - teaching and supporting kids so that they’re ready to learn than spending six hundred dollars on drummers for an afternoon.

Zaida’s statement highlights all of the priorities equity committees must balance. Although her comments emphasized her own struggles with these priorities, as Yasmine’s comment indicates,
equity committees are also accountable to other staff. Thus equity committee members must justify the teaching time that is sacrificed, the value of the event in serving its purported purpose, the social realities that are concealed through the emphasis on a particular form of celebration, as well as the material cost of the event.

The official policy of multiculturalism, Bannerji (2000) has argued, permitted the state to transcend the “partisan interests” of the cultural groups within its borders. (p. 74) The approach to multiculturalism taken by school administrators as described by these participants seems to indicate a similar tact. By consigning the task of promoting multicultural festivities to committees comprised largely of non-white teachers, they allow the school to continue to be imagined as white. They permit white teachers to defend ‘core cultural’ practices against incursions by multiculturalists. Most importantly, in the context of celebratory culture, they remove any meaningful modes of redressing colonialism and racism from the discussion.

That it is possible to write a chapter about multiculturalism with hardly a mention of the Canada’s fundamental injustice – colonialism – highlights how effectively this discourse detracts from questions of justice and histories of social struggle. The narratives offered by these teachers illustrate how multiculturalism continues to constitute and organize difference in Canadian schools. While terms like equity and inclusion have come to replace multiculturalism in practice, multiculturalism discursively binds citizens to the nation by sustaining its sense of unique tolerance. Through multicultural discourse, Canada has ontologized ‘culture’ and ‘strangers’ thereby sustaining white supremacy through the hegemony of liberal Anglo white ideals. Holidays and festivals in schools function to usher newcomer students towards multicultural civility, inculcating loyalty to the nation and appropriate forms of tolerance. Multiculturalism also serves to reduce ‘multicultures’ to consumable, assimilable festivals. As a discourse it permits only ‘cultural recognition’ and ‘cultural sensitivity’ as modes of responding to ‘difference’. Thus, even critical teachers end up as advocates battling for greater ‘cultural recognition’ for newcomer students.
CHAPTER SIX

Professionalism and respectability: The governmentality of white civility

The previous chapters explored how investments in citizenship and multiculturalism serve to undermine the equity objectives of elementary school educators. This chapter uses Foucault’s notion of governmentality to examine the ways that neoliberal rationalities work on and through female teachers as professionals. Much has been written about neoliberal governmentality, about the way the political and economic rationality of neoliberalism functions in the constitution, self-constitution and organization of subjects within the liberal state. As argued in chapter three, the project of whiteness and tolerance, or Canadian civility as I have termed it, operates conjointly with neoliberalism. After elaborating Foucault’s notion of governmentality, I examine the work of Goldberg (2009) and Mbembe (2001) to address how the notion of civility disperses political power. This chapter is also informed by Fellows and Razack’s (1998) conceptualization of ‘respectability’ and Popkewitz’s (1994) discussion of teacher professionalization.

Foucault defines ‘government’ most plainly as the “conduct of conduct.” (Foucault, 1978, p. 93) He argues that the state has been ‘governmentalized’, by which he means that increasingly non-juridical institutions and tactics operate to organize, regulate, and control the population. (p. 104) Governmentality, according to Brown (2006), can be thought of as “the powers and rationalities governing individual subjects and the populace as a whole (which) operate through a range of nonpolitical knowledges and institutions.” (p. 79) Brown contests Foucault’s argument that the state has been “over-privileged” within modern analyses of power, contending instead that state legitimation is among the main goals of political power. She argues, therefore, that while political power and modes of governance may be diffuse, the state is “singularly accountable” for these operations. (p. 83) Following Brown, I want to emphasize that the technologies and rationalities analyzed in this chapter are valuable not only for highlighting the diffusion of political power and knowledges, but for how they serve the state-legitimizing project of white civility.

To explore the relationship between the state, civil society, and civility, I turn to Mbembe (2001). In a partial genealogy of the notion of civility, Mbembe illustrates that civil society emerged in Europe to manage the violence of arbitrary rule and to distinguish ‘public lordship’
from ‘private lordship.’ (p. 36) Civility was the means through which the nobility projected their rank and power and these manners began to spread through society as the bourgeois elites mimicked them. This competitive push for marks of distinction led to the general proliferation of self-controlled behaviour and respect for contracts, reducing the need for brute force. As the means of violence and other forms of power became concentrated in the state, the state began to legitimize itself through the production of spaces of autonomy known as civil society. (pp. 38-9)

Although Mbembe is arguing within the European feudal context, some of these points can be generalized to North America. The key point, as reinforced by Goldberg (2009) is that “civil society both fuels and is underpinned by the state.” (p. 39) Thus, civility functions through the institutions of civil society as a mode of governmentality to disseminate those social arrangements, attitudes and behaviours that secure the stability of the state. Civility is the logic of state control individualized and naturalized. The narratives of teachers offer a useful glimpse into those modes of governmentality and the technologies through which state logic circulates.

Fellows and Razack (1998) argue that the notion of respectability was also central to the formation of the middle class in the same historical context. (p. 345) They illustrate, in addition, that respectability was established through the marking of certain bodies as degenerate and the material and symbolic exploitation of those bodies. By examining the hierarchical relations between women at the time, they argue that a woman’s ‘toehold on respectability’ was maintained through the economic and sexual exploitation of other classes of women as well as through their disavowal. (pp. 348-9) The crucial point for this study is that teachers are produced and produce themselves as respectable, dominant professionals. Fellows and Razack state, “If, as women, our liberation leaves intact the subordination of other women, we have not achieved liberation, but only a toehold on respectability.” (p. 350) I argue that the markers of status that serve to legitimize teachers and enable their claims to respectability function to undermine their efforts to pursue equity for their students, in their schools and in society more broadly.

Popkewitz (1994) argues in his examination of the history of teacher professionalization that the creation of ‘professions’ secures specific values and interests. He points out that the professionalization of teaching in the late nineteenth century in America served to idealize it as an altruistic occupation and conceal its political dimensions. (p. 2) In the early twentieth century professionalization hierarchized education in order to produce paths to advancement for males. (p. 4) Professionalization typically functions to signify a high level of training, competence, and specialization to the public in order to secure public trust while simultaneously conferring status
on professionals. (p. 3) He argues that the reforms undertaken in the U.S. in the late 1980s and early 1990s standardized curricula placing responsibility for its development in the hands of ‘experts’ while constituting teachers as classroom managers. Although he does not use the term neoliberalism, he points out that the reforms increased teacher workload and heightened ‘accountability’ through greater monitoring and “rational approaches to school improvement.” (p. 4) In Ontario similar reforms were undertaken in the late 1990s with similar effects. (Dehli & Fumia, 2002) The analysis that follows is concerned with the neoliberal professionalization of teachers as neoliberalism continues to inform the ways teachers are constituted and self-constituted.

This chapter examines the governmentality of neoliberalism and civility that functions within teacher narratives to inform their subjectivity as professionals. I begin with an analysis of notions of teacher competence – specifically goodness, knowledge and efficiency to illustrate how it is underpinned by whiteness. I then examine the way teachers of colour highlight merit and deny their experiences of racism in order to constitute themselves as worthy and acceptable educators. Finally, I examine instances in which teachers of colour distance themselves from their non-white students to approximate white civility. As Malinda Smith (2010) writes in her study of whiteness in academia:

Governmentality draws our attention to the ways in which an individual learns to modify her own conduct and to perform according to the new rationality not only because of the risk of institutional punishment, but also because she internalizes the new rationality and conduct as integral to the ideal-type academic self. (p. 47)

**Teacher competencies**

Davies and Bansel (2007) argue that the field of education has “been reconfigured to produce the highly individualized, responsibilized subjects who have become ‘entrepreneurial actors across all aspects of their lives.” (p. 248) These individuals, they argue, have been shaped in such a way that they “desire to be morally worthy” “successful entrepreneurs” who can “can produce the best for themselves and their families.” (p. 251) Smith (2010) points out that academics are governed by “instrumental rationality” and “audit culture,” a point that is equally relevant for elementary and secondary school educators. (p. 47) However, for teachers, along with the competencies that can be instrumentalized are notions of moral virtue that must be exhibited but are much more difficult to measure. Members of the teaching profession, and female teachers in particular, have historically been required to demonstrate altruism through
caring and nurturance. (Acker, 1995) In this study, teachers produced themselves as moral examples to students. For instance, Sarah told me:

I think my role would be in one word, it would just be, I’m a model. I know I hear that all the time in teacher’s college. You have to model your behavioural expectations, you have to model this, you’ve got to model that.

She emphasized that modeling is what she was taught in teacher training and also how she takes herself up as a teacher. Although teachers are expected to constitute themselves as good people worthy of being emulated, the substantive modes of goodness expected are harder to describe.

Joan, a white teacher, when asked about how she understands her role, said:

When you asked me the question, the first thing that came to my mind was ‘ambassador.’ That’s the word that popped into my mind. I couldn’t tell you what I’m an ambassador for though. Right-thinking people? People who believe that… You know, am I different than the bigot who believes that the world should be her way, you know, that this is a sin and this is a sin because the Bible says so? I don’t know. I don’t know, you get into the whole philosophy of what’s right…. So I guess in a way I’m an ambassador, I have to go with that because it’s the first thing that popped into my mind when you asked the question. That representing - so that the way I act, the way I treat them, the fact that I always say ‘please’ even if I’m screaming at them. (Laughs.)

Joan’s statement illustrates how difficult it is to claim to be ‘good’ without addressing the principles that define goodness. She seems to have started to elaborate on how she came to think about being an ambassador of “right-thinking people” but recognized that even bigots think of themselves that way and backed away from the statement with a more general comment about modeling ‘polite’ behaviour. She went on to say:

Treating the kids as people and that’s for me - that really is the bottom line. And the other thing for me is that I’m really interested in other cultures and other ways of looking at things. I may not… I’m genuinely interested in a way that precludes me making value judgments. I don’t know what I’ll do when I get some of these kids in the lower in the grades with these parents who had come to me with very strong religious beliefs about what their daughters should or should be allowed to do in class.

Within the context of our discussion, Joan’s response came across to me as open and self-reflective but it is clear that notions of civility and white privilege informed both how she described herself and how she understood her role. In Carol Schick’s (2000) study of white identity, white teachers who had taken a cross-cultural anti-racist course continued to produce themselves as respectable, legitimate and dominant. (p. 85) The discourse at work in Joan’s statement also relies on positive self-production and innocence. Within Joan’s narrative is a tension about whether her liberal values are universally applicable, but the tension does not
undermine her self-characterization as an ambassador of good values. At another point in the interview she said that in teacher’s college:

I remember hearing, oh what’s his name, black activist… and he did a one-time session on equity in the classroom and I asked him ‘what - to you - if you walked into a classroom, what would trigger for you, this is a teacher who is trying to deal with this?’ And he just switched it back to me being privileged, white, and then white privilege. But I was quite serious what would you want to see when you walked into that room?

As Schick argues, the ideal teacher self, as a white, middle-class helper is threatened by a critique of white privilege. (p. 87) Joan, in this statement was eager to find ways to set up an equitable classroom in order to enhance her self-production as a ‘good’ teacher, rather than considering the destabilizing implications of her white privilege.

While Schick found that her participants idealized the role of the teacher as supportive, caring and loving, (p. 91) teachers in this study emphasized guidance, respect and knowledge. Dehli and Fumia (2002) note that when teachers constitute themselves as professionals, they invoke the middle-class, (male) white terms associated with respectability. (p. 11) Joan’s comment in the last paragraph suggested that treating children ‘as people’ was what made her a good ambassador and, by implication, and effective teacher. Zaida offered a similar comment when discussing some of her equity training:

…I’ve been to workshops. Sometimes forced or coerced or encouraged to go. Other times we were given an equity document by a principal. I said ‘I could be the teacher on staff who’s read it but, really, I’m not the person who needs to read it.’ He said, ‘I know but the person who needs to read it, she’s not going to read it.’ What is it telling me? It’s telling me I need to treat my kids with respect. I said, ‘I don’t need to read your book to know to treat kids with respect.’

The willingness to treat young people ‘with respect’ or ‘as people’ in these last two statements is presented as sufficient for ensuring equity. These notions suggest that equity is dispositional; that if teachers have the right attitudes about equity, they are equitable practitioners. Zaida’s self-characterization as a knowledgeable expert reinforces her competence as a teacher. I do not contest the implication that policy documents are often unhelpful in achieving their purported goals. Ahmed and Swan (2006) demonstrate in their study called “Doing Diversity,” for example that, “documents that document racism become measures of good performance.” (p. 97) Zaida, however, implied that other staff members did need to read the equity document so her argument is not that equity documents are useless, only useless to her. She said some of her colleagues “are blatantly racist or blatantly unfair to kids because of who they are or where they come from.
They don’t realize they’re doing it or care they’re doing it.” Her statements position her as racially innocent and, therefore, respectable. Zaida’s claim for respectability through her self-representation as a competent teacher is significant not for what it says about her colleagues but for what it does to her newcomer students. As Fellows and Razack (1998) argue, “attaining (respectability), even one aspect of it, requires the subordination of Others.” (p. 352) The construction of Zaida’s statement makes precisely this point. By distinguishing herself from racist teachers, Zaida casts herself as racially innocent, thereby taking for granted how her own position of privilege and dominance is accomplished and how it might affect newcomer students. When I probed into her comment about whether teachers did not ‘realize’ or did not ‘care’ that they were being racist, she said, “I think sometimes they really don’t know they’re being damn rude.” While her language suggests frustration, it also functions to personalize racism by presenting it as a question of etiquette. The emphasis on knowledge within Zaida’s comment allows anti-racism to be characterized as a professional competency rather than a political shift.

The regulating effects of teacher competence in these examples suggest that as teachers constitute themselves and are constituted as good, innocent, knowing agents they position themselves outside of social relations. Their dominance and privileges serve to bolster their professional competence. Within this discourse inequity is reduced to an absence of knowledge or a personal disposition that needs correction. This enables the ongoing instrumentalization of teacher competencies. In other words, teachers learn themselves as professionals who are or must be good, innocent and knowing. The indicators that they or their colleagues are performing effectively must be measurable and correctable, hence teachers emphasize knowledge that can be augmented or dispositions that can be improved. In this way, acknowledging complicity in systems of oppression is precluded by the rationalities of neoliberalism and professionalism.

As we can see neoliberaism produces self-interested individualism through heightened monitoring and notions of accountability. (Davies & Bansel, 2007, p. 256) Thus far, my argument may suggest that the measures of professional competence are uniform for all teachers, however monitoring is more pronounced for teachers of colour. To highlight this, I will contrast one of Joan’s statements with the comments of two teachers of colour. When I asked Joan about the professional pressures of teaching equitably, she said, “Currently the only pressure I feel is from the principal to make my room neat…I haven’t had to deal with people saying that what I’m teaching is not appropriate.” Rahana, who is a biracial hijab-wearing Muslim woman, on the other hand, alluded to a conflict about Remembrance Day with a colleague. She said:
…during Remembrance Day … I have a unit where I talk about what happened to the 
Japanese and we read Sadako. And we talk about what’s happened, and we talk about 
peace, what we can do, because I don’t want them seeing certain people as heroes when 
it’s not necessarily always heroic…. (Another teacher), his family had gone and fought in 
the war and he felt that that was his focus. I’m not going to argue with him, but don’t 
come to my classroom and tell me that I have to teach it that way. I have a different 
opinion about it.

While both Joan and Rahana are subject to pressures on how to competently perform their jobs, 
only Rahana experiences pressure about what to teach. As a minoritized marked body, Rahana 
cannot hold the position of the idealized objective teacher. Her ‘bias’ can easily be called into 
question. Yasmine explicitly explained that she could not do the equity work she wanted to do 
because she felt her motives would be questioned:

..I don’t think I’m - my school is not ready for me to just shove it down their throat (sic) 
because they are also going to perceive me as just Indian and having an Indian agenda, 
whereas that’s not my thing. I really could care less about any of the Indian stuff. I know 
the kids care a lot so I think it’s necessary.

Yasmine’s statement affirms that she modifies her conduct to conform to the idealized role of the 
‘objective’ white teacher who has ‘no agenda.’ Neither Rahana nor Yasmine is explicit about 
whether anyone has in fact questioned their objectivity but their awareness of that potential 
serves to regulate their conduct. Moreover the demands of approximating whiteness serve to 
regulate the performance of competence in other ways. Mariam, another hijab-wearing Muslim 
teacher, for example, said in a discussion about bullying in the classroom, “I’m a pretty strict 
teacher in my classroom and we all got along fine.” As Popkewitz (1994) points out, throughout 
the last century, the professionalization of teaching has resulted in an emphasis on the 
“administrative skills that we now call ‘classroom management.’” (p. 4) Mariam highlighted her 
classroom as a contained, controlled space of order. To do so, she highlighted her competence 
through notions of authority and firmness. The climate of supervision therefore serves to produce 
conformity to masculinist notions of whiteness such as objectivity, authority and firmness. Dehli 
and Fumia (2002) note that:

the ‘social’ and ‘caring’ dimension of teachers’ work and working identity, 
historically associated with the figure of the woman teacher, must be subordinated 
to the image of the of efficient and organized teacher who can cover the 
curriculum and whose students can meet expectations. (p. 15)

The rationality of efficiency points to the regulatory technology of time management. 
Teachers often cite the statistic that they are responsible for teaching “twenty thousand”
curriculum expectations in a single year, as Sarah pointed out during her interview. The sense of constraint regarding time was present in the narratives of all seven teachers whom I interviewed and affected how they conceptualized equity-related work. Anne explained that equity could only be addressed through the curriculum:

Because we’re being asked to do so much, we’re being asked to do so much within a day. If you’re looking at focusing on (equity) you’re looking at focusing on it through the curriculum unless someone, somewhere, somehow decides this is how you can focus on all you want to focus on and teach the curriculum.

Anne’s suggestion that “someone, somewhere, somehow” must determine how to both address the curriculum and do equity work also highlights that curriculum development is largely outside of the purview of the classroom teacher. Popkewitz (1994) argues that the professionalization of teaching has resulted in the bureaucratization of curriculum and restrictions on teacher responsibility in that domain. (p. 4) It is therefore not surprising that Anne and the other teachers saw time and curricular demands as barriers to equity work. Sarah, in contrast, resisted the notion that she was constrained:

I face the restrictions but I don’t let them impair me and I think that’s what some people do. They see ‘Oh my god, I’m restricted’ and they let themselves be restricted. You can face them, you can be aware of them but if you let them be restrictive, that’s when you actually are restricted. … There’s always room and time for what matters to me and what I feel is the most important so - and most of the time they happen in between lessons than during them so those are the moments I have to take and run.

Sarah had just completed her teacher training at the time of our interview and had not yet held her own classroom. This is not to say that her statements about “restriction” are any less valid than the other teachers’, rather it points to the governmentality of time constraint. The discourse does not work uniformly but nevertheless regulates how all teachers think about their jobs.

In this section I have shown that notions of teacher competence including goodness, knowledge and efficiency function as technologies of governance that serve in the project of civility. Teachers perform themselves in ways that reinforce masculinist whiteness and resist anti-oppressive praxis.

**Colour-blindness, merit and acceptability**

One component of teacher professionalism that warrants separate attention is the notion of merit. Smith (2010) points out that neoliberalism is “comfortable with the liberal myth of
Smith notes, with many other scholars, that the notion of merit serves to conceal racism so that individuals are held personally accountable for conditions that are in fact shaped by systemic injustice. Several of the teachers of colour, even those who acknowledged and contested racisms through other aspects of their discourse, offered statements that denied or concealed how racism affected them personally. Rahana, for example, said: “…for me growing up, I saw how my mother never played any kind of race card, you know what I mean? She was always pushing herself forward....” Thus, even though she may be committed to equity in her classroom, she seemed to apply the logic that merit determined “moving forward” in her own family. She even used the term ‘playing the race card’ which has functioned to silence calls for affirmative action or other forms of social or material restitution. Sarah also talked about never having allowed herself to feel “victimized” and always having been “proud” as a black woman. This points to neoliberalism’s responsibization of the individual. The one who ‘allows’ herself to feel the effects of racism is responsible for the racism. The alternative, it seems, is to construct a “proud” identity that depends on the denial of racism’s effects.

Zaida went even further to argue that race can serve as an advantage for non-white educators seeking promotions. I will quote the dialogue in full.

R: Are there ways that social inequality affects you personally as a teacher and a member of a school community?

Z: Yeah. I think there is. I think the school board has certain things behind the equity push. Like I know if I do a principal qualification, I’ll get a better chance of being principal than someone exactly the same who didn’t look like me. And I sort of have a problem with that because now I’m running into these principals and I’m like, ‘You don’t have the kind of real life experience to be the kind of principal I remember having in the old days.’ And I think those principals really did, so…. And I think they’re all retiring and the new ones are all these fresh faces. And there’s (sic) some really great things about that. It’s wonderful to see principals who look like the students in their schools but I don’t want to get a job because of it.

R: Why do you think that is happening?

Z: I read the equity policy about it a couple of weeks ago. The school board did a survey a couple of years ago. I remember filling it out, I think it was 2006. They did a survey and asked us all to self-identify if we so chose. It was voluntary but they said we should do it… So they did that and now they’re trying to check: Are their hiring practices reflective of the community at large?

R: But why do you think they are less qualified?
Zaida’s initial comments suggested that she was the beneficiary of social inequality because, as she argued, she could be hired over an equally qualified white person on the basis of her race. She indicated that the newer (non-white) principals that she was seeing were evidence of this diversification. While she acknowledged that it was nice to see “principals who look like the students in their schools,” she lamented the loss of the more experienced (white) principals of the ‘old days.’ When I pressed her on whether she was insinuating that the non-white principals were less qualified, she indicated that the inexperience she perceived had to do with changing age demographics and neoliberal changes to the principal’s role. Although her final position was that newer principals were not inexperienced because they were hired merely on the basis of race, her initial comments highlight the importance of meritocracy as a governing rationality for people of colour. In the words of Dei, Karumanchery, and Karumanchery-Luik (2004), the racially oppressed “go along to get along.” (p. 90) While I would agree that proving oneself worthy is important for psychic survival, I would add in the case of teachers of colour that we deny racism and highlight accomplishment through merit in order to reaffirm the legitimacy that is necessary for the respectable teacher.

Mariam offered a lengthy statement highlighting the specific challenge of legitimacy and acceptability for Muslim teachers.

My practicum was at a really ‘hoighty-toighty’ school. Some of the children of the Toronto Maple Leafs went to that school. It’s a public school but it’s within this protected little community with expensive houses all around and the kids in the classroom were white, blonde hair blue eyes, type of classroom (sic) and it was interesting. It was a very rewarding experience because I had never been in that environment. I went to very multicultural schools. And here I’m thrown in this place not far from home, but where no one looks like me and so it was interesting because I could see the parents were - you know social habits were a little different, you know having to explain this or that, whatnot. But it was very nice because the kids were very open. The kids were like, ‘You know Miss, when you first came I didn’t think you spoke English.’ But they bought me a hijab and they all pitched in and this one kid was like ‘I like your hijab today, Miss.’ It’s not a part of his regular vocabulary. So it was a good experience…. This was a very unique type of environment. And I think we both learned from each other so it was nice.
Mariam’s narrative functions to naturalize the difference between the familiar “multicultural” environments in which she had grown up and this “protected little community” that just happened to be white and affluent. She emphasized how “open” the students were to her for acknowledging her ‘cultural difference.’ She backed away from an assertion she was ready to make regarding the parents in order to say she had to explain things to them because “social habits were a little different.” This construction allowed her to emphasize her agency and authority. Her statements cast whiteness as innocent and even noble for tolerating and accepting her as an “other.” By disregarding the reasons that students would make assumptions and assertions about her English proficiency, she was able to cast herself and the experience in a positive light. She was able to both learn and teach, making the experience “interesting”, “rewarding” and “nice.” Like Sarah, she did not allow herself to be “victimized” through a discourse in which she is subjected to the effects of white privilege and cultural dominance. Instead, Mariam continued to produce herself as a competent teacher who engaged in a cultural exchange.

There is likely another dimension to Mariam’s discourse, one with which I am intimately familiar. That dimension is the need for acceptability that governs how we, Muslims have often constituted ourselves since the events of 9/11. Mamdani (2004) cites President George W. Bush’s famous speech given immediately after the 9/11 attacks, to argue that Muslims have been produced as ‘bad’ (terrorists) unless proven otherwise. (p. 15) Reinforcing Mamdani’s point, Thobani (2007) explains that ‘bad’ Muslims can be “guilty by association,” by refusing to perform the role of the secular patriotic citizen. (p. 238) Mariam, by wearing hijab, visibly fails to conform to the role of the secular citizen. Constituted as ‘guilty’ and ‘bad,’ she must prove otherwise. Her emphasis on the how ‘open’ her students were points to her expectation that they would not tolerate her. Brown (2006) argues that tolerance is a political discourse that produces and manages identities. (p. 14) Referencing the same speech as Mamdani, Brown analyzes Bush’s call for tolerance. She argues that the U.S. state placed “itself in a hostile relationship with the community being tolerated.” (p. 95) While this is a specifically American example, the ‘war on terror’ has affected Canada’s Muslim populations as well. (see Razack, 2008) Thus, Mariam’s comfort in her ability to earn the acceptance and approval of her students in spite of her hijab is important to her identity as a Canadian and a teacher.
Rahana was explicit about the pressures to conform to notions of Muslim ‘acceptability’ in her predominantly Muslim school.

I think one of the reasons they hired me when they did was because they saw that I’m Canadian but yet I’m Muslim. I wear the hijab. I’m like that balance that they were trying to seek, right?

Rahana’s statement suggests that she was hired to represent a notion of Muslim acceptability by symbolizing a “balance” between Canadian-ness and Muslim-ness. The implication is that in a school with a large Muslim population, students need to learn appropriate ways to be Muslim and Canadian, something she felt she was expected to model. She explained, as well, that her school had some tensions with certain Muslim parents and went on to say:

I think (the administrator’s) agenda with me too was like, ‘Look we have our good Muslim teacher in the school, she’s practicing, she wears hijab. Come on parents what’s the problem?’

She described a sense that the school was legitimizing itself to concerned parents through her presence as a Muslim. Rahana also detailed pressures she felt from the administration to ‘advocate for what the school wants’ against parents at parent council meetings. She did not directly comment on how she handled these pressures, but described a Muslim colleague who did resist the pressure to perform acceptability:

And there’s one particular teacher who has been teaching at the school over the years and she is an anti-racist educator and she has been challenging these things over the years. But she is always seen as the “bad one”…I mean they respect her, they have to respect her, they have no choice. But, you know, that she is not a favourable person.

When I asked her how this affected her, she said:

My classroom, this is where I have a certain amount of autonomy, this is where I’m going to do what I can do. If there’s something that I see that’s a big injustice, I will write to the admin, I will go speak to them about it and then they have to make a decision. But I’ve felt that I’ve done my part, you know what I mean? Am I going to push, push, push to the point of where I’m stressed? No. Absolutely not. Because I have my family to take care of, right?

Although Rahana did not take herself up as the ‘good’ and ‘acceptable’ Muslim teacher she feels she is expected to be, she did acknowledge the stress involved in being the “bad one” with colleagues and administrators. The regulatory pressure is therefore at work in the way that she limits her actions to the place where she feels she has the most autonomy.
As was suggested in Rahana’s explanation of why she was hired, teachers of colour can ensure their acceptability by performing a particular role as representatives of their communities. It was mentioned in the previous chapter that teachers are often asked to provide information about their ‘cultures’ to assist other teachers in ‘multicultural’ lesson planning. Specifically, Zaida explained that she was called upon to describe Muslim symbols for an art lesson undertaken by her colleagues. Mariam offered another example of being called upon to represent her community by helping teachers determine whether the snacks they provided to students were halal:

And teachers take my opinion, you know, they send over a pack of something and ask ‘can (the Muslim students) eat that?’ or whatever. It’s very respectful and I appreciate the fact that they care enough to ask …It’s nice because the parents don’t have to worry about the teachers just not caring and giving their kids. (sic) And the teachers respect the kids enough to care. And it’s a nice environment where, maybe not everyone does it but the people that I remember teaching around did call up or did come over and ask. And it’s nice that they cared enough to ask or felt comfortable enough to ask.

This puts Mariam in the position of having to speak for all of the Muslim students. By accepting this role Mariam confirms her position as the helpful minority who can represent her community. This position allows her to exercise a certain expertise with her colleagues that they don’t have, thereby offering her a degree of authority and legitimacy. That the position essentializes both her and her students is overlooked within this assistive relationship. The description casts the non-Muslim teachers as tolerant and gracious for their willingness to ask about the foods Muslim students can eat. It casts Mariam as appreciative of the tolerance conferred upon her and her students. It also allows Mariam to swiftly elide the fact that some teachers do not respect the students’ dietary restrictions.

Thobani (2007) argues that immigrants who want to become the multicultural subjects of the nation must deploy their otherness in reassuring and affirming ways. (p. 170) She writes “his/her otherness must be kept under strict control to avoid eliciting disgust, revulsion, or a sense of threat.” For non-white teachers of newcomer students, performing acceptability can involve self-distancing from newcomer students of similar ‘cultural’ groups. For example, Yasmine said of her Indian students: “They’re so into their Bollywood actors and I’m not one of those kind (sic) of girls. I don’t know anything Indian per se.” Mariam offered an example in which she was consulted by her principal about a parental request for water jugs to be placed in the school washrooms. These jugs would allow students to clean themselves with water after
using the toilet, a hygiene practice that is important to many people - in this case South Asian Muslims in particular. She explained her response:

I said, I mean, I know what would happen in the washrooms, it would turn into a mess. If the student is responsible enough, they can take their own bottle…At least that parent felt comfortable. The vice principle was appreciative that that parent felt comfortable enough to bring up that issue with her - such a sensitive issue. She asked me about it, I know what all of us have done, which is that we carry our own. That reduces the litter and the mess that would happen. I mean you can imagine what would have happened in the washrooms. It would have been a mess. Obviously they have the right to do that, so bring it. I don’t know if the school is responsible.

Brown (2006) writes that “the subject of tolerance is tolerated only so long as it does not make a political claim, that is, so long as it lives and practices its ‘difference’ in a depoliticized or private fashion.” (p. 46) Mariam argued that it was not the school’s responsibility to provide jugs, and instead pushed for individual responsibility. By doing so, she was perhaps able to demonstrate that, unlike the families who are still tied to their culture and/or religion in a collective way, she conforms to role of the acceptable, private multicultural citizen. She also demonstrated her helpfulness in willingly offering input to her administrator and also deployed her dominance and authority as a teacher to dismiss the parent’s request. Discursively these gestures can point to the disavowal of a ‘sensitive’, potentially uncivil exhibit of culture with which she could too easily be linked, while on a personal level her approach is reasonable and pragmatic and helps minimize complications for the school.

The role of teacher is taken up differently by each individual educator. Teachers are governed by and govern themselves within competencies such as: goodness, knowledge, guidance, respectfulness, efficiency, merit and helpfulness. Teachers often strive for legitimacy, respectability and acceptability within their field but even when they do not, these notions constrain their choices and govern the types of equity educators they endeavour to be. Professionalism and respectability therefore function to regulate teacher behaviour in ways that serve the nation-legitimizing project of white civility.

I have argued that the regulatory pressures are immense. I hope that by pointing to some of the specific ways that power circulates, we teachers will find more avenues of resistance. I feel deeply implicated in many of the technologies and rationalities I have described. Nevertheless, it is my sense that if we are attuned to the ways we are invested in respectability we have a better chance of recognizing our complicity in the domination of others. In this way,
rather than bolstering the project of whiteness, we can resist civility and work toward an anti-colonial, anti-racist praxis.
CONCLUSION

This study, drawing on theory that problematizes Canadian sovereignty and identity, has challenged some of the ways the schools have assisted in the legitimization of Aboriginal dispossession, white entitlement to the land, and the regulation of non-whites. I have argued that white civility is the racialized discourse that has produced and naturalized a hegemonic Anglo white ethnicity. I have argued that civility also governmentalizes state control through the dispersal and circulation of powers that organize the population and bind it to the state. Chapters two and three addressed aspects of policy and curriculum. They demonstrated the way students are constituted through notions of citizenship as civil, depoliticized, obedient, neoliberal subjects of the state. Scholars of citizenship in education have called for the enhancement of democratic and pluralist principles within school curricula. These calls are useful as a first step to anti-oppressive education, however they are insufficient. I argue that increasing democratic and pluralist commitments in the curriculum only advances anti-colonial, anti-racist pedagogy in so far as it leads to a reorganization of the relationship between peoples, land and government. Decolonization requires a better democracy but it also require more.

Chapters two and three also reviewed civic education in Canadian schools. These chapters highlighted, along with the teacher narratives in chapter four, that schools shy away from addressing controversy and politics, instead teaching government in ways that support the status quo. I argue that civic education is a useful starting point for an anti-oppressive praxis. Teachers can use civics classes to address social relations of dominance and oppression. The grade five curriculum offers spaces for addressing conflict and power in discussions of Canadian history, symbols and institutions. These discussions need not be limited to grade five. It is most important that teachers not use these lessons to re-affirm a commitment to the status quo. In other words, they must be wary of the way the discourse of civility produces notions of Canadian superiority, binds subjects to the state, and presents a narrative of the progressive extension of rights.

While the interviews did not indicate that teachers are using civic education classes as spaces of contestation, the participants did deploy and reinterpret curriculum expectations in order to address racial identification and contest white dominance in other areas. Some teachers are already presenting units that challenge master narratives and the invisibility of white identity. Other teachers are using language classes to talk about equity and relations of domination. Nevertheless, teachers noted the challenge of these undertakings caused by a paucity of resources
and time. It also seemed that teachers were working alone and were reliant on knowledge they had previously acquired. Some teachers had expertise in Canadian history that allowed them to develop critical units. One or two had accumulated strategies and lesson plans through equity organizations that met outside their schools. This suggests the need for broader-reaching anti-racist networks that assist in the development of units covering more aspects of the curriculum. It suggests, as well, the need for more effective ways to share resources. Pre-service education programs need to do much more in assisting teachers to develop the knowledges and strategies necessary for anti-colonial, anti-racist praxis.

Teachers described experiencing some uncertainty about whether it was appropriate to unsettle children’s identities by teaching them narratives that expose their implication in the oppression and domination of others. It is my contention that these racial identifications are largely naturalized in school, therefore teachers should begin to confront them in the classroom. Ontario teachers should avail themselves of the province’s policies and professed commitments to equity and inclusion in order to challenge the production of racialized subjectivities through the curriculum.

One of the limits of my study is that the call for teachers of newcomer students attracted teachers specifically interested in equity for recent migrants. These teachers had very little to say about decolonization and justice for Aboriginal peoples. As I have argued, this is concerning because decolonization must be the foundational question of justice in Canada. The neglect of indigenous concerns in Toronto area schools signals how easy it is for newcomers to become invested in the project of colonization. Educators committed to equity should ensure that decolonization is taken seriously in all schools.

Central to my argument has been the need for teachers to critique the discourse of citizenship so as not to reproduce its racializing effects. I have argued that citizenship positions subjects, specifically teachers, with varying degrees of entitlement based on race. Teachers, therefore, cannot challenge the racialized subjectivities produced in schools without scrutinizing the way their own subjectivity is constituted through citizenship discourse. By confronting the racial underpinnings of citizenship, teachers can resist producing Aboriginal identity as “marked for physical and cultural extinction” and white identity as “exalted and worthy.” (Thobani, 2007, p. 75) Important for newcomers, teachers can resist advancing the idea of immigrants as grateful supplicants. Teachers should acknowledge their positions and investments within the Canadian project of civility in order to open up more meaningful discussions with students about injustice.
Hand in hand with challenging the discourse of citizenship, teachers should challenge the discourse of multiculturalism that serves to produce Canada as superior and tolerant and that serves to bind subjects to the state. Through greater contestation of citizenship and multiculturalism, teachers can resist the nation-building turns that even critical lessons can take. Rather than teaching students about gratitude and commitment to the nation-state, teachers can begin to advocate for a reconfiguration of racial identities in the interests of justice.

Teachers in this study had a great deal to say about holidays and cultural events within schools. As I have argued, this is related to the pedagogy of celebration that is advanced in part through multiculturalism. While I point out that pedagogy of celebration serves as an obstacle to equity, anti-colonialism and anti-racism by obscuring more substantial claims for justice, it also highlights the ways teachers are striving to be culturally sensitive to their newcomer students and to recognize their experiences. Teachers mentioned the need for translators to facilitate communication between parents and schools. They also highlighted some of the ways they and their schools promoted first language retention for newcomer students through reading programs and library resources. I do not want to overlook these important claims for justice that teachers valued and advanced. While I have argued that cultural sensitivity and cultural recognition are insufficient as goals for anti-oppressive education, these discussions hint at moves in the right direction. Teachers should continue the work of advancing justice for newcomer students by facilitating access to schools and allowing students to develop identities that need not mimic whiteness.

I have argued, finally, that teachers should be cautious of the ways their claims to respectability and legitimacy undermine some of their anti-oppressive concerns. Teachers are under pressure to perform themselves as competent, meritorious professionals, however they should recognize the ways these pressures function to constrain what kinds of justice initiatives they believe are possible. While most teachers will have to continue to deploy ‘professionalism’ in the interests of their careers, this is different from securing “a toehold on respectability” and bolstering the project of whiteness. Organizations interested in advancing equity should support teachers in confronting the professional values that confer privilege and reinforce oppressive relations.

One of the participants, Joan, stated during her interview, “We teach based on who we are.” This is perhaps obvious but is rarely acknowledged. In order to better negotiate the challenges of addressing race, citizenship and culture in schools, teachers should acknowledge...
the ways they are implicated in systems of oppression and should consider what their specifically located experiences do within the project of civility. The modest ideas offered here are strategies of resistance, but it is my hope that resistance will lead to mobilization in the direction of justice and equity for all.
REFERENCES


Appendix A:

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT EMAIL TEXT

My name is Raneem Azzam and I am conducting research for my Masters of Arts degree in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. My topic relates to race and citizenship in public schools the Greater Toronto Area. I am looking for teachers who have taught in schools with majority newcomer populations who would be willing to discuss their thoughts and experiences. Teachers should be Canadian citizens themselves and should be interested in or involved with equity work.

Specifically, I am investigating the tensions, contradictions, and challenges relating to multiculturalism, diversity, tolerance, and inclusion. I am interested in how teachers understand their positions, how they feel about some of these tensions, and how they address them within their teaching practice.

If you know of someone who might be interested in this project, please forward them this email. Interested individuals may contact me at raneem.azzam@utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Raneem Azzam
Appendix B:

INFORMED CONSENT
INFORMATION SHEET FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

Dear Participant:

You are invited to participate in a research project that looks at the ways teachers of newcomer South Asian Muslim students think about and deal with citizenship education. The purpose of the study is to understand how the social positions and identities of individual teachers affect the ways they experience their role as educators of citizenship. This research is being conducted for a Masters of Arts thesis at the University of Toronto/Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in the Sociology and Equity Studies department under the supervision of Dr. Sherene Razack.

CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

Participants should be teachers who have worked in a neighbourhood in which the majority of students are from South Asian and Muslim backgrounds. This study depends also on teachers who are Canadian citizens since relate to how you have learned about and teach Canadian citizenship.

Your participation consists of an individual interview of approximately 45 minutes. It will take place in English at your home or at a mutually agreed upon public location at a time of your convenience.

Your interview will ask for some basic demographic information. It will ask for your reflections and experiences within your role as a teacher of students who are learning about Canadian citizenship. It will ask for your thoughts and experiences about policies and practices related to multiculturalism, diversity, tolerance and inclusion. It then asks for your thoughts about your own experiences as an employee and community member relating to race, class, gender and other forms of marginality.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

There is minimal risk in this study. You may choose not to answer any questions or to withdraw from the study at any time.

While there is no direct benefit to any participant, your participation can contribute to a better understanding of the role of race, religion, and ethnicity in the practices of citizenship education in Canada.
CONFIDENTIALITY

All information you provide is confidential and steps will be taken to ensure your anonymity. Your name will be concealed using a pseudonym and details that would identify you will also be concealed. Only I and my supervisor, Dr. Sherene Razack, will have access to your information. All information will be kept in a secure location and will be destroyed when the project is complete. All data files will be kept on a computer that is password protected and will be deleted immediately upon completion of the project.

You have the option of allowing the interview to be recorded using a digital audio recorder. If you consent to having the interview recorded, all digital audio files will be copied to my computer immediately after the interview and will be password protected. The original file will be deleted from the audio device. The audio recording of your interview will be transcribed within 48 hours, and the digital file will be deleted immediately after transcription.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in the project is strictly voluntary. This means you agree to participate with no pressure and are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You agree that I may use the data gathered for research and educational purposes on the condition that your information does not identify you individually. If you would like, a summary of the research will be shared with you at the conclusion of the project.

FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

You will not receive compensation for your participation in this project.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Raneem Azzam, at 416-569-5985 or by email at raneem.azzam@utoronto.ca. You can also contact the supervising professor, Dr. Sherene Razack by email at sherene.razack@utoronto.ca.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact the Ethics Review Office (University of Toronto) at 416-946-3273 or email: ethics.review@utoronto.ca.
Appendix C:

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

Please complete the following information to indicate your consent. The second copy is for your records.

I (print name) _________________________ agree to participate in the research study described above on this date of _____________________. The study has been explained. I have had the opportunity to ask questions regarding the research and its process.

I  consent  do not consent  (please circle one) to allow this interview to be recorded with a digital audio recorder.

Signature __________________________________
Date ______________________________________

Please contact Raneem Azzam at email: raneem.azzam@utoronto.ca if you have any concerns. As well, participants can contact the Office of Research Ethics at ethics.review@utoronto.ca or 416-946-3273, if they have questions about their rights as participants.
Appendix D:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Demographic info

My research relates to social positioning and identity. I am going to ask you some demographic questions and questions about your social position. Please feel free to answer in any way that feels comfortable to you.

1. Are you a Canadian citizen?
2. What is your gender?
3. Where were you born?
4. Where were your parents born?
5. How would you describe yourself racially and/or ethnically?
6. What languages do you speak?
7. Do you identify with any religion? If so, which one?
8. How would you describe your class background?
9. For how long have you been teaching?
10. Can you tell me about where you grew up?
11. Can you tell me about your elementary and secondary school experiences?
12. Is there anything else you can you tell me about yourself that would help me understand you as a Canadian?

Citizenship and Canadian-ness

13. How do you understand the concept of Canadian citizenship? What are the main things that come to mind for you when you think of the concept of citizenship?
14. What are the main ways (within or outside of school) that you think students learn about what it means to be Canadian?
15. How do you understand your role as a teacher in educating students about Canadian citizenship?
16. Can you describe some of the ways you, as a teacher, are involved in teaching students about Canadian citizenship within your classroom or within the school community at large? (Some examples could be: lessons, units, policies, events, routines, etc.)
17. Do you think your role as a teacher includes educating students about how to be (act) Canadian? If so, how? If not, why not?
18. Do you ever experience any tensions or contradictions within your understanding of Canadian citizenship and the way you are expected to teach about it?

Citizenship, multiculturalism, and diversity

19. Please describe the demographic makeup of your school’s student body. (You can talk about races, ethnicities, countries of origin, length of time in Canada, religions, socio-economic status etc.)
20. How do you understand the ministry and school board’s policies around diversity, inclusion, and antiracism?
21. How do you understand your role as a teacher in working with or addressing these policies?
22. Do you ever experience any tensions between these policies or understandings you have about the curriculum or the practices required of you as a teacher?
23. How do you understand your role as a teacher in teaching students about social inequality?
24. How do you and your school teach students about colonialism and Aboriginal histories? Do you experience any tensions in the way Canada's history of colonialism is addressed/is supposed to be taught/ and/or other ideas you think about?
25. How do you understand the idea of multiculturalism in Canada? Do you have any thoughts about Canadian multiculturalism?
26. Can you discuss any racial issues and/or racism within your classroom or your school? How do you understand your role in addressing racial issues or racism in the classroom or the school?
27. How do you understand the idea of “culture” within the context of your school?
28. Is “culture”, as you understand it, ever a source of tension or conflict within your classroom or your school? How do you understand your role in addressing these tensions if they arise?
29. In what ways, if any, does religion come up at your school?
30. Is religion ever a source of tension or conflict within your classroom or your school? How do you understand your role in addressing these tensions if they arise?
31. How do you understand class and gender issues in your classroom or school (or classism and sexism)? How do you understand your role in addressing these issues?

Self and citizenship

32. Do you see yourself as a minority (e.g. racial, ethnic, religious, sexual)? If so, do you think your minority status impacts your experiences as a teacher? How?
33. As a teacher and a member of the school community, are there ways that social inequality affects your life directly?
34. Do you ever experience any tensions or conflicts in the way you are expected to teach students about social inequality and the way you view or experience it?
35. Can you briefly describe your political views or describe any political issues that are important to you?