TROUBLING THE TEACHER DIVERSITY GAP: THE PERPETUATION OF WHITENESS THROUGH PRACTICES OF BIAS FREE HIRING IN ONTARIO SCHOOL BOARDS

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Graduate Department of Social Justice Education
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Abstract

Teaching staff in Ontario schools do not reflect the increasing diversity of the students who occupy Ontario classrooms today. School boards across Ontario have come under considerable scrutiny regarding the lack of diverse teacher representation that adequately reflects Ontario’s demographic composition (Childs et al., 2010; Ryan, et al., 2009; Turner, 2015). This thesis addresses the Ontario teacher diversity gap (James & Turner, 2017; Turner 2015; Turner, 2014; Ryan, et al., 2009) in relation to provincial equity and inclusive educational policies, which have been created to address the dominance of white teachers in publicly-funded education in Ontario. However, findings from the research indicate that these policies have not had the desired results, and in some ways have contributed to perpetuating the status quo, and the ongoing overrepresentation of white teachers in schools. The thesis furthermore addressed the notion of bias-free hiring (Fine & Handlesman, 2012; Hassouneh, 2013) practices through narratives of Ontario teachers themselves. The predominant assumption of bias-free hiring is that one can divorce themselves from their unconscious biases and preconceptions of groups who are dissimilar to them in order to recruit the so-called “most qualified applicant”. The narrative of the “most qualified applicant” is a term invoked when racialized people seek access to employment opportunities. School administrators have great influence on who is hired; therefore it is important for administrators to interrogate their own social locations and positions of power,
and unconscious bias in terms of how they recruit teachers. Findings from the research indicate that teachers from racialized groups have different experiences when seeking employment as teachers in publicly-funded school boards in Ontario. In response to this the EHT *Equity Hiring Toolkit* for Ontario School Administrators has been developed to support school administrators to recruit more diverse teachers. The EHT provides a framework for school administrators to engage in antiracist praxis and action, by examining their social location, and ways that their positionality impacts the hiring decisions they make. School administrators can use the creation of the Toolkit based on the findings of the data that emerged from the research as a Creative Professional Activity (CPA). I consider this to be my contribution to the field of social justice education and leadership.
Acknowledgments

My experience as a student in the Department of Social Justice Education has been that of an empowering, moving, and transformative journey. I have discovered so much about myself, the power of alternative epistemologies and spiritualties, as well as the power of my ancestors in influencing my scholarship. As Dr. Wane (2008) reminds us, decolonization is not a single event or experience, rather it is an ongoing process across space, time, and land. This process does not entail a starting or ending point, and one must always be conscious that although the mind may be colonized, the spirit cannot be. I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my nana and Supervisor, Dr. Njoki Wane, who has stood by me and supported me through this journey in all of its forms, whether academic or personal. Dr. Wane, your ongoing encouragement, warmth, and open heart have allowed me to flourish and become the best scholar I can be. I shall be forever in your debt for inviting me into your home in Kenya, for sharing your infinite knowledge and wisdom with me and for always being there for me as a mother. You have taught me so much about myself and about life, and you have brought out the best in me. Thank you, nana, for your kindness, your grace, and your warmth. I look forward to the ongoing discussions, travels and work we shall carry on engaging in Asante Sana.

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Thank you to my daughters, Nadia and Ava, for your smiles; you are both the noor of my heart. Without your unconditional love to motivate me and keep me strong, this journey would not have been possible. I would like to acknowledge and thank my husband and best friend, Adil, for your positive attitude each and everyday, for your support and for always having my best
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“Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.”

— Jalaluddin Rumi
Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my two lovely daughters: Nadia Abawi-Shemranifar and Ava Abawi-Shemranifar. Your smile, hugs, kisses, and love is my heart, my passion and my light. I hope to set the best example for you, be the best mother possible and I will do all that I can to help you reach all of your goals and dreams in this life. This thesis is also dedicated to my ancestors, particularly in memory of my late grandmother Bobo Jan; I will never forget your smile and your kind eyes. Although I could not understand your Pashto and Farsi and you could not understand my English I shall always cherish the memories of playing in the garden in your loving presence. I often dream of you; I was young when you were taken from me, but you will never know the impact you have had on my life. I reflect on all that you went through to be educated, to attend Kabul University, and to become a nurse in the early half of the 20th Century in Afghanistan. I admire your strength as a mother, for sacrificing so much to ensure your sons could prosper, for the pain you endured losing your daughters.

I dedicate this work to the daughters of Afghanistan; there is not a day that goes by that you are not in my heart. It is by chance that I have the privilege to have been born in the West—a privilege that haunts me, as the West is the culprit of your unending and devastating wars, misery, and destruction. Although I have never been to Afghanistan, I often dream of a day when there will be peace, when there will be prosperity, and a day when gunshots, bombs, and grenades are replaced by the sounds of laughter, music, and poetry. I hope to see this day in my lifetime; I hope to breathe your air, feel your sunshine on my face, and walk on your soil. May there be serenity and peace in my fractured watan.
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Chapter 1:
Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Research

Equity and inclusive education policy implementation has recently surged across Ontario school boards following the Ministry of Education’s Policy Program Memorandum (PPM 119) of 2009, Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools and Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan (2017). Policy Program Memorandums (PPM) are numbered policy initiatives issued to publicly-funded school boards that “outline the Ministry of Education’s expectations regarding the implementation of ministry programs and policies” (Policy/Program Memorandum, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2017). PPM 119 mandated that all publicly-funded school boards create and implement equity and inclusive education policies at both the board and individual school level. PPM 119 (2009) outlined its commitment to bias-free hiring under Section 1: Board Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Practices as follows:

Boards should make every effort to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. The board’s work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. (2009, p. 5)

Bias-free hiring practices refer to recruitment practices that mask the importance of acknowledging and understanding the centrality of social location in teacher hiring recruitment practices (Fine & Handlesman, 2012; Hassouneh, 2013; Sheridan, 2009; Turner, 2014/2015). Turner (2014) defines bias-free hiring as follows, “In a bias-free hiring process, the goal is to get beyond our first impressions, stereotypes, and judgments about each candidate in order to assess their skills and abilities against the duties of the job” (2014, p.1). Equity and inclusive education policies have mobilized around the practice of bias-free hiring protocols to diversify the teacher
demographic. Bias-free hiring\(^1\) assumes a colour-blind approach to diversifying the teacher population by treating all applicants equally and thus focusing on their skills, knowledge, experience, and merit (Ahmed, 2012; Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Kobayashi, 2009). Although the Ontario Ministry of Education policies as well as Board-specific policies that shall be discussed in Chapter 5 cite bias-free hiring as best practice, there are no references as to the research, the methods and ways in which such practices will enhance teacher demographic representation. By calling for bias-free hiring, equity and inclusive education policies effectively remove the necessity of acknowledging and troubling the centrality of race in teacher hiring.

There is a lack of critical examination of these discursive practices that define “bias-free” hiring. This thesis analyzes the power relations between the white teachers who dominate the Ontario education system and racialized and Indigenous teachers who are marginalized by it through hiring practices that encapsulate colour-blind conceptions of neutrality and objectivity. Not only is the narrative of bias-free hiring problematic, the findings of the research demonstrate that they are also detrimental to the recruitment of racialized and Indigenous teachers. The findings indicate that policies are not effective in reducing the teacher diversity gap because the emphasis on bias-free hiring as equitable and inclusive practice omits the importance of naming and acknowledging the importance of race and racism in teacher hiring practices. The adoption of these hiring policies that foregrounds bias-free hiring omits the criticality of interrogating preconceived notions, power relations, and racism in the settler-colonial Ontario education system. Settler-colonialism is a multidimensional structure based on the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous peoples and lands, in which the education system has been and continues to

\(^1\) To disrupt the structures of white dominance in this thesis, the first letter of the words white and whiteness will not be capitalized. However, the first letter of the words Black and Indigenous shall be capitalized as a counter-narrative to white privilege and oppression (Brady, 2017).
operate as a facet of the elimination of Indigeneity (Snelgrove et al., 2014). Settler-colonialism and colonialism are differentiated by Tuck and Yang (2012). The authors described settler-colonialism as “different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5). Logan interrupted the national historical narrative of Canada as a peaceful and harmonious nation when she asserted:

Popular Canadian histories celebrate the creation of Canada as a safe haven for immigrants within a vast ‘untouched’ wilderness, and these histories still resonate with much of the Canadian public. These persistent narratives of Canadian history often give a false, benevolent impression of the measures taken to create and maintain Canada as a nation state. Until they grapple with genocide, and in particular settler colonial genocide, Canadian histories are incomplete and under-represent Indigenous removal in Canadian history. (2015, p. 433)

Segeren (2016) suggested that a fundamental policy enactment gap exists between equity and inclusive education policies in relation to teacher hiring. While the stated policies and practices have been put in place, there remains a significant teacher diversity gap in Ontario (Childs et al, 2010; Ryan, et al., 2009; Turner, 2015). Equity and inclusive educational policies pertaining to teacher hiring have remained vastly ineffective in diversifying the teaching population. The mobilization of bias-free hiring protocols effectively silences the acknowledgment of racialized power relations that perpetuate white privilege in teacher hiring in Ontario school boards. As Turner’s findings noted, those individuals in positions of authority who are responsible for teacher hiring and promotion are overwhelmingly white (Turner, 2015). Therefore, it is critical that the majority white administrators engage in critical dialogue and action to understand how their positionality reflects their hiring patterns through self-transformative praxis (Lopez, 2013/2015; Wane & Cairncross, 2013).

The findings of this thesis revealed that although there has been a recognition on the part of the Ministry of Education of the lack of and importance of racialized and Indigenous
educators, the policies are constructed and enacted in a manner that the disruption of the status quo of white privilege in teacher hiring never materializes (Ahmed, 2012; Kobayashi, 2009; Solomon et al., 2005). As Dua (2009) and Ahmed (2012) argued, equity and inclusion policies are implemented as a strategy to aesthetically meet the needs of an increasingly racially diverse and Indigenous population. However, the policies are drafted in a manner that ensures that their materialization is never actualized. This phenomenon is evidenced by the overrepresentation of white teachers, as only 9 per cent of elementary school teachers and 10 per cent of secondary school teachers are racialized (Turner, 2015).

The EHT emerged from the examination that I have undertaken in order to link theory to practice. The purpose of the EHT is to bring about critical awareness on the part of school administrators on ways that implicit biases are manifested in their hiring practices. The EHT encourages critical awareness in school administrators by providing a critical framework where they can examine their social location and how it operates to determine the hiring decisions they make. The EHT allows for critical awareness and critical dialogue to develop through an Applied Critical Leadership framework (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012) that is detailed in Chapter 8.

1.2 Summary of the Problem: A Historical Overview of the Racial Oppression of Indigenous and Minority Students in the Education System in Ontario

Education has historically been a focal point of brutal white, settler-colonial, government-sanctioned, assimilationist, and genocidal policies toward Indigenous people and the Indigenous community (Cherubini, 2010), as well as other minority groups such as African Canadians, Chinese Canadians, and Japanese Canadians. Education in the settler-colonial Canadian state is based on Eurocentric pedagogies that value European and particularly Anglo-Christian epistemologies (Dei, 2006), and systematically other and devalue non-European intellectual and spiritual contributions. According to Comeau (2005) Eurocentric colonial
education was founded on three principles: a) character education, b) segregation, and c) assimilation. Overtly, xenophobic processes were carried out through the disenfranchisement of Indigenous people and communities, institutional anti-Blackness manifested in slavery and segregation, and finally the assimilation of non-white immigrants, migrants, and refugees to Eurocentric norms and values (Comeau, 2005; Thobani, 2007).

The state-sanctioned domination of Indigenous communities on behalf of the Canadian settler-colonial state, from early occupation to the present day has devastated educational policy initiatives toward Indigenous people (Cherubini, 2010; Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Razack, 2015). Education as genocide was enforced through the nation-wide residential school system enacted by the Canadian Federal government with the adoption of the Indian Act in 1867, and most recently in 1996 when the last residential school was closed (Truth and Reconciliation Commission [TRC], 2015). The purpose of the residential schools was, as James (2012b) outlined:

To eradicate Indigenous languages and cultures, a goal they sought to achieve by separating their families and communities, denigrating Indigenous traditional ways and practicing punitive forms of quasi-military discipline (p. 3-4).

Residential schools were state-sanctioned institutions run by the Catholic and Protestant churches with the ambition of assimilating, dehumanizing, and ultimately intending the forced disappearance of the “Indian” from the white settler state (TRC, 2015). The Indian Act mandated that all Indigenous children over the age of 6 must be removed from their homes to attend the residential schools (Haig-Brown, 1988). It is estimated that well over 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their homes and communities and placed in residential schools (Blackstock, 2007). The assimilation of Indigenous children was carried out by the indoctrination of children into Euro-Canadian, Christian values that rendered Indigenous
languages, cultural practices and histories as “backward,” “savage,” and “deficit” in relation to Eurocentric norms and values.

Educational imperialism and the intergenerational trauma that ensued from the residential school system, was compounded by the devastating impact of provincial child welfare systems (Blackstock, 2007; Razack, 2004/2015). Emerging in the 1950s and peaking in the 1960s during the “60’s Scoop,” the abduction of Indigenous children from their families by social workers became justified under a Eurocentric, white supremacist paradigm of “good parenting.” Under the Eurocentric norm of proper parenting, children were forcibly taken from their homes and communities (Blackstock, 2007; Marshall, 2013; Razack, 2015). Throughout the 20th century, the overwhelming majority of Indigenous children were either institutionalized in child welfare facilities or in residential schools (Blackstock, 2007). Abuse, neglect, malnutrition, and child labour in the facilities was rampant, so much so that all documents concerning correspondence between the schools and physicians was destroyed to cover up death rates from conditions in the residential schools as well as deaths from escape attempts. The death rates for Indigenous children in such institutions were disproportionately higher than the non-Indigenous school aged population. The TRC articulated the lack of regard for Indigenous lives on behalf of the Federal government:

The high death rates in the schools were, in part, a reflection of the high death rates among the Aboriginal community in general. Indian Affairs officials often tried to portray these rates as simply the price that Aboriginal people had to pay as part of the process of becoming civilized. (2015, p. 99)

The TRC draws attention to the horrendous details of the residential school system in particular and exposes the fallacy of the Canadian nation state as a peace-keeping pillar of acceptance and tolerance (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; Razack 2004; TRC, 2015; Thobani, 2007). Meanwhile, the document itself fails to grasp the irony of the continued murder, suicide, displacement, and continued overrepresentation of Indigenous children in child protective care
while genocidal practices and policies toward Indigenous people on behalf of the settler nation continue to thrive. Canada thus is a settler-colonial state as sovereignty is in the hands of settlers that utilize legal means to deny Indigenous peoples their autonomy, lands, and rights (Lawrence & Dua, 2005).

The national on-reserve (or schools located on Indigenous reservations) K-12 dropout rate of Indigenous students is 58%, followed by the off-reserve dropout rate of 30%; the overall Métis dropout rate stood at 20% in 2011 in comparison to 10% of the non-Indigenous population (Dehaas, 2014). The on- and off-reserve disparity is widely attributed to the large funding gaps between provincially-funded school boards which operate off-reserve and federally-funded on-reserve schools (Galloway, 2016). The funding gaps have been estimated to be as severe as 40% and upwards (Dehaas, 2014). The closure of such educational gaps is not meant for the well-being of Indigenous communities and histories but for the purpose and benefit of the labour market agenda and Canada’s economic competitiveness and viability in the era of neoliberalism (Abawi & Brady, 2017; Cherubini, 2010).

The ongoing displacement and disenfranchisement of Indigenous families and communities continues to be perpetuated by the child welfare system. Blackstock (2007) argued that residential schools never really shut down; rather they have been morphed into the child welfare system. Blackstock (2007) noted that there are currently three times as many Indigenous children raised outside of their homes and communities than there were at the height of the residential school system. In 2011, it was reported that some 14,200 Indigenous children were residing in foster care, and fewer than half, at 44%, lived with at least one parent who self-identifies as Indigenous. Indigenous youth are furthermore overrepresented in the federal prison system (Gebherd, 2013; Yukselir & Annett, 2016).
In addition to the racist policies that frame the settler-colonial relationship toward Indigenous people, Canada has been a pillar of anti-Black racism. Anti-Black racism in the Canadian context is described by Morgan & Bullen (2005) as:

Prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is rooted in their unique history and experience of enslavement. Anti-Black racism in Canada is often subtle and is generally not accompanied by overt racial slurs or explicitly prohibitive legislation. However, it is deeply entrenched in Canadian institutions, policies, and practices such that anti-Black racism is either functionally normalized or rendered invisible to the larger white society. (2016 p. 23)

Anti-Black racism in Canada has thrived from the enslavement of Africans, school segregation that prevented Black children from attending public schools, as well as the ongoing stigmatization of Black students and their families (James, 2012; James et al., 2017; Madan, 2016). Ontario and Canada as an entity has generally been viewed more favourably than its American neighbour with regard to its treatment of Black Canadians (Bakan, 2008). Whereas the United States is dominantly portrayed as the hub of the African slave trade, Canada has been conceptualized as a safe haven for African Americans. However, what is often omitted from the narrative of the mythical Canadian state (Thobani, 2007) is the enslavement of the Africans that flourished for some 200 years throughout Canada (Bakan, 2008; Hamilton, 2011). In addition to slavery, Black Canadians have been subject to a multitude of other forms of anti-Black racism including, but not limited to: forced housing and education segregation, restrictive immigration patterns, exclusion of Black Ontarians and Canadians from attending post-secondary education institutions, and exclusion from property ownership (Bakan, 2008; Hamilton, 2011; Henry & Tator, 1998; Turner, 2015).

In Ontario during the 1840s, in response to the migration of African Americans fleeing slavery in the United States, parents and community members lobbied to ban Black children from attending public schools. In 1850 under the Common Schools Act, the racial segregation of Black Ontarians in schools became legally enshrined (Hamilton, 2011; McLaren, 2004; Turner,
Legal and forced racial segregation of Ontario and Canadian schools were legal for some 114 years and it was not until 1983 that the last segregated school closed its doors in Nova Scotia (Hamilton, 2011). Anti-Blackness is ongoing in Canadian society today and operates through the policing of Black bodies, in conjunction with white fear of the Black body as inherently dangerous and menacing and the punishment of Black bodies (James, 2011; Mullings et al., 2016). Anti-Black racism in the Ontario context has resulted in disproportionate dropout, expulsion, and suspension rates of African Canadian students and the pushing out of Black bodies from schools into the prison system, otherwise known as the “school to prison pipeline” in the Eurocentric education system (Dei, 2007; James, 2012; Kovalenko, 2012; Madan, 2016).

A Report released by York University entitled *Toward Race Equity in Education: the Schooling of Black Students in the GTA* (James & Turner, 2017) outlined several key issues specifically facing young Black students, in particular Black male students (James & Turner 2017). The Report draws attention to processes and practices of racialization entrenched in Greater Toronto Area (GTA) schools that disrupt the notion of Canada as a multicultural and peaceful nation. Classifications of race and processes of racialization are socially constructed across time and space and are generally utilized to allocate power and privilege to benefit a dominant group (Galabuzi, 2006; Leonardo & Zemblyas, 2013). Race has been a defining factor of settler-colonial Canadian statehood through immigration policies, segregation, and access to resources such as housing, education, and employment. Racialization occurs through categories such as “visible minority” that other and stratify the nation-state hierarchy by the social exclusion of bodies who are not members of the white settler-colonial identity (Galabuzi, 2006; White & Cooper, 2015).

Gallabuzi (2006) described the process of racialization as follows:
Minorities are socially constructed entities in societies, and the label implies the imposition of an inferior status. They are often set apart by the majority group as incompetent, abnormal, or dangerous because of differences pertaining to race, gender, class and religion. Majority or dominant groups use these differences to distance themselves from minorities for the purpose of acquiring or maintaining privilege and power (p. 31).

Racializing factors in the educational context include the widespread practice of streaming, the aforementioned disproportionate disciplinary measures inflicted on Black males by school administrators and School Resource Officers (SROs), the overrepresentation of Black children in special needs and behavioural programs and the underrepresentation of Black students in gifted programs (James & Turner, 2017). The Ontario Safe Schools Act, 2002, was a “zero tolerance” policy enacted by the Harris government. The Act strengthened school administrator and teacher authority to carry out suspensions and expulsions, while it provided grounds for mandatory punishments regardless of the specific circumstances of each incident (Madan, 2016; Winton, 2012). In 2003 the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) found that police had disproportionately discriminated against minority male students, in particular Black male students (James, 2011; James et al., 2017; Madan, 2016; Winton, 2012;).

In response to the allegations and eventual settlement, the Ministry of Education implemented Bill 212 in 2007, called the Ontario Education Amendment Act: Progressive Discipline and School Safety. The Bill mandated a “graduated disciplinary model following a progressive continuum of supportive interventions” (Madan, 2016, p. 24) and removed the discretionary powers of school administrators and teachers to suspend and expel students. Although the Bill was passed in response to allegations of racism following the Safe Schools Act, any progress made took a downturn with the commissioning of armed School Resource Officers (SROs) in Toronto high schools (Kovalenko, 2012; Madan, 2016; Winton, 2012). The presence of armed, overwhelmingly white male officers in high schools with high Black and other racialized student populations highlighted the weakening relationship and mistrust between
law enforcement and Black and Brown bodies (McMurty, 2008). The introduction of SROs furthermore emboldened the school-to-prison pipeline as Black male students were overwhelmingly more punished and disciplined through expulsion, suspension, and charges than other students (James, 2011; Kovalenko, 2012; Madan, 2016).

The disproportionate disciplinary measures toward Black students correlate with the prison data whereby African Canadians make up some 3% of the population, but account for 10% of the inmate population and are the fastest growing group to be placed in the federal prison system (McIntyre, 2016). The Toward Race Equity in Education: The Schooling of Black Students in the GTA report furthermore outlined the prevalence of academic streaming of Black students by the education system. Throughout the past decade, dropout rates among Black students in Ontario hovered around the 40% mark (James & Turner, 2017; James, 2012; Lopez, 2013), largely attributed to the mentioned disciplinary measures as well as disengagement due to entrenched Eurocentrism in the Ontario curriculum (Dei, 2007; James, 2012). There are currently three pathways for students when they reach high school. Firstly, there is the “academic” stream, which consists of academic courses for students geared toward university. Secondly, the “applied” route that prepares students for college or a trades program. Finally, the “locally developed essentials” or workplace stream is designed to assist students in meeting the basic needs of their high school diploma (p. 29). James and Turner’s (2017) findings suggested that Black students are overrepresented in both the applied and locally developed essentials programs due to deficit perspectives of teachers and school administrators in terms of their views of Black families. The streaming and pathologizing of Black bodies at a young age obstructs Black youth from accessing university admission and thus teacher education programs.
1.3 Increasing Racialized and Indigenous Demographics in Ontario

Public education in Ontario has also operated as a tool of assimilation toward non-white immigrant children into Eurocentric norms of pedagogy, citizenship, and character education. Prior to the expansion of the immigration system, highly-restrictive and xenophobic policies were firmly intact under what Thobani referred to as “keep Canada white policies” (2007, p. 18). Thobani continued to explain that during the 1960s and 70s, the Canadian Immigration Act moved to create the point system to fulfill the need for skilled labour. Immigration became more open not as a result of multicultural principles of “tolerance” but to also recruit low-skilled labour, which white settlers found undesirable. In terms of the national narrative, immigrants are viewed as a threat to Canadian values and way of life Thobani argued: “as long as Canada remains a white settler colony, the nation will continue to be racialized” (2007, p.52). According to Statistics Canada (2011), 26.1% of Ontarians identify as being a member of a visible minority or racialized group, which is conceptualized as people who are non-Indigenous and non-White in colour, and/or non-Caucasian in race. Another estimated 2.4% of Ontarians self-identified as Indigenous.

Although Ontario does not presently have mandatory race-based data collection on school board personnel, the school boards who do collect race-based data on staff and communities point to the prevalence of the teacher diversity gap. The diversifying of the teaching population has not kept pace with that of Ontario’s demographics (Ryan et al., 2009; Solomon, et al., 2005; Turner, 2015). The lack of a diverse teacher workforce directly impacts the student population, such as through: pedagogical approaches, teacher expectation of students, and curriculum delivery in classrooms (Ryan et al., 2009; Sharma & Portelli, 2014). Teachers tend to teach based on their own experiences and social location and, because Ontario teachers are predominantly white, this skews the knowledge, learning, and curricular approaches that children
in their classrooms are exposed to (Ghosh, 2010; James, 2012; McFarlane, 2015). Although overtly racist and gendered references have been removed from curriculum materials, Eurocentrism still permeates pedagogical practices and reinforces itself through the “hidden curriculum” (Giroux, 1978). The hidden curriculum subtly and invisibly operates by providing voice to Eurocentric epistemologies and by silencing other ways of knowing. For example, Eurocentric dominance perpetuates itself in the education system through the omission and denial of African and Indigenous pedagogies and scholarship in resources, materials, curricular content, and the construction of “othered” identities from a lens that privileges European worldviews (Dei, 2012).

1.4 Analyzing the Teacher Diversity Gap in Ontario

In 2007 the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) asserted that the lack of a teacher and administrative representation that reflects the student population is a barrier to equitable and inclusive access to education (OHRC, 2007). The statement followed a human rights lawsuit toward the Toronto District School Board and the Ministry of Education in light of the overrepresentation of racialized youth being suspended, expelled, and dropping out of school. The racialized discrepancies were brought to light as a result of the increased disciplinary discretions teachers and administrators were afforded from the Ontario Safe Schools Act (2002). The same message concerning teacher representation was again echoed in 2008 by a report titled *The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence* that was commissioned by the Ministry of Education following the lawsuits. The report emphasized the following:

In the education system, we feel that the most urgent priority is to bring more teachers who reflect and represent the diversity of the students into schools and priority neighbourhoods. This cannot be left to chance or the vagaries of the hiring practices of individual schools. Through whatever mechanism the Ministry of Education has or can develop quickly, we believe that action on this issue must be advanced immediately. (McMurtry & Curling, 2008, p. 244)
One year following the report, the Ministry of Education reacted to the calls for increasing teacher diversity and representation at the school board level in policy through the enactment of PPM 119 (2009) as well as Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. The Ontario Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy requires school boards to implement more inclusive hiring practices; however, as Turner (2015) analyzed:

While the policy notes that board staff “should reflect the diversity within the community, there is no requirement that boards collect data on the composition of its workforce or student population, analyze the diversity gap or implement efforts to close the gap. (2015, p. 14)

The teacher diversity gap is a discrepancy in the proportion of racialized teachers to racialized students (Hrabowski & Sanders, 2014; Turner, 2015). According to Turner’s (2015) report, Ontario has a teacher diversity gap of 0.5. A value of 1.0 indicates that the teaching population fully represents and reflects the diversity of the population. Thus, the smaller the proportion, the larger the teacher-population diversity gap. Therefore, while the racialized and Indigenous population in Ontario is increasing, teacher diversity has not kept pace with this trend (Childs, et al., 2010; Escayg, 2010; Ryan, et al., 2009). Statistics Canada (2011) predicted that racialized Canadians would make up one third of the national population by 2031. During the 1980s, racialized Canadians made up less than 5% of the population and in the next 15 years will make up 32% of Canada’s demographic (Block & Galabuzi, 2011). According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2012) Ontario is home to the largest share of immigrants, migrants, and refugees in the country. More than one quarter of Ontario’s citizens are racialized, and the racialized and Indigenous population is projected to continue increasing. In the Toronto Central Metropolitan Area (CMA), the racialized population is considerably higher. For example, 72% of the population of Markham, 66% of Brampton, 54% of Mississauga, and 49% of Toronto is racialized (Turner, 2015). Meanwhile, as previously noted, only 10% of the province’s secondary teachers and 9% of elementary school teachers are racialized. The diversity gap among school
administrators is substantially higher, with an estimated 5% of vice principals and 2% of principals identifying as racialized (Turner, 2015). School administrators hold great influence over the staffing of their schools, therefore the overwhelming majority of those responsible for teacher hiring are white.

Ryan et al., (2009) analyzed some of the reasons for the lack of racialized and Indigenous teachers and administrators. The authors referred to a “leaky pipeline” as a metaphor to describe the education system, in which the pipeline transports students along the education spectrum from K-12 to post-secondary education (PSE). As Ryan et al. articulated, the pipeline is flawed; therefore leaks occur along the way, which cause certain bodies to “spill out” (2009, p. 18). These spills are a result of racialization processes embedded in schooling, such as streaming (which shall be addressed later) that disproportionately inflicts disciplinary measures that push out and marginalize Black and Brown students (Dei, 2012; James, 2012; Madan, 2016). Finally, unfavourable views of education discourage racialized bodies from becoming educators (Childs et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2009). Racialized and Indigenous students who do manage to stay in the pipeline and graduate from a teacher education program are often faced with significant obstacles when trying to access the teaching job market due to discriminatory hiring practices (Childs, et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2009).

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions framed my study:

1. In what ways might school administrators examine their positionality and the impact on their hiring decisions? How does the identity and positionality of school administrators impact their hiring decisions?

2. How might the practice of bias-free hiring perpetuate the status quo of white privilege in teacher hiring? How might a deeper knowledge and understanding of bias-free hiring as
an effective mechanism to close the teacher diversity gap impact the diversification of teacher hiring in Ontario?

1.6 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the narrative of bias-free objective hiring as best practice to increase teacher diversity in Ontario school boards. The study does so through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) approach. The two theoretical approaches in the examining racialized power relations embedded in the settler-colonial education system that privilege whiteness in teacher hiring. The study examines the problematic conception of objectivity in teacher hiring practices. As mentioned above, the overwhelming majority of those in school leadership positions who influence teacher-hiring decisions are white (Turner, 2015). Bias-free, colour-blind hiring policies perpetuate the teacher diversity gap, as the lack of recognition of school administrator’s identity, positions within the power structure, and institutional racism in the system. This bars access to the full participation of racialized and Indigenous teachers.

Based on the extant literature, there is a substantial lack of racialized and Indigenous teachers in Ontario (Childs, et al., 2010; Howard, 2010; Ryan et al., 2009; Solomon et al., 2005; Turner, 2015). The literature demonstrates the multifaceted barriers that prevent racialized and Indigenous bodies from accessing the teaching profession. Although the equity and inclusive education policies address the importance of racializing and Indigenizing the teaching population, the policies systematically fail to acknowledge the importance of race and power relations in teacher recruitment by advocating for bias-free hiring. The implementation of bias-free or objective hiring practices have offered limited transparency as there have been no mechanisms put in place to monitor and reform teacher hiring, such as the mandatory collection
and publication of race-based teacher population data, or the correlation between race and employment contracts.

As opposed to ignoring the systemic, structural, and institutional barriers through objective paradigms of hiring, the findings from the study suggest the importance of school administrators to interrogate their preconceived notions, unconscious biases, relative positions of power and oppression, and beliefs and values that implicate their hiring decisions (Childs et al., 2010; Dei, 2007; Lopez, 2013/2016; Pinto et al., 2005; Schick & St. Denis, 2003; Solomon et al., 2005). Solomon et al. (2005) conceptualized the policy enactment gap (Segeren, 2016) as an “ideological incongruence”. He states that on the one hand, equity and inclusive education policies call for a more diverse teacher demographic and make commitments diversifying the teaching population. However, on the other hand, there are limited accountability measures in place to ensure an antiracist and social justice recruitment of teachers is being actualized beyond the representational framework of equity and inclusivity politics (Coulthard, 2014).

The theoretical frameworks support the research as both examine the centrality of the teaching profession as being premised upon what Mills and Pateman (2015) called the “racial-sexual contract.” The notion of the contract is that it perpetuates the status quo of white, feminized, heteronormative teachers in relation to an increasingly racialized and Indigenous student body. In order to examine the social and cultural perpetuation of white, female teachers and its parallels to the historical hegemony of white female missionaries, nuns, and residential school teachers; whiteness as a social identity must be articulated and critiqued. CWS dismantles the fallacy of whiteness as the invisible norm, especially in the settler-colonial context in which conceptions of Canadian nationhood and belonging are premised upon the exclusion of racialized and Indigenous bodies and the privileging of whiteness in settler-colonial institutions such as education. CRT converges with CWS in this study, as CRT challenges the neutrality of highly-
racialized processes such as hiring, employment, housing, health indicators, education, and access to resources (Giroux, 2005). Contemporary racism and racialization operates through subtle and often ambiguous avenues and ‘guises’ (Giroux, 2005). CRT is necessary in naming the subtle, liberal, and neoliberal processes of racialization by drawing on power relations that are often masked within the discursive politics of inclusion (Coulthard, 2014; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The theoretical frameworks converge to draw attention to the pervasiveness of institutional, systemic, and structural white dominance by problematizing notions of racelessness and providing agency to racialized and Indigenous voices.

The review of the literature, the data findings, and the overview of education as a structure of settler-colonization and genocide of Indigenous people in Canada reveal the context of the hegemony of white privilege in education. The research examines the ways that white privilege is sustained in the education system. Whiteness as dominance perpetuates itself through inequitable schooling practices, teacher identity narratives, and the pervasiveness of whiteness in teacher education programs, the racialization of poverty, neoliberalism and gatekeeping procedures that regulate access to the profession (Childs, et al., 2010; Escayg, 2010; Pinto et al., 2012). Thus far, the main strategy for diversifying the teaching profession in Ontario has been twofold: at the Ontario Faculty of Education level, by providing an option for applicants to self-identify (which will be discussed below). However, the applicant data is never publicly released to determine which bodies are admitted at the expense of others. This thesis analyzes the teacher diversity gap on two fronts. The first is by analyzing the equity and inclusive hiring discursive practices of “bias-free” teacher hiring that silences racial inequities to perpetuate white privilege through colourblind doctrines of meritocracy (Matias, et al., 2014; Sleeter, 2017). The second is by encouraging school administrators—who are overwhelming white—to take part in
transformative critical leadership practice and action to self-examine how their social location impacts how they hire teachers (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012; Wane & Cairncross, 2013).

1.7 Situating Myself

I was motivated to carry out this research firstly based on my experiences as a student in the Urban Diversity teacher education program, and secondly from my professional experiences working as a teacher in two Greater Toronto Area (GTA) school boards, and finally as a teacher educator. The teacher diversity gap in the Ontario context is a phenomenon that has troubled me for quite some time as I became aware of the gap from my first day of practicum. During my time in the teacher education program in South West Ontario- I completed both teaching practicum placements; one in the Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) program and one in grade 4 in diverse communities within Board A. The pre-service education program was comprised of a non-white majority and a white minority. Of the four instructors two self-identified Afro-Caribbean males and two were white females. The mandate of the program was to provide access to candidates who have been underrepresented in accessing the teaching profession. I believe that based on my racialized name and research interests indicated on my application, I was placed in the Urban Diversity Program.

Many racialized teachers with whom I worked during my Bachelor of Education had mentioned that they often felt that they were the ‘token’ minority in the school and that they had been hired to meet quotas. One self-identified Afro-Caribbean female teacher stated that she had felt she was hired to teach in an urban school because of the student population as a way for the board to earn trust with the community. It became apparent to me that diversity and representation was on the basis of the “recognition” of the “other” in an aesthetic manner, rather than reconceptualizing the system through antiracist dialogue, education, and the interrogation of teacher identity and past as well as ongoing colonialisms across time and space. School board
personnel in administrative and leadership positions responsible for teacher hiring throughout Ontario school boards are overwhelmingly white (Escayg, 2008/2010; Turner, 2015).

Throughout my education career I have engaged with literature that calls on overwhelmingly white teachers to self-examine how their positionality implicates their teaching practices (Dei, 2007; Lopez, 2013; Wane & Cairncross, 2013). While it is paramount that teachers engage in this critical work, school administrators must also take part in social justice work. Principals and vice-principals must develop a critical consciousness of how they construct and conceptualize racialized and Indigenous identities (Picower, 2009) and how these social constructions determine how they choose the teachers in their classrooms. A critical understanding of their role and positionality within power and oppression is central to developing a critical consciousness of the operational aspects of white privilege and how white privilege is manifested in teacher representation. Ladson-Billings noted that, “notions of whiteness are taken for granted. They rarely are interrogated. But being White is not merely about biology. It is about choosing a system of privilege and power” (2001, p. 81). Carr argued that the purpose of self-interrogation and awakening a critical consciousness is not to place blame or make individuals uncomfortable. Rather, as Carr indicated:

> The objective is to further dialogue, and hopefully contribute to the movement for tangible action, to build a more decent society, achieve greater levels of social justice, and to address the deeply held values, manifestations, racism, and lived realities that can lead to marginalization, hatred, differentiated outcomes, and perverse social inequalities and injustice. (2016, p. 53)

> The national identity narrative of Canada alludes to a diverse, tolerant, and welcoming society by failing to acknowledge the ongoing settler-colonization based on the appropriation of Indigenous peoples, lands, and resources. Schools continue to operate as institutions through which racial hierarchies are reinforced and solidified each day (Lee, 1996). As Lee argued “racism is systemic and not episodic and must be addressed as such” (1996, p. 6). Lee’s
quotation speaks to the ongoing systemic and institutional racism that is entrenched in settler-colonial education systems. Schools are a microcosm of society as an entity whereby bodies are othered in relation to the dominant norm of Euro-Canadian identity (Dei, 2007; James, 2012; Madan, 2016).

As a woman of Afghan (Pashtun) and Scottish heritage, I must acknowledge the varied positions of privilege and oppression that I embody. Many Afghans would point to my self-identification as Pashtun (also known as Pathan) from the Yusufzai tribe as divisive, however I feel that it is important to recognize this ethnicity distinctly as British colonizers have divided the Pashtun homeland. In 1896, a British officer named Sir Mortimer Durand created the “Durand Line,” a fictitious border, which was specifically instituted to divide the Pashtun tribes that bordered British India. This was a quintessential colonial tool to divide and conquer the tribes; in similar fashion, in 1947 during the Partition of India, East and West Pakistan were created (Pakistan and now Bangladesh) and the Pashtun lands south and east of the Durand Line effectively became Pakistani territory. There are currently more Pashtuns residing in Pakistan than Afghanistan, however, the tribes, as brothers, do not recognize the Durand Line and border therefore brothers, sisters and cousins inhabit both sides of the border. My father has always proclaimed that he is a Pashtun first and an Afghan second, and the affinity to one’s tribe has always been a factor in oral storytelling passed down to me from my relatives. My tribe, the Yusufzai tribe, gained worldwide attention following the near death shooting of Malalai Yusufzai, a Pakistani Pashtun teenager who defied Taliban rules banning women and girls from attending school. During the British occupation of India, the frontier between Northern India and the Pashtun tribal areas was fraught with conflict; my great grandparents migrated north to Kabul seeking new economic opportunities. Today, the vast majority of Yusufzais continue to reside in present-day Pakistan.
In examining my social location I acknowledge that I possess a great deal of privilege when in social settings, public spaces, and institutions from embodying whiteness. I am often invited into conversations of “white bonding” (Wise, 2011) and small talk while at work, on the subway, or at the park with my children, because I am white passing. However, both in the context of the teaching profession as well as the job market as an entity, I experience setbacks with a name that signifies a specific ethno-racial identity. On job applications, I am immediately pushed aside as a racialized woman, possibly a woman in hijab, a woman with a poor command of the English language or a woman whose gendered identity and sexuality is so fiercely controlled and regulated by the “Third World” Muslim men of my family. Several times when I have had informal conversations with teachers and administrators during my work as a supply teacher where my name is not known, I am often subject to conversations of white bonding. White bonding conversations are those through which white people (of European descent) will engage in with other white or white-passing individuals. Much of the time these conversations are harmful as they immediately “other” and stigmatize non-white bodies. For example, some of the white bonding conversations I have engaged in include dialogue where I have been subject to “small talk” about welfare recipients, Islamophobia, and anti-refugee and migrant sentiments. The “in between-ness,” hybridity, and intersectionality of my identity allows me to navigate certain spaces, it negates privilege as long as I remain nameless in white spaces such as education.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study entails the critical examination of the lack of racialized and Indigenous teachers within Ontario publicly-funded education by interrogating the complexity of racialization in the colourblind, seemingly subtle process of teacher hiring. There is an inherent contradiction and disconnect between the strategy of bias-free hiring to close the teacher
diversity gap and what the policies indicate their purpose to be: increasing teacher diversity to appropriately reflect the population of Ontario. The narrative and discursive practices that encapsulate the equity and inclusive education policies in terms of teacher hiring advocate for “bias-free” and objective hiring without acknowledging and questioning the power relations and social locations of school leaders who are responsible for hiring decisions. It is important for courageous conversations to take place (Singleton, 2005) as part of professional development initiatives. Dialogue that encourages names and engagement deconstructs their respective identities and the idea that social locations are never neutral. Instead these conversations help inform interactions with different communities and thus implicate their hiring and recruitment decisions.

The equity and inclusive education policies are problematic in that they fail to indicate the definition of bias-free hiring, provide the research which supports such practice to close the teacher diversity gap, as well as indicate how one is to be “bias-free” when it comes to teacher recruitment. The Equity Hiring Tool for School Administrators is the contribution of my research findings to the existing literature as a mechanism to encourage school leaders to begin the journey of self-transformative praxis (Wane & Cairncross, 2013) and critical action (Lopez, 2013).

1.9 Limitations of the Study

Every research study focusing specifically on one component of a problem or research question faces limitations, whether these be in scope or the need for a wider scale of data collection and data sampling. There are three limitations to my study. The first one is the scope of the research, which is mainly focused in racialized and Indigenous elementary and secondary teachers. Therefore, the study does not examine the perspectives and experiences of those occupying school board leadership positions. Moreover, as the focus of the study is on race in
matters of teacher recruitment, the study does not examine the intersectionality of race and [dis]ability, gender and socio-economic status. The second limitation to the study means keeping the following idea in mind: hiring a significant volume of racialized and Indigenous educators will not serve as a panacea. It is crucial to acknowledge that Canada is a settler-colonial settler state as was defined in the introductory paragraph of this chapter. Settler colonial states exist and thrive on the ongoing domination and subordination of Indigenous peoples. Some racialized bodies are complicit in settler-colonial domination, when they ascribe to whiteness and gravitate toward proximity of whiteness through structures of internal oppression. However, many racialized bodies have become uprooted and emplaced on Turtle Island through violent factors such as slavery and through ongoing Western military and economic Imperialism that has plagued much of the Global South. Hiring more diverse teachers will therefore not restructure or reverse the endemic white privilege and white supremacy of the system, as it shall only provide an aesthetic, tokenistic solution while the dominant whiteness and Eurocentrism continues to thrive uninterrupted. The study intends to challenge and counter the white supremacist agenda of subtle racism or what Henry and Tator (1998) called “democratic racism” perpetuated through colourblind discursive practices of bias-free and objective hiring. Finally, a third limitation of the study is the lack of an Indigenous teacher perspective. Due to the ongoing colonial nature of the state, as well as the ongoing entrenchment of the Federal Indian Act which determine pervasive status definitions based on white, settler-colonial conceptions concerning which bodies are eligible to claim their Indigeneity on the basis of blood quantum (Cherubini, 2010), it is understandable that many Indigenous people might be reluctant to self-identify. This is a limitation to my study as none of the participants self-identified as an Indigenous person; therefore the specific barriers faced by Indigenous teachers in the Ontario school board teacher recruitment were not discussed. My research only involved teachers working in publicly-funded
education in Ontario and did not address the unique challenges faced by racialized and
Indigenous individuals aspiring to leadership roles or currently in leadership positions in the
Province’s publicly-funded education system.

1.10 Overview of the Research

In the introductory chapter, the thesis topic was introduced as well as the rationale for
undertaking this study. I provided a brief overview of the historical and contemporary context of
education in Ontario, the increasingly racialized and Indigenous population demographics and
the Ontario teacher diversity gap. I situated the study by outlining the theoretical frameworks I
will be utilizing as well as locating myself by both discussing my social location and my
experiences in the Ontario education system.

The Literature Review examines the contextual factors that have barred Indigenous and
racialized teachers from accessing the profession. The scholarship addresses the social,
economic, and political context of neoliberalism, the increase and racialization of precarious
labour, the role of gatekeeping mechanisms in the teaching profession such as Ontario College of
Teachers (OCT) regulations and the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). Teacher education
programs are analyzed to address the perpetuation of the status quo of whiteness and white
privilege in education.

Chapter Three provides an analysis of the two theoretical frameworks incorporated to
situate the research. Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT) were
utilized to ground the research to disrupt the status quo of seemingly neutral, colourblind
institution of educational policy and opportunity. The frameworks converge to disrupt the
normalcy of whiteness through the interrogation of discourses neutrality and democracy, such as
those embedded in equity and inclusive education policies advocating for colourblind, bias-free
hiring practices. The refusal to name and acknowledge the dominance of whiteness in education continues to reinforce the status quo of overwhelmingly white teachers in Ontario classrooms.

Chapter Four outlines the research design and qualitative methods used for the study, including document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews involved the sharing of experiences and perspectives of 10 participants from various school boards across Ontario, and participants represented a plethora of social locations. The documents selected for the document analysis method are examined in relation to a document analysis framework.

Chapter Five discusses the policy documents and reports analyzed in relation to equitable and inclusive teacher hiring practices at the school board level. The documents include Ministry of Education reports as well as school board documents created in response to the Ministry policies. The chapter also outlines and critiques individual Ontario school board equity and inclusive education policies in relation to bias-free teacher hiring.

Chapter Six details the themes and findings uncovered from the semi-structured interview data collection. The themes of the interview findings that are discussed include: beliefs about teacher representation, perspectives of teacher and administrative representation, experiences of race and racism in hiring, the implementation of equity and inclusive education policies, nepotism and favouritism, and conceptions of bias-free hiring. These themes and findings framed the following chapters as well as the Equity Hiring Toolkit.

Chapter Seven outlines suggestions and strategies to close the teacher diversity gap. The chapter closely analyzes various school board online teacher applications and how the applications that appear neutral can in fact locate applicants without the applicant self-identifying. The chapter presents a critical online teacher application checklist that interrogates
the meaningfulness of the process ascribed to applicant responses. The purpose of the checklist is to challenge the neutrality of the teacher application process.

Chapter Eight provides suggestions for recruiting more racialized and Indigenous teachers moving forward, including: the mandating of detailed school board census data, the reconceptualization of equity and inclusive education, and proposed Equity Hiring Toolkit for Ontario School Administrators. The overview of the Toolkit is detailed in the chapter; the actual Toolkit is attached at the end of the thesis. The Toolkit is created for practitioners and raises awareness of biases (conscious or subconscious) and how they inevitably impacts hiring decisions.

Chapter Nine concludes the thesis with future directions of study in relation to equity and inclusive teacher hiring and representation.

1.11 Key Terms

**Affirmative Action:** The development and implementation of positive measures with regard to all aspects of the employment of members of designated groups (Ontario Human Rights Code, 2010).

**Bias-free Hiring:** “In a bias-free hiring process, the goal is to get beyond our first impressions, stereotypes, and judgments about each candidate in order to assess their skills and abilities against the duties of the job” (Turner, 2014, p.1).

**Cultural Competency:** Professional development and training approaches to learn about other cultures and communities in order to be more understanding of different identities. As Schick & St. Denis challenge: “most think they are going to learn about the cultural other and be informed of strategies for how they will ‘deal with the other in the classroom’ ”(2005, p. 56).

**Cultural Racism:** Exists within the organizational culture in the unwritten rules and cultural norms that determine how things get done in the organization, who is valued in the organization, and who is not (Turner, 2015, p. 4).
**Designated Groups:** Refers to racial minorities, aboriginal peoples, women, and persons with disabilities. For the purpose of this policy, persons who have experienced discrimination because of sexual orientation and socio-economic status are also included (Ontario Human Rights Code, 2010).

**Discrimination:** Unfair or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code, or on the basis of other, similar factors (Ministry of Education Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation – 2009, Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools).

**Diversity:** The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status (Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009, p. 4).

**Employment Equity:** A program designed to remove systemic barriers to equality of outcomes in all aspects of employment and which leads to equitable representation of designated groups at all levels of employment (Ontario Human Rights Code, 2010).

**Equality:** The achievement of equal status in society in terms of access to opportunities, support, rewards and economic and social power for all without regard to age, gender, race, class, culture, faith, citizenship, disability, ethnic origin, family status, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status or same sex partner (terms from TDSB Employment Equity Policy P029, March 2012).

**Equity:** A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences (terms from TDSB Employment Equity Policy P029, March 2012).

**Inclusive:** Whether policies and practices are inclusive of people from diverse communities and identities (Terms from the PDSB *Journey Ahead* Document, 2013).
**Indigenous:** “Aboriginal identity refers to whether the person reported identifying with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. This includes those who reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit) and/or those who reported Registered or Treaty Indian status that is registered under the Indian Act of Canada and/or those who reported membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, Section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples of Canada” (Statistics Canada, 2011).

**Institutional Racism:** Institutional racism includes the written polices, procedures, and practices, which create barriers to the hiring, advancement, and full inclusion of racialized employees in the workplace (Turner, 2015, p. 4).

**Long Term Occasional Teacher (LTO):** An OCT who is employed by the board on a long-term contract. (This contract is not permanent and has a start and finish date). LTOs are either on the board LTO list (which they must be interviewed for and referees checked) or they are OTs (see below) who have an LTO placement (Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario).

**Multiculturalism:** Multiculturalism ensures that all citizens can keep their identities, take pride in their ancestry, and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures. The Canadian experience has shown that multiculturalism encourages racial and ethnic harmony and cross-cultural understanding (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012).

**New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP):** The NTIP “supports the growth and professional development of new teachers”(new permanent teachers). The program consists of mentorship with more senior teachers, professional development and training, as well as an orientation with the respective school board (NTIP, Ontario Ministry of Education)

**Neo-Liberalism:** The social, political, and economic ideology that advocates for reduced government regulations and emphasizes free-market competition. Citizens are reconceptualized as customers and the government should have as little oversight as possible. Neoliberalism calls for minimal taxes and the privatization of public services, goods, and spaces (Monbiot, 2016).
**Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT):** A teacher who is certified/licensed by the regulating body (Ontario College of Teachers) to teach in a publicly-funded school board (Ontario College of Teachers).

**Occasional Teacher (OT):** An OCT who is employed by the board on a casual basis. They have no salary and are paid a daily rate. The rate varies between boards; most OTs must work a minimum of 20 days to remain active on the board OT list for the next academic year (Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario).

**Permanent Teacher:** Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) who is employed by an Ontario school board on a full-time, permanent contract with a salary based on levels A1-A4 of the salary grid in accordance to education, experience and qualifications (Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario).

**Reasonable Accommodation:** Policies and procedures in place to identify and remove barriers in the workplace that keeps qualified employees from participating equally in all aspects of employment (Ontario Human Rights Code, 2010).

**Settler Colonialism:** “Settler colonialism is different from other forms of colonialism in that settlers come with the intention of making a new home on the land, a homemaking that insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain” (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5).

**Social Justice:** An interdisciplinary framework for analyzing various forms of oppression through a critical understanding and analysis of inequitable social, patterns, privileges, and institutions (Adams et al, 2007).

**Systemic Racism:** Systemic racism includes institutional racism and racism that is embedded in the organizational culture. Systemic racism can be embedded in written policies, procedures, and practices that create barriers to the hiring, advancement, and full inclusion of racialized employees. Organizational culture includes the unwritten rules and cultural norms that determine how things get done in the organization and what and who is important. The organization's culture sends powerful messages that can maintain racial disparities and racial hierarchies within the workplace (Turner, 2015, p. 4).
**Teacher Diversity Gap:** The ratio of racialized teachers to racialized students. “To calculate the Teacher Diversity Gap, the percentage of teachers of colour is divided by the percentage of the general population that is racialized. A value of 1.0 indicates that the teaching population reflects the diversity of the population and that there is no gap. The smaller the number is, the larger the gap” (Turner, 2015, p. 11).

**Visible Minority:** This category includes persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and who do not report being Aboriginal (Statistics Canada, 2011).

**White Privilege:** Social privileges that benefit white people and perpetuate the dominance of whiteness in society. Privileges include greater access to power, resources, and opportunities that are not afforded to non-whites (McIntosh, 1989).
Chapter 2:

Literature Review

2.1 Literature Review Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to review the extant literature pertaining to the barriers that systematically prevent access to the teaching profession for racialized and Indigenous bodies. These particular factors include: the inequitable access to the teaching profession faced by racialized bodies, the rise of precarious labour and shifting purposes of education framed through neoliberalism, the lack of racialized candidates in teacher education programs, gatekeeping mechanisms such as accreditation, and finally, an overview of equity and inclusive education initiatives in Ontario. Equity and inclusive education policy discursive practices have altered most recently from liberal multiculturalism to contemporary neoliberal equity and inclusive education (Segeren, 2016). The policies conceptualize diversity as a commodity that must be capitalized on in order to ensure student conformity, accountability and standardization for a competitive market-economy (Rezai-Rashti et al., 2017; Segeren, 2016; Spreen et al., 2014). Jack and Ryan noted that although the diversification of both the public and private workforce has been a central focus for several years now, the conception of diversity is as the authors suggested, “limited to its most basic form-that is of the workforce representing the faces of the general population, while continuing to reflect the values of the dominant group” (2015, p. 64).

The literature reviews the correlation between race and precarious employment for workers in Ontario and underlines the unique challenges that racialized and Indigenous people in Ontario encounter when attempting to access full-time and permanent employment. The literature analyzes the perpetuation of whiteness in Ontario teacher education program recruitment and graduation due to the dominant narratives of teacher identity that privilege white, female, heteronormative, middle class bodies, a narrative that is entrenched in the racial
and sexual contracts (Mills & Pateman, 2015). Furthermore, the chapter examines the myriad gatekeeping mechanisms that are in place that control access to the teaching profession through licensing requirements, the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP), and the Program’s mandatory mentorship requirement to be contracted as a full-time permanent teacher (Barrett et al., 2009).

2.2 Neoliberalism and Equity Initiatives in Education

Education in Ontario experienced a significant paradigm shift under Progressive Conservative Premier Mike Harris’s leadership. Under Harris’s leadership, the “Common Sense Revolution” enhanced the privatization of public education through vast cuts to social programs, especially targeting the education system. Harris initiated the implementation of three education bills: Bill 104, the Fewer School Boards Act of 1997; Bill 160, the Educational Quality Improvement Act of 1997; and Bill 74 the Educational Accountability Act of 2000 (Segeren, 2016, p. 44). Education became increasingly aligned with neoliberalism on the premises of socialization, assimilation, and conformity for a trained and productive workforce (Giroux, 2014). The neoliberal shift to a marketized educational agenda was marked by an increasing emphasis on performance-based measures, accountability, transparency, and standardization in terms of the curriculum and evaluation mechanisms (Segeren, 2016, p. 7). Standardization of education in the neoliberal context both at the provincial and international levels manifested itself in the form of math and literacy evaluations such as EQAO (Education Quality and Accountability Office) and PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) evaluations (Segeren, 2016, p. 37).

Education within the neoliberal paradigm is no longer conceptualized as a social or public good, but rather a commodity that is to be privatized (Giroux, 2014; Slaughter, 2009). Neoliberalism’s push to privatize the education system has segregated schools and created a two-
tiered schooling model that is highly racialized. Schools in more affluent areas with wealthier families and corporate connections provide lucrative fundraising incentives and donations; parents and families in low-income neighbourhoods lack the disposable income to provide such funds (Johnson, 2017). As Segeren and Kutsyuruba pointed out, neoliberalism and social justice are fundamentally and ideologically incompatible (2012, p.17); Grimaldi further emphasized this incompatibility when he noted:

Neoliberal discourses of human capital, individualization, school, improvement, performativity and standardization impedes any contextual, multidimensional and actual approach to social exclusion as well as the pursuit of any egalitarian outcomes be they (re) distributive, cultural or associated outcomes. (2012, p. 1131)

As critical theorists suggested, Neoliberalism has furthermore commodified diversity in Ontario by reformulating equity and inclusive education policies to represent students and families as clients in a subtle manner to ensure that racialized and Indigenous students conform and ascribe to white normativity in education (Morris, 2016, p. 952). From my own experiences as an Occasional Teacher, a Long Term Occasional Teacher and a permanent Early Childhood Educator, the commodification of diversity was evident through celebratory gestures such as food and music. For example, rotating theme-based events such as Asian Heritage Month, or Black History Month whereby African and Asian histories, cultures, and societies are amalgamated into one known and objectified entity. Furthermore, the celebration of Latin[0/a], Indigenous, African, and Asian pedagogies are only inserted into learning during their designated months, while Eurocentrism remains grounded as the dominant worldview and knowledge base.

The increasing privatization trend within public education has been fuelled by the corporatization of publicly-funded education in Ontario that is perpetuated by the capitalist discourse of offering “choice” to parents as stakeholders and clients (Spreen et al., 2014, p. 131). This approach asserts that the state should not be involved in client choices of education, as education is contextualized as a service that is best left up to market forces (Spreen et al., 2014,
The privatization of public education in the context of neoliberalism removes the notion of education for the public or social good and replaces it with that of education for results-based learning. Advocates of this model in the American context (and increasingly in Ontario) blame teachers as the sole culprit for student failures; the blame of teachers has, as Spreen et al. posited, two objectives: firstly the de-professionalization of the teaching profession and, secondly, the weakening of the labour force, thus paving the way for the full privatization of schools and a body of non-unionized paraprofessional teachers (2014, p. 135).

The Organization for Economic Cooperative Development (OECD) has praised Ontario’s education system as a “high quality, high equity” system (OECD, 2011; Segeren, 2016). Neoliberal educational reforms focus on student performance on standardized evaluations, which have become the defining measure of how equity is measure in the province. Neoliberal equity initiatives stemming from former multicultural education to current equity and inclusive education conceptualize equity in education as correlated to student performance and outcome (Rezai-Rashti, et al., 2017). Rezai-Rashti, et al. critiqued the neoliberal underpinnings of equity education in Ontario. The authors argued that the equity policy emphasis on neoliberal indicators of student performance and achievement provided “limited attention to and recognition of structural and systemic inequities that are present in the education system” (2017, p. 162). The authors emphasized the following:

While educational equity remains inextricably linked to ensuring equitable outcomes and closing achievement gaps, equity is also seen as a vehicle through which test scores and by extension inter-national competitiveness can be raised. Ontario’s diversity is cast as an economic resource and a necessary condition for global economic competitiveness. (Rezai-Rashti, et al., 2017, p. 166)

Moreover, the praise of the Ontario education system as a model for student achievement and diversity offers a fallacy by silencing the historical and continued inequities for racialized
and Indigenous populations (Lingard, et al., 2013). The discussion of the neoliberalization of the labour market will be further emphasized in the following section on precarious labour.

2.3 Race and Precarious Labour in Ontario

Racialized and Indigenous people in Ontario are overrepresented in unemployment as well as low-paid and precarious labour. Precarious employment is work that is part-time, temporary, and/or contract work with low wages, limited or no benefits, on-call hours and/or uncertain periods of employment (Evans & Gibb, 2009, p.4). Evans and Gibb defined precarious work as:

Forms of work characterized by atypical employment contracts, limited or no social benefits and statutory entitlements, high degrees of job insecurity, low job tenure, low wages and high risks of occupational injury and disease. From a worker’s point of view, precarious work is related to uncertain, unpredictable and risky employment. (2009, p. 4).

As Cranson (2003) asserted, the face of this neoliberal trend is both gendered and racialized. Cranson (2003) described the labour timeline that occurred following World War Two: during the 1940s the standard employment relationship was the norm for employer and employee relationships. The standard employment relationship included labour laws, strong unions, as well as legislation and policies that protected worker rights. However, the benefits of this type of working relationship did not extend to all Canadians. They were confined largely to white male workers and their white employers and unions. The erosion of the standard employment relationship occurred slowly following the expansion of immigration policies beyond Europe’s borders in the 1960s and 1970s (Evans, 2007). The deterioration of the standard employment relationship has amounted to the erosion of legal protections such as unionization, agency, collective bargaining participation, and workplace rights (Lewchuk, et al., 2013). The rise of precarity has furthermore increased rates of illness, injury, and mental health concerns due to employment instability (Cranson, 2003; Lewchuk, et al., 2013). Although the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) is the union responsible for the teaching profession
covers both casual and permanent teachers, non-permanent teachers face many of the burdens of employment uncertainty, unstable wages, and a lack of guaranteed hours.

Precarious labour in the neoliberal context has entered the professions, such as in teaching, nursing, librarianship, as well as the PSE professoriate. The teaching profession in Ontario is becoming increasingly precarious due to the surplus of teachers in the province (Mindzak, 2016). Precarious or occasional teaching (OT) positions have become highly competitive, although the prospects for full-time employment in the teaching profession remain dismal (OCT Transition to Teaching, 2012). Mindzak described the barriers facing the precarious pool of LTOs and OTs, and noted that these non-permanent teachers:

Appear to signify a group that is struggling to secure employment, marginalized from the teaching profession, facing precarious employment and lacking access as well as a voice in their work (2016, p. 57).

Pollock (2010) conveyed that it is beneficial to both the profession and the education system alike to have a surplus of supply teachers. Pollock asserted that the pool of qualified precarious teachers effectively:

Guarantees that there will always be a need for a pool of certified, non permanent teachers who are available for deployment within a short period of time, for indefinite periods and across a broad range of grade levels and subject areas (2010, p. 1).

Racialized teachers are faced with an uphill battle when it comes to securing contract work in the precarious teaching profession. Kipusi (2013) reported alarming racialized disparities between white and non-white OTs in terms of obtaining LTO contracts or being selected for the LTO List; the authors conclude: “there is a significant relationship between being Caucasian and holding more LTO positions, furthermore their data suggests that “Caucasians report that they have been hired for every position they have applied for more than visible minorities 15.9% vs. 8.8%” (2013, p. 8). The findings demonstrate a preference for hiring and promoting white teachers, generally teachers who resemble the social location of the administration. Ryan et al.
(2009) noted two institutional barriers toward racialized and Indigenous candidates accessing the teaching profession. First, inequitable educational practices and opportunities such as streaming, and disciplinary measures such as expulsions and suspensions. Second, discriminatory hiring practices toward licensed teachers based on their race and credentials if their teacher education was completed abroad. The authors called for hiring committees and licensing processes that are overseen by the OCT to be cognizant of their biases and preconceived notions that may perceive internationally obtained credentials from a deficit perspective (Sharma & Portelli, 2014). As Ryan et al. asserted:

Those involved in both licensing and hiring processes also need to make sure that they have adequate knowledge of other systems and be aware of their inherent stereotypical biases and prejudices. They need to know that many of their common sense assumptions about standards and practice may routinely disadvantage professionals of colour. (2009, p. 18)

Although Canada is romanticized within the dominant discursive narratives of settler-colonial nationhood as a land of opportunity for immigrants and multicultural celebration, racialized and Indigenous people in Canada are often socially excluded by the labour market (Gallabuzi, 2006). This social exclusion manifests itself in low-paying and unsafe working conditions, vulnerable and insecure residency protocols such as those in the Live In Caregiver Program and Temporary Foreign Worker Program, as well as disproportionate levels of illness, discrimination, limited mobility, and higher levels of mental illness (Gallabuzi, 2006). As Gallabuzi mentioned, “racialized groups thus provide a subsidy for the booming globalizing economy, drawing parallels to the contribution of free slave labour to the emergence of industrial capitalism” (2006, p. xii).

According to the Conference Board of Canada, some 844,000 Canadians are not securing employment in their trained fields due to the lack of credential recognition (Desjardins, 2016). Racialized immigrants are more likely to possess higher levels of education in comparison to
white Canadians, but tend to face fewer employment opportunities and significantly lower income levels (CRRF, 2015-2016). Therefore, employment is not neutral nor is it merit-based; it is a highly racially stratified system that privileges whiteness at the expense of racialized and Indigenous Canadians through both the discursive practices of meritocracy as well as the valuing of certain knowledge and experiences over others (Premji, et al., 2014).

The correlation between race, gender, and employment is evident as racialized males are 24% more likely to be unemployed than white males, and racialized women fare far worse and are 48% more likely to be unemployed than white men. Those who are employed earn a mere 55.6% of white male earnings (Block & Gallabuzi, 2011). Block and Gallabuzi articulated the resulting racialization of poverty in Canada, indicating that racialized Canadians earn only 81.4 cents for every dollar earned by white Canadians. The authors observed the racialization of poverty as follows:

The racialization of poverty refers to a phenomenon where poverty becomes disproportionately concentrated and reproduced among racialized group members, in some cases inter-generationally. The emergence of precarious work as a major feature of Canadian labour markets is an important explanation for the racialization of poverty. (2011, p. 15)

A Canadian Race Relations Foundations Annual Report (2015-2016) further indicated troubling trends facing racialized and Indigenous Canadians. The report found that Indigenous people are three times less likely than white Canadians to be in the top 20% category of income earners, while racialized Canadians are two times less likely than their white counterparts. Thus, racialized and Indigenous Canadians are overrepresented in the low-income earning category and underrepresented in the top-income earning echelon. As there is a surplus of teachers in Ontario, precarious or occasional teaching positions have become highly competitive, although the prospects for full-time employment in the teaching profession remain dismal (OCT Transition to Teaching, 2012/2015). The disparity between racialized and Indigenous people in precarious
work and that of white Canadians counters the guideline for objective and bias-free teacher hiring and advancement as racialized and Indigenous Ontarians continue to overwhelmingly face race-based employment barriers (Cranson, 2003).

2.4 Racial Inequities in Accessing Teacher Education Programs

In a 1988 survey conducted by the Ontario Ministry of Education, it was found that 90% of all pre-service teachers were white, and predominantly Anglo-Saxon (Childs et al., 2010). The Ministry then began to hold discussions concerning avenues to attract more “visible minorities” for teacher education recruitment. One of the mechanisms the Ministry incorporated was racial or Indigeneity identification categories included in Teacher Education applications in Ontario. In 2011, for the upcoming 2012 academic year the Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC) listed eight Teacher Education faculties, including Brock, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), York, Queen’s, Trent, Wilfred Laurier, Windsor, and Nippising. These faculties indicated racial identity as a factor in admission decisions (Tupper, 2012). Most of the applications included an option for candidates to “self-identify” as a minority. Although it is commendable that students could choose to self-identify, or through the York University application site, could apply utilizing the “Access Initiative” application for Indigenous and racial minority students; the problem lies in the lack of data concerning the demographics of applicants admitted into the program still remains. As Childs et al. suggested:

Faculties do not publish information about the racial identities of their applicants or those they admit, so it is not possible to determine whether all applicants-and those who are offered admission and who chose to attend-are representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of students in the schools. (2010, p.180)

Therefore, similar to the equity and inclusive education legislation and policies, there is a lack of oversight, a negligence of record keeping, or possibly a fear of disclosure in terms of who is hired and promoted. There is also an omission of obligation to collect race-based data in relation to teaching contract or positions of leadership.
As previously mentioned, the “leaky pipeline” metaphor conceptualized by Ryan et al. (2009) correlates to the understanding of the identities that are privileged to progress seamlessly through the pipeline to PSE. There are several factors that have been elaborated on previously that contribute to the pushing out of racialized and Indigenous bodies from the education system from kindergarten to PSE. The factors include: streaming, disciplinary measures and Eurocentric curriculum and school norms that silence non-European epistemologies (Dei, 2012; James, 2012/2010). Because race-based data collection is not mandatory, only two Ontario school boards collect census data on their staff and student population. The two boards that collect this data are the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Peel District School Board (PDSB).

According to the TDSB, race is highly linked to graduation rates. Black students and Latino students are substantially less likely to graduate from high school. Black graduation rates stand at 50.8% and Latino student graduation rates are at 69.2%, in comparison to the overall graduation rate of 83% (TDSB, 2015). Black, Indigenous, Latino and Middle Eastern students are vastly more likely to be suspended and expelled and there is a strong correlation between school suspensions and the criminal justice system (James, 2012; Madan, 2016; Ruck & Wortley, 2002; Winton, 2012.). Additionally, racialized students, especially Black students, are less likely to believe that schools are safe and welcoming spaces (Ruck & Wortley, 2002). The push out and marginalization processes that force racialized and Indigenous bodies out of schooling and the education system is indicative of the underrepresentation of Black and Brown bodies in teacher education programs, and as certified teachers. Racialized and Indigenous candidates who do enter pre-service education programs are often isolated and face hostility as white teacher candidates dominate teacher education programs (Escayg, 2008). The privileging of whiteness and the role of white performativity in teacher education is further elaborated on in the following paragraph.
2.5 White Performativity and Socialization in Teacher Education

White, middle-class, heteronormative females dominate teacher education programs in Ontario (Childs et al., 2010; Pinto et al., 2005; Ryan et al., 2009; Solomon et al., 2005). By perceived “merit” white teacher candidates have passed through the social gate keeping of the admissions process and are almost immediately guaranteed a smooth transition to OCT licensing. This phenomenon was confirmed by Landry’s (2016) analysis of the pervasive Whiteness intertwined in teacher education programs. As Landry put it, “with the majority of teachers in Canada being white, middle class females, and Canada being governed by Eurocentric ideals, I argue that whiteness, white privilege and discourses of neutrality permeate Ontario’s teacher education programs” (2016, p. 11).

The discourse of whiteness is evident in both teacher recruitment and teacher education programs where whiteness informs the teaching professions culture (Solomon et al., 2005). The authors articulated the teacher socialization process throughout pre-service teacher education programs as the “institutionalization of whiteness” that effectively perpetuates white normativity in the teaching profession and informs the ideology of teacher identity as one based on character, morality and care (Morris, 2016; Solomon et al., 2005). Lund (1998); also noted the entrenched resistance of the teaching profession to change, describing the profession as “conservative”; Lund postulated that admissions tend to favour whiteness as white candidates are considered less likely to disrupt or challenge the status quo. As they have benefited greatly from their privilege; white teacher candidates have also likely had positive educational experiences.

The literature suggests that the dominance of whiteness in teacher education is not only prevalent in relation to the number of permanent teachers already in practice in GTA boards, but it is also flourishing in the culture of teacher education recruitment and admissions processes. Solomon et al., (2005) are another research group that drew attention to the perpetuation of
whiteness in teacher education programs across the province. The authors pointed to white
dominance in teaching as the profession itself is historically conceptualized as a white, middle
class profession. As such teacher education programs have continuously perpetuated an
unofficial policy of gate keeping, whereby hegemonic narratives of teacher identity, and
identifying who can become a teacher is informed by white privilege. Solomon et al. (2005)
contemplated the normativity of whiteness in teacher education. These authors posited that:

The increased racial diversity within Canadian schools and society in general is seldom
reflected amongst teacher education candidates enrolled in faculties of education. The
continued over-representation of white, female, middle class, heterosexual bodies within
faculties clearly belies the increased minority representation in the schools (2005, p. 149).

Statistics Canada (2011) has estimated that by 2031 Canada’s racialized population will
be 32%, and 63% in Toronto, therefore should the trend of white dominance continue, the
teacher diversity gap would widen even more dramatically (Turner, 2015). The lack of
accountability in terms of releasing race-based data obtained from teacher applications to the
public presents a challenge in determining which bodies are admitted to teacher education
programs and which do not receive an offer of admission. The connection between the pre-
service education admissions procedure to certification to teacher hiring must be acknowledged.
The lack of mandatory data collection in terms of both teacher admissions as well as school
board data that indicates the correlation between job status and race makes it difficult to
determine whether or not teacher education policies are closing the diversity gap among teacher
candidates.

2.6  Gatekeeping the Teaching Profession

The Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) is the regulatory body that oversees the teaching
profession in Ontario. The OCT is responsible for setting regulations, outlining teacher
certification and licensure. Internationally Educated Teachers (IETs) have been considerably
marginalized in terms of teacher representation in publicly-funded education. A 2008 OCT
report indicated that only 7% of IETs found employment in an Ontario school board, in comparison to 29% of all other Ontario graduates (Transition to Teaching, OCT 2008). IETs are discursively placed outside of the settler-state definition of the white, heteronormative narrative of teacher identity (Ryan, 2009; Solomon et al., 2005). Eurocentric socialization processes are endemic in Ontario Faculties of Education (Pollock, 2010). IETs are “othered” by their racialized identities, accents, and perceived innate “foreignness” to the dominant white, able-bodied, heterosexual, female teacher construction (Childs, et al., 2010; Pollock, 2010; Solomon, 2005). Premji et al. (2014) outlined mechanisms that bar racialized immigrant women to the teaching profession, including: the lack of recognition of foreign credentials, the lack of Canadian employment experience; language barriers; and their limited professional network. The author suggested “immigration and integration policies, restrictive professional accreditation systems and discriminatory employer practices, all of which operate along racialized and gender lines” (2014, p. 123). In an oversaturated teaching job market, IETs suffer the brunt of racist hiring and promotion processes, which clearly contradict the dominant discourse about “bias/barrier-free” hiring and promotion policies.

A final aspect of racialized gatekeeping within the teaching profession I would like to address is that of the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP). Prior to the NTIP, the Ontario regulations required all new graduates from teacher education programs to pass the Ontario Teacher Qualifying Test (OTQT) that was introduced under Premier Mike Harris. The OTQT entailed a four-hour examination consisting of 36 multiple-choice questions and 14 open-ended responses. In 2006, the Liberal government removed the OTQT requirement (Pinto, et al., 2012). The Ontario Ministry of Education introduced the NTIP in 2009, with the following rationale:

The NTIP supports the growth of new teachers. It is a step in a continuum of professional learning for teachers to support effective teaching, learning and assessment practices. It provides another full year of professional support so that new teachers can continue to
develop the requisite skills and knowledge that will support increased success as teachers in Ontario. By helping new teachers achieve their full potential, the NTIP supports Ontario’s vision of achieving high levels of student performance (NTIP, 2009).

The NTIP includes several elements, such as: orientation programs for all new permanently hired teachers to both the school and the board; mentoring for new teachers by seasoned teachers, professional development and training in areas of math, literacy and technology; and classroom management training. In order for teachers to successfully complete the NTIP, they must pass two TPAs (Teacher Performance Appraisals). Barrett et al. (2009) problematized the NTIP, by questioning the hidden curriculum embedded in the program as a mechanism to marginalize certain bodies from attaining permanent teaching contracts. The authors observed that the mentorship of new teachers by experienced teachers who are overwhelmingly white, middle-class, heterosexual, and female only serves to maintain and perpetuate the status quo through a racialized conception and discourse of “competency” in terms of TPAs. Furthermore, they suggest that the NTIP both standardizes the profession and demands conformity, noting “a transmission-based model of teacher induction/membership. The assumptions about good teaching that are being made and are never interrogated because the transmission model does not encourage critique” (Barrett et al., 2009, p. 678).

There are also controversies within the NTIP, as the program provides administrators with enormous authority to select mentors to maintain the status quo of uncritical pedagogical practices and those who will not challenge the system. In a study conducted by Pinto et al. (2012) issues of social justice, equity, and inclusion are marginalized and minimized by administrators throughout the NTIP process. As the authors explained, the authority and autonomy of administrators allowed, “principals to reproduce and reinforce existing school cultures, or transform the way teachers teach students and students learn through their leadership roles and influence of their staff” (Pinto et al., 2012, p. 6). The authors concluded that social
justice considerations become brushed aside as classroom management strategies take precedence (Barrett et al., 2009; Pinto et al., 2012).

2.7 Conclusion

The review of the literature highlighted the importance of contextualizing the underlying and multifaceted processes that have contributed to the teacher diversity gap in Ontario schools. These factors include: inequitable practices in education that push Black and Brown bodies out of schooling, as well as the rise of precarious employment and the racialization of poverty, as well as the privatization, and neoliberal discourses of equity that have guided equity and inclusive education. The literature discussed gatekeeping mechanisms such as the OCT in terms of accreditation that marginalize immigrant teachers, and the socializing processes that are embedded in the NTIP. Although all of these important factors were examined in relation to their impact on the lack of racially and Indigenous teachers, there is a lack of literature in relation to the relationship between school administrators and teacher hiring.

While progress and gains have been made in some Ontario school boards with respect to the collection of staff, student, and community census data, extant literature points to the overall ineffectiveness of equity and inclusive education policies in minimizing the teacher diversity gap. In the literature it is evident that there are gaps concerning the importance, responsibility, and role of school leaders in hiring racialized and Indigenous teachers. Various components are suggested by the literature in underpinning the barriers racialized and Indigenous candidates encounter when pursuing a teaching career. Nonetheless, there are limited sources that critically analyze the discourses surrounding bias-free and objective-hiring practices as an equitable and inclusive recruitment strategy for educators. For racialized and Indigenous teachers to be represented in Ontario classrooms it is essential that the perpetuation of white privilege in teacher hiring be disrupted by encouraging school administrators in publicly-funded schools
across Ontario to examine their preconceived biases as well as their social location in order to
determine how their unique social location and unconscious biases implicate hiring patterns and
decisions.

Individuals all carry biases, whether conscious or unconscious, based on our specific social locations, upbringing, group identities, and interactions within society. The refusal to name and interrogate one’s own social location, power relations and examine known and unknown biases removes the necessity of challenging racialized power relations embedded in teacher hiring processes. As a Creative Professional Activity (CPA) I have created a proposed Equity Hiring Toolkit for School Administrators, which I will describe later. The creation of the EHT challenges administrators to locate themselves by examining their own identities and social locations and examine how their own positionalities, as well as conscious and unconscious biases and how these biases implicate hiring decisions. The EHT effectively brings forward the omitted discussion of race that has been silenced by colour-blind, merit-based hiring. In order for the teacher diversity gap to close, administrators and other hiring committee members must identify their own particular positions of power, privilege, oppression, beliefs, preconceived notions, and location within the hierarchy of white supremacy in education.
Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the two theoretical frameworks that converge to situate this research: Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) and Critical Race Theory (CRT). CWS is central to examining equity and inclusive teacher hiring policies because the majority of those making hiring decisions are white. CWS (Gillborn, 2005; Leonardo, 2002; Leonardo & Zemblyas, 2013; Solomon et al., 2005; Wise, 2011) problematizes the normalcy of whiteness in education and the refusal of white educators to name and acknowledge their white privilege (Matias, et al., 2014). CRT (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998/2001; Matias et al., 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012; Sleeter, 2017) interrogates power relations masked within discursive neoliberal inclusivity politics such as colour-blind, bias-free hiring policies that appear to be neutral but severely disadvantage racialized and Indigenous applicants. Coulthard (2014) has argued that “recognition” is a component of colonial domination in which the settler state “recognizes” Indigenous rights, yet simultaneously denies these rights by failing to dismantle ongoing settler-colonial policies of domination. A similar approach can be applied toward the discourses of “inclusive” and “equitable” education, that seeks to “recognize” differences in a celebratory manner without any regard to the examination of power relations that detrimentally impact racialized and Indigenous bodies. The two theories although different align by disrupting the structural and institutional racialized power relations that prevent Black and Brown bodies from entering the teaching profession, even after they avoid spillage from the pipeline (Ryan et al., 2009) and obtain teacher certification.

Matias et al. (2014) illustrated the convergences and divergences of both frameworks:

Like CRT, CWS employs an interdisciplinary approach, which is beneficial to how we conceptualize the white imagination. Unlike CRT, CWS focuses on problematizing the
normality of hegemonic whiteness, arguing that in doing so whites deflect, ignore or dismiss their role, racialization and privilege in race dynamics. (2014, p. 291)

The intertwining of CWS and CRT is central to examining and dismantling the colour-blind narratives of equity and inclusion in teacher hiring policies. Moreover, the majority of those making hiring decisions are white, therefore CWS troubles the normativity of and perpetuation of white privilege in teacher hiring by encouraging school administrators to engage in critical leadership praxis to discern how their social location impacts their hiring patterns.

3.2 Critical Whiteness Studies

Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) (Gillborn, 2005; Leonardo, 2002; Leonardo & Zemblyas, 2013; Matias et al., 2014; Solomon et al., 2005; Wise, 2011) emerged from the Critical Race Theory (CRT) field. CWS differs from CRT as Landry (2016) explained as CWS:

Allows for a deeper analysis and dialogue on the issues and omnipresence of whiteness as it focuses predominantly on the social construction of whiteness and its role in the social, political, cultural and historical aspects (p. 14).

The aim of CWS is to “move away from the quintessential focus on the “racial other” and examine instead the institutionalization of whiteness and the systematic factors that underscore its continued dominance” (Solomon, et al., 2005, 147). Therefore, whiteness must be examined in terms of how its performativity and invisibility perpetuate and reproduce binary colonial dichotomies of power and oppression. Giroux (2005) outlined key components of whiteness, one of them being an unwillingness to name the processes of racism and racialization, whereby inequity in employment, education, and wealth are explained by a plethora of alternative and unrelated factors.

The ideology of meritocracy is fuelled by white privilege. As Liu has proposed:

The reality of meritocracy is that it is not so ambiguous. A troubling effect of an uncritical view of meritocracy is that by not acknowledging there are greater social inequalities at play, there may be a tendency to view students who have do not reach higher levels of educational attainment as having failed on their own terms. (2011, p. 384)
To acknowledge white privilege would be to recognize the “myth of meritocracy” (Bloodworth, 2016), and the omission of white people to identify with a collective racial/ethnic group, history, or experience is problematized. As Giroux (2005) has indicated, whites gain their power and dominance through the “othering” of ethnicity, in which whiteness becomes a normalized and naturalized phenomenon. Whiteness therefore stands as the norm in which all non-whites are “othered” (Said, 1978). Finally, there is an innate minimization of racist ideology permeated by both denial as well as the dominant narrative that racism is a phenomenon of the past (Leonardo, 2002). CWS calls for a deconstruction of whiteness, what it means as well as its dominance in the construction and perpetuation of Eurocentrism within the education system.

Matias et al. illuminated:

CWS acknowledges the dangers of whiteness, especially when whites assume the role of the Determiner (with a capital D) of what is and is not racist. This places manifestations of race and racism in the hands of those who racially benefit from the subjugation of people of colour.” (2014, p. 296)

CWS unveils the invisibility and hegemonic norm of whiteness; it interrogates whiteness as a social and racial category and puts the onus on whiteness rather than examining systems of oppression from solely the lens of the problematization and othering of non-whites. CWS brings race into dialogue, rather than reiterating neutral, neoliberal, and colour-blind narratives that champion meritocracy while disregarding the inequitable distribution of resources and power.

Schick and St. Denis (2005) drew on their experiences of educating predominantly white pre-service teachers and remark on the denial of race as an important aspect of power, privilege, and status. The authors drew on their own anticolonial and antiracist pedagogy in their teacher education classrooms, Schick and St. Denis observed the following:

The strategy of denying that race matters supports differences of power reflected in historic, social, political, and economic practices. Race is a social and historical category produced through power relations and necessary for the construction of difference that is frequently explained in dominant discourses. The outright denial of unequal power normalizes and makes invisible both historic and current relations of
inequality based on race, racial inequality is assumed to be an explanation for disadvantage.” (2005, p. 62)

Bonilla-Silva (2006) referred to the new ideology of racism as the emergence of colour-blind racism in a “Post-Jim Crow” era whereby overt racism has been replaced by subtle racism in liberal society. Although Bonilla-Silva (2006) is writing distinctly from an American context, there are various parallels with Canada as both societies are neo-colonial settler states that benefit from the domination of Indigenous and racialized peoples and the continued hegemony of white supremacy. As Bonilla-Silva explained, “Most whites endorse the ideology of colour-blindness and that this ideology is central to the maintenance of white privilege” (p. 14). Colour-blind racism is one such ideology, which is premised upon the notion of a “post-racial” world; this argument has been particularly popular since the election of President Barack Obama. Thus, the fallacy of meritocracy as hegemony omits any discussion about the racialization of socio-economic status, the dominance of white teachers and administrators, and disproportionate dropout rates, suspensions, and expulsions of racialized and Indigenous students.

Colour-blind racism does not “notice” race or social location; rather it only views individuals in a neo-liberal capitalist society in accordance with their so-called merit (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). This colour-blind racism operates on the assumption that each individual in an individualistic and competitive society is a free agent and has equal opportunity to pursue his or her own ambitions in life (Matias & Mackey, 2016). CWS dismantles systems of white privilege, such as education by requiring practitioners to develop a critical awareness of the manifestation of whiteness institutional structures. The liberal and increasingly neoliberal conception of individualized meritocracy is birthed from the era of European Industrial Revolution, expansion, colonization, and industrialization. This philosophy of “human nature” and purpose is distinctly from a Eurocentric lens and vantage point. It is from this very conception that colour-blind racism thrives through four distinct frames, which Bonilla-Silva (2006) categorized. The four
frames entail: abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and the minimization of racism. Colour-blind racism is a key aspect of CWS as it calls for whites to examine their positionality as a racial and social group; and challenges the normalcy of whiteness and the perpetuation of white privilege, white housing, and school and neighbourhood segregation through subtle and coded discursive practices (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Within the education system, racialized and Indigenous bodies are problematized in a manner whereby whiteness remains unnamed and unchallenged (Dei, 2007) and othered identities are punished. Racialized and Indigenous bodies are punished by disproportionate expulsion rates (Dei, 2007; James, 2012; Lopez, 2013) and referrals to behavioural and special needs programs. Racialized and Indigenous teachers are underrepresented in Ontario’s teacher demographic for their deviation from the white, settler-colonial narrative of teacher identity (Mills & Pateman, 2015).

### 3.3 Critical Race Theory

CRT (Crenshaw, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998/2005; Matias et al., 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012; Sleeter, 2017) has its roots in the field of Critical Legal Scholarship (CLS). During the 1970s CRT emerged in response to deteriorating racial equality advances made in the 1960s, in particular the disproportionate impact of the legal implications on African Americans (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012; Stefancic & Delgado, 2011). Ladson-Billings (1998) outlined four objectives of CRT as: the normalization of racism in society, story-telling as a counter-narrative to white dominance, the critique of liberalism where systems of racism and racialization are silenced, and finally, the emphasis on race realism. Stefancic and Delgado (2001) defined CRT as “a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship among race, racism and power” (p. 2).

CRT is utilized to analyze the field of education in order to identify the racialized processes that disenfranchise and marginalize racialized and Indigenous students. These
processes include: streaming, disciplinary policies and practices, and achievement by asserting that the organization of society is based on racialized hierarchies that must be dismantled (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The deconstruction of the categories of “otherness” in which othered identities are constructed and measured in relation to the normativity of whiteness is a central tenant of CRT. Ladson-Billings (1998) asserted:

The creation of these conceptual categories is not designed to reify a binary but rather to suggest how, in a racialized society where whiteness is positioned as normative, language is ranked and categorized to these points of opposition. These categories fundamentally sculpt the extant terrain of possibilities, even when other possibilities exist. (1998, p. 9)

The race-neutral discursive practices make the naming and disruption of the operations of race and racialization ever more challenging. In the context of Ontario’s equity and inclusive education policies, the conceptions of equity and inclusion, and the narratives of the teacher diversity gap are based on meritocratic notions of achievement in a neoliberal context, most notably “bias-free” hiring. Sleeter (2017) emphasized the prevalence of meritocracy and neutrality in highly-racializing matters such as teacher recruitment. Sleeter reinforced:

The dominant ideology attributes people’s widely different levels of success within a system of competitive individualism to talent and effort and racial disparities to those factors plus lingering effects of historical racism. CRT in context holds that claims of neutrality and colourblindness mask white privilege and power. (2017, p. 160)

CRT provides strategies and practices to attain transformational change to the dominant structures of white supremacy in education by deconstructing systems of oppression and transforming them into more equitable power relations (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The most effective way to engage in this transformative practice is through the utilization of counter-stories to challenge and interrupt racialized norms and stereotypes embedded in white settler-colonial societies. The empowering of marginalized voices silenced by white supremacy is emphasized by Delgado & Stefancic (2001). The authors contended:

Stories also serve as a powerful psychic function for minority communities. Many victims of racial discrimination suffer in silence, or blame themselves for their
predicament. Stories can give them voice and reveal that others have similar experiences. Stories can name a type of discrimination; once named it can be combated. (2001, p. 43)

Stories provide agency to racialized and Indigenous voices in providing personal accounts of encounters and experiences of race and racialization. Ladson-Billings (1998) conceptualized the importance of counter narratives as measure to provide a deep conceptual understanding of the realities of race and racism in the education system. The personal narrative is important to critical and transformational practice and action as “the naming of one’s own reality with stories can affect the oppressor” (p. 14). The importance of CRT to the study is its focus on the interrogation of the institutionalization of neutrality, conceptualizing equity and inclusive education policies, specifically for the purpose of this work, and teacher-hiring protocols to close the teacher diversity gap. CRT effectively dismantles the claims of objectivity and colourblindness emphasized in bias-free hiring strategies by arguing that these strategies serve to perpetuate the status quo of whiteness in teacher recruitment by masking white privilege (Sleeter, 2017).

3.4 Conclusion

The rationale of the utilization of the two theoretical frameworks to situate my study is as follows: first, CWS is necessary to re-centre the focus on whiteness rather than on “othered” identities, as whiteness operates through its invisibility, normalcy neutrality and denial (Schick & St. Denis, 2003). CWS, in congruence with CRT, allows race to be brought into dialogue and critical conversations, about power relations and white privilege in education in both institutional structures and power relations. CRT effectively challenges the claims of “post racialization” (Crenshaw, 2011, p. 1261) by drawing attention to the processes of racialization and othering that are neutralized in meritocratic hiring policies, which are assumed to be raceless (Crenshaw, 2011; Leonardo & Zemblyas, 2013; Sleeter, 2017). The frameworks disrupt the neutrality of colourblind neoliberalism embedded in equity and inclusive teacher hiring policies by
deconstructing whiteness and white privilege in white-dominated institutions such as teaching.

Matias and Mackay (2016) summarized the critical role of CWS in problematizing the salience of race, as well as the “deconstruction of whiteness” through critical action and practice (Lopez, 2013; Tatum, 1997). By the learning and unlearning of white privilege (p. 35) the authors asserted that:

In understanding how race and racism impact people of colour—the study of CWS provides teachers, many of whom are white, with a process of learning their own whiteness and how the exertions of whiteness create a violent condition within which people of colour must racially survive. Choosing to ignore this knowledge set gives partial understanding of racial injustice, one that cannot fully allow for commitment to racial justice. (Matias & Mackay, 2016, p. 35)

Moreover, CWS and CRT dismantle what Henry and Tator (1999) referred to as “democratic racism” that is embedded in the “bias-free” teacher recruitment and certification processes. Democratic racism is referred to as:

Explanations, narratives, codes of meanings, accounts and narratives that establish, sustain and reinforce oppressive power relations. Racialized discourse is a set of social practices that favours the in-group and denigrates the out-group, categorizing, evaluating and differentiating between groups. Democratic racism is a discursive practice. (Henry & Tator, 1998, p. 123)

Democratic racism is based on what the authors articulate as two oppositional values: racism and democratic liberalism, whereby denial and a refusal to acknowledge and name systems of racism are central.

While CWS centres whiteness by challenging its invisibility and normativity, CRT provides a template for critical practice and action to take place through empowering racialized and Indigenous communities to share their personal accounts of race and racialization through counter-stories. Counter-stories expose white school leaders to non-white voices, experiences and worldviews to challenge the views of the dominant white administrator population. As Delgado and Stefancic articulated: “only aggressive colour-conscious efforts to change the way things are will do much to ameliorate misery” (2001, p. 22). Through the application of these
two theoretical frameworks, and the findings from the research data I have formulated the Equity Hiring Toolkit for School Administrators. Rather than advocating for the dominant discourses of neutral, “bias-free” hiring, the Toolkit is designed for school leaders to begin the self-transformational journey (Wane & Cairncross, 2013). There has rightly been a great deal of emphasis on teachers to engage in the examining of their social location, positionalities, and belief systems and how they interact to affect their teaching practice. However, the same must be applied to school administrators in order to develop a critical consciousness of the ways in which their beliefs, values, and identities mitigate to inform hiring practices that perpetuate the teacher diversity gap.
Chapter 4:
Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to articulate the research methods for data collection in undertaking this study. The data collection processes used two complimentary qualitative approaches: semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews provided insight to the perspectives of current Ontario teachers in terms of equity and inclusive education policy enactment, hiring practices, and perspectives of teacher and administrative representation within the profession. The document analysis enabled the contextualization of the discursive practices and power relations within the Ministry and Ontario school board documents through a content analysis. A document analysis is necessary to discern the ideological, political and social contextual factors through which the policies emerged. In this section, the details of the participant recruitment process for the purpose of the interviews, the specificities of the confidentiality agreement, and informed consent that each participant was provided with shall be discussed (the documents can all be found in the Appendices section).

4.2 Research Design

The study incorporates a qualitative methods approach including: semi-structured face-to-face interviews and document analysis as policy is a discourse (Ball, 1994). I analyzed the collected documents from Ontario school boards and Ministry of Education policy documents available online through a document analysis that contextualizes the multifaceted relationships between power and discourse (Foucault, 1972). The rationale for semi-structured interviews and a document analysis to situate the research is that semi-structured interviews provide insight to the perspectives of Ontario teachers in relation to equity and inclusion policies relating to the teacher diversity gap. The duality of both qualitative methods allows for a better understanding
of the social, political, economic, and power relations that lead to the formation of equity and inclusive policies. The interviews were meant to provide an open-ended dialogue about the participant’s own unique and individual experiences and perspectives of teacher diversity and equity and inclusion policy enactment. In Chapter 6 the emerging themes and issues are analyzed based on my interpretation of the data collected from the semi-structured interviews as well as the policies examined.

Document analysis provides insight into the ways in which power relations; hidden agendas, ideologies, and discursive patterns operate to construct narratives of meaning through the exchange between power and social relations (Bowen, 2009). The document analysis also seeks to understand the role of the state as a legitimate power to create and implement policy and motivate actors on behalf of the public. In this case, the settler-colonial state becomes the agency through which equity and inclusive education policies are drawn up and enacted. The institution of publicly-funded education becomes the site of policy enactment (Bowen, 2009). The document analysis provides a textual understanding of the contextual components of how policies and documents are created, their purposes, and stated commitments, and mechanisms in place to enact the policies. Semi-structured interviews offer the practical experiences and perspectives of the policies within the publicly-funded education system by those who are directly implicated by them, which in this case are Ontario teachers.

4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews allow for a more open-ended discussion of thoughts and ideas, as the questions are not all fixed, and “allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (Patton, 2002, p.34). Semi-structured interviews allowed first-hand insight to the perceptions and experiences of teachers from various social locations in examining how their social location is correlated with their encounters progressing through the teaching
hierarchy and recruitment processes throughout their career. The rationale for conducting face-to-face interviews is that the interviews are the most appropriate form of data collection. During face-to-face, semi-structured interviews, the participant’s voice be heard, as well as the emotions expressed through their body language, which are captured by the moment, as well as other non-verbal cues. Furthermore, this method is highly effective as it is free from the distractions of phone and online interviews (Patton, 2002). Semi-structured interviews generally utilize open-ended questions formulated by the research “to obtain specific information and enable comparison across cases” (Knox & Burkard, 2009). Semi-structured interviews operate as a guide (Flick, 2002) that offer flexibility for the participant to share their story, while simultaneously guiding the direction of the interview through questions that underline the emphasis of the study purpose (Knox & Burkard, 2009). A more in-depth discussion of the participants and interview procedures is detailed in the following paragraphs.

4.4 Participants and Recruitment Process

Interviews were conducted with 10 participants. Participants had to be Ontario Certified Teachers (OCTs) working in a teaching capacity in a publicly-funded Ontario school board. The following table details demographic information as self-identified by each participant in the semi-structured interviews.

I recruited participants by putting up flyers that called for participants in my department, at the University in general as well as distributing flyers at conferences and other faculties of education outside of OISE. The flyer is in Appendix B. I also sent out various emails on different listservs, which indicated the call for participants as well as the requirements (the requirements being that the participant must be employed or formerly employed by a publicly-funded school board in Ontario).
The participants represented a mix of social locations to allow me to comment on race, gender, [dis]ability, religion, sexual orientation, and ethnicities as well as teaching assignments. As indicated in Table 1, the participants are at different stages of employment. Some are permanent teachers, some are Long Term Occasional Teachers (LTOs) and others are Occasional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Teaching Contract</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
<th>Ethno-Racial Self Identification</th>
<th>Gender Self Identification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tania</td>
<td>OT</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>East Asian</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ronald</td>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steven</td>
<td>OT</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>West Asian</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christine</td>
<td>OT</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal</td>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>West Indian</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurleen</td>
<td>LTO</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>South Asian</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers (OTs). From the sample of participants, 8 out of the 10 self-identified as racialized, 2 identified as white and none of the interviewees identified as Indigenous. The rationale for the selection of participants of various social locations; including white candidates was so that the study could analyze the differentiated experiences and perceptions based on their respective identities. I thought it was important to have some white participants to solidify the literature findings, which indicated the privileging of whiteness in teacher recruitment. The participants’ narratives provided insight to the various experiences encountered as they sought employment in publicly-funded school boards. These narratives informed the creation of the EHT based on how each participant’s social location impacted their teaching career.

Participants were provided with pseudonyms to be identified in the project. The duration of each interview was approximately 30-45 minutes and tape-recorded while I scribed each participant’s responses. Each interview was comprised of 15 questions (please see Appendix A).

All of the participants had completed their teacher education programs in Canada, two of them also obtaining Master’s degrees. Three participants were born outside of Canada and all 10 are between the ages of 25-40. All participants, regardless of teaching contract status, had less than 10 years of experience in the profession; only two of the participants had permanent contracts in an Ontario publicly-funded school board. To ensure my participants felt comfortable in telling their narrative I did my best to provide a safe and welcoming environment so that participants could share their insights, lived experiences, and how the ways they interpreted different phenomenon, such as policy implementation and bias-free hiring. When analyzing participant narratives, it is important to be mindful that narratives are co-constructed and do not exist in isolation, but rather are implicated by social constructivist perspectives, such as social, cultural, and historical contexts (Hunter, 2010). In this case, the examination of the participant narratives was impacted by race, which shaped participant insights and experiences, as well as
their views of equity, inclusiveness, diversity, and bias-free hiring policies. The facilitation of a safe space for the interviews to take place was initiated by providing the participants a choice of where they wished their interviews to be held. A safe space additionally allows for narrative sharing to be transformative and empowering (Hunter, 2010). The participants overwhelmingly chose a casual space; thus interviews were carried out in informal locations, some at the university, but most in coffee shops off campus.

4.5 Confidentiality and Informed Consent

Research participation can be a daunting task for many people. Out of the 10 participants; only 2 had been part of a research project before. Participants can feel skepticism about participation in research for various reasons, including: the power relations between the researcher and the participant, confidentiality issues that could result in a loss of career or future career opportunities, or other privacy manners. Therefore, the privacy of the participants (Newton, 2010) as well as the school boards each participant works for have been protected with pseudonyms. All participants received a consent form (see Appendix A), which outlined the purpose of the research, what they would be asked to do for the research, their rights as participants, and the protection of their privacy, my personal contact information as well as that of my Supervisor. They were also provided with the University of Toronto Human Research Ethics Program contact information should participants have any further questions concerning their rights and responsibilities as participants. I outlined in detail to each participant the exact process by which data will be collected and utilized, and informed participants of their right to withdraw at any time (as noted in Appendix A), as well as the specific privacy measures in place to protect their identity by the fullest extent. At the start of each interview, I informed participants that I would be recording the interview on my device as well as transcribing it to ensure greater accuracy. When the interviews were completed, I transcribed the data and
submitted an electronic copy of the transcript to each participant. Each participant had the option
to change any aspect of the transcript and had a one-week deadline to do so. None of the
participants wished to change their original interview transcript after review, and there were no
formal follow-up conversations regarding the research questions or purpose of the study.

4.6 Document Analysis

The second qualitative method of data collection for the thesis is a document analysis. A
document analysis is a mechanism of qualitative research in which “a systemic procedure for
reviewing or evaluating documents—both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet
transmitted) material” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Documents may include policy, books, journals,
newspaper articles, and others, whereby data is analyzed and interpreted to gain understanding
and insight to the empirical knowledge within the materials (Bowen, 2009, Corbin & Strauss,
of which are available online. Document collection occurred between September and December
2016, a total of 52 documents were collected and analyzed. Documents were collected in two
stages. First, reports, policies, and documents related to equity and inclusive education in Ontario
were collected from the Ontario Ministry of Education; Ministry documents were selected to
frame the social and political context through which educational policies were formulated and
implemented. Second, I collected Ontario school board documents, reports, and policies specific
to equity, inclusion, and social justice education with a focus on hiring, promotion and retention
processes.

Following the collection of documents, two analytical processes ensued: the content and
thematic analysis. Bowen outlined the procedure as follows: “the analytic procedure entails,
finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing data contained in documents”
(2009, p. 28). The content analysis entailed the organization of the data into assigned categories,
such as Ministry or board documents and the thematic analysis is concerned with the processes of “pattern recognition” (p. 32) and emerging themes embedded within the documents that become subject for discussion and analysis (Bowen, 2009). Themes are revealed through the coding of similar content of the policy text in order to examine the language into ascribed categories of meaning (Weber, 1990).

Policy documents are not neutral texts; they are grounded in social, historical, and political contexts (Miller & Alvarado, 2005) whereby “the social nature of the production, exchange and consumption of documents means that they offer ‘social facts’ rather than transparent or consistent representations of social reality” (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997, p. 48). Language is encapsulated by power relations, and in order to challenge the stated notions of neutrality and bias-free narratives within equity and inclusive policies it is imperative to determine the social and political positionings of the text (Gee, 2001). Thus as Gee states, language is never neutral and is always informed by “systems of meaning,” which are: “informed by political, social, racial, economic. Religious and cultural formations, which are linked to socially defined practices that carry more or less privilege and value in society, they cannot be considered neutral (2001, p.1).

The themes and patterns that the document analysis sought to reveal were the emphasis on equity and inclusive education in relation to school board recruitment and representation. The texts were analyzed based on the quantification of certain words, phrases and discursive practices. Babbie explained, “this quantification is an attempt not to infer meaning but, rather to explore usage” (1992, p.1283). In order to analyze the policy content it is critical to determine the power relations manifested in the documents. A significant factor of policy implementation are policy actors who possess and exert control of policy implementation as well as to what extent policies are enacted. The role of the institution or organization in which policies are
framed, in this case the Ministry of Education and Ontario school boards, needs to be contextualized as Eurocentric (Cherubini, 2010; Thobani, 2007). As Bowen asserted, “organizations and structures provide the framework around which policies are defined and policy decisions are made” (2009, p.4).

4.7 Data Organization

Documents and notes were sorted into appropriate files; for example, Ministry documents were placed in one file, and all school board documents from various provincial boards were placed in another file. Written notes from the interviews were typed up and stored in an additional file. Each folder was colour-coded; red for Ministry documents; blue for school board documents and green for interview notes. From the Ministry and school board documents I coded the data in accordance with emerging themes and patterns (Bowen, 2009) perpetuated throughout the numerous policies and documents. I also recorded the interviews on my device, but I decided to transcribe participant responses during the interview process to ensure accuracy for transcribing purposes. All documents, interview transcripts, folders, and materials were kept under lock and key, one copy in my personal office and one copy in the office of my supervisor.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided the methods that informed the data collection and analysis of my research. The qualitative methods that have been utilized for my thesis are document analysis and semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews approach was used for my research as candidates were selected purposefully (Newton, 2010) in the sense that it was important to interview individuals of various backgrounds working in the context of publicly-funded Ontario school boards. The following chapter will provide an introduction and background of the policies studied, as well as an analysis of the discursive practices and contextual factors embedded within the documents.
Chapter 5:
Analysis of the Policies

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to outline the genealogy of equity policy initiatives in Ontario from the 1986 Employment Equity Act to the enactment of Ministry and school board level equity and inclusive education policies that specifically examine hiring processes. Table 2 provides an overview of the policies to be analyzed throughout the chapter. The analysis will examine the discourses of bias-free hiring as a vehicle to increase teacher diversity to reflect the demographic composition of Ontario. The analysis underlined the prevalence of race-less discursive practices that emphasize the merit, ability, and quality of a teacher as the deciding factor for how school leaders should recruit teachers. The documents illustrate a commitment to equity and inclusive teacher hiring in which school administrators should effectively push aside all biases that inflict discriminatory treatment in order to select the best-qualified candidate. The following policies acknowledge discrimination in hiring as a contributing factor to the lack of diversity among teachers. However, the policies stop short of indicating the research that supports bias-free hiring as best practice to increase teacher diversity, as well how school administrators are to conduct bias-free hiring.
### Table 2: Timeline and Summary of Policies Discussed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Employment Equity Act</td>
<td>Drafted in 1986 by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, implemented in 1987. The Act was repealed in 1995 under Premiere Mike Harris’s Conservative government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPM 119 (1993) Antiracist and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards:</td>
<td>The document acknowledged the prevalence of racism in Ontario schools and advocated for implementing antiracist approaches to curriculum delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPM 119 (2009) Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive</td>
<td>Mandated that all publicly-funded school boards create their own equity and inclusive education policies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Policies in Ontario Schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive</td>
<td>Advocated for “bias-free” hiring practices and the removal of bias in terms of teacher-student assessment practices as a panacea to remove racism in school boards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Strategy (2009) Revised in 2014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan (2017)</td>
<td>Provides more detailed Action Items than the 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy in terms of diversity in teacher representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario</td>
<td>Builds on the 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy and focuses on increased knowledge of FNMI communities and histories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Regulation 274/12 (2012)</td>
<td>Seniority-based hiring regulation adopted by the provincial government to curb endemic nepotism and favouritism in school board hiring and promotion practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 5.2 Employment Equity Act

In 1986, under Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, the Federal Employment Equity Act was adopted to draw attention to the employment gaps between white Canadians and minority groups. The Act was loosely based off of U.S affirmative action policies following the 1982 implementation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that legally enshrined the right
of the “designated groups” (Mentzer, 2002). The designated groups consisted of racialized people, Indigenous people, women, and persons with disabilities (Agocs, 2002). The Equity Act was adopted in response to the shifting immigration patterns that took place in the 1960s and 1970s that lifted restrictions allowing people from non-traditional sources to enter the country (Anderson & Ben Jafaar, 2003). The increased immigration from non-European countries to fill labour shortages (Thobani, 2007), as well as the adoption of the 1971 Canadian Multicultural Act by Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau, symbolically recognized the cultural differences of Canadians while maintaining the status quo of white, settler-colonial domination (Coulthard, 2014; Thobani, 2007; Razack, 1998).

The Employment Equity Act officially took effect in 1987, after the 1983 Royal Commission on Equality in Employment was released (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2003). The Act mandated that all public and private service sectors take steps to decrease significant gaps in the employment of designated groups, which included: racialized people, Indigenous people, women, and persons with disabilities. The Act outlined specific measures than employers were to adhere to in order to reduce employment gaps in relation to the Act’s four designated groups: women of any race, Indigenous people, racialized people and persons with disabilities. Agocs (2002) outlined the purpose of the Employment Equity Act, saying: “The Act required the employer to review the policies that govern hiring and promotion in order to identify and remove or replace those that create discriminatory barriers” (p. 265).

In 1995, under the leadership of Mike Harris’s Progressive Conservative Party, the Act was repealed in Ontario. The repeal of the Act also known as the Quotas Repeal Act had detrimental consequences on the progress made to analyze the differentiated employment situations of various communities in the province. Bakan and Kobayashi (2003) described the detrimental impact of the Quotas Repeal Act in Ontario: “The Repeal Act not only eliminated all
measures in place to advance employment equity, but it required that all information gathered in connection with the previous law be destroyed” (p. 13).

The Repeal Act faced resistance from the Alliance of Employment Equity that challenged the Harris government’s repeal by taking the case to the Ontario Court of Appeal on the basis that the Appeal Act violated Charter rights (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2003). Although the court acknowledged racial discrimination in employment, the appeal was dismissed (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2003). As Agocs (2002) inferred: “The promising potential of Canada’s early employment equity policy initiatives has not yet been realized. There continues to be a gap between employment equity policy on the one hand, and action and implementation on the other” (p. 257).

The lack of priority and commitment to equity employment legislation as indicated by the removal of equity hiring legislation demonstrates the disregard for the barriers faced by marginalized groups in accessing employment. The Ontario government has emphasized a policy alternative known as the “Equal Opportunity Employment” under the Ontario Human Rights Code that frames the discourses of diversity in relation to neoliberal market productivity (Bakan & Kobayashi, 2003). The Ontario Human Rights Code states that:

Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to employment without discrimination or harassment because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, record of offences, marital status, family status or disability (OHRC, 2017).

Furthermore, the Ontario Human Rights Code ensures:

The right to “equal treatment with respect to employment “covers every aspect of the workplace environment and employment relationship, including job applications, recruitment, training, transfers, promotions, apprenticeship terms, dismissal and layoffs. It also covers rate of pay, overtime, hours of work, holidays, benefits, shift work, discipline and performance evaluations (OHRC, 2017).
Although the Ontario Human Rights Code is entrusted with overseeing employment equity initiatives, the demographic data collection that was mandated in the Employment Equity Act that monitored hiring patterns is no longer required.


In 1993 under the leadership of New Democratic Party (NDP) leader, Bob Rae, the Ontario Ministry of Education drafted the Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards or PPM 119 (1993). An amendment to the Education Act in 1992 stated that:

School boards are required to develop and implement antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies…Antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies reflect a commitment to the elimination of racism within schools and in society at large. Such policies are based on the recognition that some existing policies, procedures and practices in the school system are racist in their impact, if not their intent, and that they limit the opportunity of students and staff belonging to Aboriginal and racial and ethnocultural minority groups. (p. 5)

The policy required all schools to develop and implement an antiracist education policy.

Some scholars have suggested that PPM 119 (1993) was enacted as a response to the 1992 Toronto Race Riots (Rezai-Rashti, et al., 2017). The primary focus of PPM 119 (1993) was to “focus on identifying and changing institutional policies and procedures, as well as individual behaviours and practices that may be racist in their impact” (p. 3). PPM 119 acknowledges the increasingly diverse racial and Indigenous demographic composition of Ontario, and further indicates the prevalence of Eurocentric norms and curriculum and culture entrenched in Ontario’s publicly-funded education system. PPM 119 (1993) additionally cites “European” perspectives as having detrimental impacts on the self-esteem and disengagement of Indigenous and racialized youth, as well as high dropout rates and decreased success of both students and staff in educational and employment outcomes.

Although the document reiterates critical findings and outcomes for staff and students of racialized and Indigenous social locations, the document stops short of making anti-racist and
social justice reforms to the system. As Chan indicated, “the policy was limited in both scope and implementation” (2007, p. 27) as boards were meant to implement antiracist policies, but by 1995 more than 50% of schools had not enacted antiracist policies in alignment with PPM 119 (Chan, 2007). The document fails in examining the ways that historical and contemporary colonial and settler-colonial education and schooling push out othered and racialized bodies, and the importance of reimagining an educational system starting with the disruption of White privilege. Instead, the document lists superficial and surface level strategies to enact change. Some of the strategies entail: staff professional development (or competence training), building relationships with the community, school-community partnerships, antiracism resources for teachers, curricular changes, and shared leadership. PPM 119 (1993) was revised and re-enacted in 2009. The differences between the two versions are analyzed below.

5.4 **PPM 119 (2009) Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools**

PPM 119 was revised in 2009 under Premier Kathleen Wynne and renamed the Developing and Implementing Equity and Inclusive Education Policies in Ontario Schools. PPM 119 is based on three guiding principals: high levels of student achievement, reduced gaps in student achievement, and increased confidence in publicly-funded education (2009, p. 1). PPM 119 differentiates itself from the previous policy by adding broader conceptions of equity and discrimination. The policy articulates:

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119 (2009) broadened the scope of No. 119 (1993) to take into account a wide range of equity factors, as well as all of the prohibited grounds of discrimination under the Ontario Human Rights Code and other similar considerations. No. 119 (2009) fully supported and expanded on the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity that were outlined in No. 119 (1993), and did not reflect a weakened or reduced commitment to antiracism or ethnocultural equity. By promoting a system-wide approach to identifying and removing discriminatory biases and systemic barriers, it has helped to ensure that all students feel welcomed and accepted in school life (p. 3).
One of the guidelines emphasized in PPM 119 (2009) that was not discussed in PPM 119 (1993) is the recognition of the lack of diverse staff members that reflect the demographics of the province. The document states:

The board’s workforce [should] reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board’s workforce should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board’s jurisdiction. (2009, p. 5)

The policy elaborates to describe how school boards ought to diversify their teaching population through bias-free measures, as outlined in the following statement:

Boards should make every effort to identify and remove discriminatory biases and systemic barriers that may limit the opportunities of individuals from diverse communities for employment, mentoring, retention, promotion, and succession planning in all board and school positions. The board’s work force should reflect the diversity within the community so that students, parents, and community members are able to see themselves represented. The board’s work force should also be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of the diverse communities within the board’s jurisdiction. (2009, p. 5)

The new PPM 119 (2009) followed suit from the 1993 version, which mandated that all school boards be required to develop and implement their own equity and inclusive education policies. This included equity and inclusive hiring practices and protocols to be adhered to. Specific school board examples of bias-free hiring commitments shall be examined and analyzed in section 5.7 of this chapter. Despite the altruistic commitments outlined in the revised PPM 119 (2009) in terms of diversifying staff representation, the submission of race-based data on their employees and the correlation between race and employment status is not required. The document calls for bias-free, barrier-free hiring as a key strategy to recruit a teaching demographic that more appropriately resembles Ontario’s population, but there is no mention of how bias-free hiring practices will close the diversity gap and how school administrators are to implement bias-free hiring practices.
5.5 Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy

Following the release of PPM 119 (2009), the Ontario Ministry of Education also compiled: Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy during the same year. The Strategy drew attention to the fact that only 43 of Ontario’s 72 school boards have some type of equity policy in place. The document serves as a guide for individual school boards across the Ontario to create their own equity and inclusive education policies by utilizing the listed “Action Items.” In 2014, the Ministry put forward an updated document known as: Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation. The document lists three primary strategies for achieving the full implementation of equity and inclusive education policies: shared and committed leadership to remove all biases and barriers through the implementation of “positive employment practices” (p. 5); the formation of equity and inclusive education at the provincial, board; and school levels, and finally; accountability and transparency based on “clear measures of success based on established indicators” (p. 7) as well as ongoing communication with the public. The Strategy details the increasing diversity of Ontario as a driving factor for the implementation of the policy, stating: “Ontario is Canada’s most diverse province, and must find solutions to these concerns. We must also address the needs of a rapidly changing and increasingly complex society by ensuring that our policies evolve with changing societal needs” (p. 9).

The reference to the “changing” demographics in Ontario alludes to a “crisis” of difference through which policy is meant to address and keep intact. The discourses alluding to the racialized issues raised in the document, achievement gaps, and a lack of diverse staff and curriculum material, and resources, is constructed through a deficit perspective (Portelli & Sharma, 2014). As Gillborn (2005) expressed:
By focusing on how much inequality is associated with particular student identities (including class, gender, race, family structure, maternal education), such research gives the impression that the problem arises from those very identities—rather than being related to social processes that give very different value to such identities, after using them as a marker or internal deficit and/or threat. (p. 272)

The deficit perspective problematizes “othered” identities as reasons for the inequities in the system and never on white privilege. Therefore whiteness retains its innocence (Wekker, 2016) and invisibility reinforced by narratives of democratic racism (Henry and Tator, 1998) where subtle coded racism is perpetuated through the politics of recognition (Coulthard, 2014). The 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy has been updated to the current document: Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan (2017) that is discussed below.

5.6 **Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan**

In 2017 the Ministry of Education released *Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan*. The purpose of the policy is to build on the 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. The Action Plan outlines its connection to the previous document as follows:

Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan will complement and build on the Ministry of Education’s 2009 strategy, set out in *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy*. For the better part of a decade, the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy has guided and supported the education community in identifying and working towards eliminating the biases, barriers and power dynamics that limit students’ prospects for learning, growing and fully contributing to society. (2017, p. 5)

The document follows the pattern of its predecessors by emphasizing the celebratory discourse of Ontario’s diversity, mentioning the province as one of the “most diverse jurisdictions in the world” (2017, p. 4). The document outlines its role as, “the province’s roadmap to identifying and eliminating discriminatory practices, systemic barriers and bias from schools and classrooms to support the potential for all students to succeed” (2017, p. 4). There are no details provided as to which strategies and measures will be put in place to eliminate embedded systemic, institutional and systematic racism in Ontario schools. Furthermore, while the purpose of the policy is as noted above to remove barriers and biases, the policy goes on to contradict itself by
acknowledging the unconscious role of systemic barriers and biases. The policy refers to systemic barriers as those that are: “caused by embedded biases in policies, practices, and processes and may result in differential treatment” (2017, p. 10). Although the 2017 Action Plan is more relevant than the previous policies as it mentions the role of embedded biases in the education system, there is no mention of the importance of acknowledging and understanding how biases are manifested and perpetuated. Under the section: Leadership, Governance and Human Resources Practices-Action Item 2, one of the objectives is to enhance diversity in hiring and promotion. Action Item 2 outlines its commitment to, “identify opportunities to promote the teaching profession and remove barriers to entry for underrepresented communities” (2017, p. 26). Action Item 2 additionally calls for greater efforts in terms of recruiting Indigenous educators, noting its goal to, “support the recruitment and retention of Indigenous teacher education candidates, with a particular focus on Northern communities and Indigenous languages” (2017, p. 27).

Action Item 3 extends its objective of enhancing diversity in the education workforce to that of increasing diversity in school and system leaders. While the Action Plan’s measures appear appealing to equitable and inclusive teacher hiring initiatives, they fail to articulate how such objectives are to be materialized. There are no clear indicators articulated as to how biases and barriers are to be removed to recruit more Indigenous and racialized teachers. Furthermore, the complexities of Indigeniety and self-identification are omitted (Cherubini, 2010). The paradox between the removal of barriers and biases and the elimination of such obstacles once again resurfaces, in that how are biases and barriers to be identified and eliminated when the majority of them, as the research suggests are unconscious? The Action Plan offers one glimmer of progress toward the closure of the teacher diversity gap, that being the suggestion for data collection. However, it is unclear as to whether the document is mandating workforce data
collection or merely suggesting it. The document emphasizes the Ministry of Education’s commitment as follows, “support boards in undertaking workforce data collection and analysis that will inform a review of systems, policies and practices…support boards in identifying and establishing timelines to eliminate barriers, and measurable goals to achieve equity in hiring and promotion”(2017, p. 31). Although the Action Plan has been updated from the 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, the issues of ambiguity and oversimplified suggestions for complex and embedded social problems remain intact.

5.7 Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario

The 2014 Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario reiterates, “renewed goals” from the three priorities listed in the 2009 Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. The four goals entail: a) achieving excellence, b) ensuring equity, c) promoting well-being, and d) enhancing public confidence in education (2014, p. 3). Moreover, the document expresses what it calls a “cultural shift” in public schools citing, “a cultural shift in schools that recognizes diversity as a contributor to success, and not a barrier”(2014, p. 8). The notion of a “cultural shift” signifies the racially coded discourse of changing (or increasingly non-white) student demographics in Ontario’s public schools. Based on the extant literature, this discourse is spun in an altruistic manner to celebrate difference, while simultaneously viewing it as a threat (Giroux, 2014; Leonardo & Zemblyas, 2013; Portelli & Sharma, 2014; Razack, 2004; Zembylas, 2003). The document provides a “Plan of Action” for the policy goal of “Ensuring Equity”. The “Plan of Action” calls for an increased understanding, knowledge and awareness of First Nations, Metis and Inuit (FNMI) cultures and histories but does not disclose how or even if Indigenous voices are to be present in achieving this stated goal. Throughout the entire document, there is no mention teacher representation in any capacity. The document touts Ontario’s diversity as its strength, noting,
Ontario’s diversity is one of the province’s greatest assets. Embracing this diversity and moving beyond tolerance and celebration to inclusivity and respect will help us reach our goal of making Ontario’s education system the most equitable in the world. Everyone in our publicly funded education system – regardless of background or personal circumstances – must feel engaged and included. (2014, p. 8)

However, despite the emphasis on the importance of Ontario’s diversity that the document attempts to reinforce, there is no reference made to the need to diversify the teaching population to represent student demographics.

5.8 Ontario Regulation 274/12

In order to curtail allegations of endemic favouritism and nepotism throughout school board hiring, as well as in response to widespread criticism of biased hiring, Regulation 274/12 was enacted in 2012 under the Education Act. The specific purpose of the Regulation is indicated by the teaching union for the province of Ontario, known as the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), as being to: “promote a consistent, transparent and fair hiring process for long-term and permanent teachers” (ETFO, 2012).

The Regulation mandates strict regulations for all publicly-funded school boards to adhere to when hiring for long-term occasional (LTO) and permanent teaching positions. The Regulation requires that boards create two lists, an OT (Occasional Teacher) and LTO roster to determine seniority and base hiring decisions on candidate seniority as a mechanism to eradicate endemic nepotism and favouritism in hiring practices (ETFO, 2012). The seniority-based regulation has in fact contributed to hindrance of diversity-hiring initiatives; as Turner (2015) noted, there still measures in place for administrators to go around the regulations, hiring from the most senior members of the profession. This practice generally limits the ability to diversify the profession.

The Dean of York University’s Faculty of Education, Ron Owston echoed Turner’s findings when he spoke out against the Regulation in relation to its hindrance of diverse teachers
from entering the profession. Owston argued that: “Regulation 274 creates a significant barrier for our faculty’s increasingly diverse and talented graduates from entering and renewing the profession” (CTV, April 2014). Despite the implementation of Regulation 274/12, the findings from data indicate that many of Ontario teachers’ still view widespread favouritism and nepotism to be a serious issue within the profession. Regulation 274/12 standardizes the hiring processes of teachers through objective-based and colour-blind seniority hiring by lacking an acknowledgement of binary power relations entrenched in the hiring and promotional processes that privilege whiteness. Findings from the semi-structured interviews alluded that regardless of the Regulation, school leaders still have considerable autonomy when it comes to the teachers they hire for their schools.

5.9 **School Board Equity Hiring Commitments**

The following Ontario school boards that will be discussed utilizing alphabetical codes, cited the following commitments toward equitable and inclusive hiring practices based on objective measures:

**School Board A**

School Board A is a major publicly-funded school board located in Southern Ontario. The school board spans several urban spaces and is highly populated. Each year School Board A receives many new immigrants and has a population of racialized residents. School Board A has been under considerable scrutiny to hire more staff members that reflect the demographics of the school board. School Board A’s equity and inclusive education policies in relation to hire protocols outline the following commitments:

a) “Equitable hiring, employment and promotion practices shall be applied.”
b) “Systemic barriers to equitable recruitment, selection, hiring, training, and development, career counselling, transfer processes, performance assessment and promotion shall be identified and eliminated.”
c) “Our hiring and promotion practices are bias-free, and promote equitable representation of our diversity at all levels of the school system; that all of our employees have equitable opportunity for advancement.”

The discourse of the equity and inclusive hiring policies in School Board A points to a simplistic analysis of the prevalence of endemic racism in Ontario schools, most notably the ethno-racial disparities which are prevalent in the divide between both permanent teaching and leadership positions and precarious, non-permanent teachers. The simplified narrative of merely identifying and “eliminating” biases in hiring does not specifically outline the process of what constitutes “systemic barriers” as well as the particular steps in place to eliminate the barriers. The Board document asserts that it already has “bias-free” hiring and promotion protocols in place, however, the Board does not offer any research-based explanation in terms of how bias-free hiring will increase minority teacher representation, nor does it provide a definition of the term bias-free.

**School Board B**

School Board B is a large board in South-Western Ontario. The board has a high population of racialized youth. In the past two years, the board has enrolled many Syrian refugees into its schools. School Board B has recently updated its equity and inclusive education policies, specifically relating to hiring practices following lawsuits as well as allegations of racism in hiring. School Board B outlined its strategies toward equitable and inclusive hiring below:

a) “The merit principle must continue to be the key element of a bias free hiring and promotion process and must be firmly entrenched in these processes.”
b) “Tools, training and resources should be developed or revised to ensure that those responsible for academic hiring have the supports needed to conduct bias-free hiring.”
c) “Include the equity and accommodation statement not just on the website, but on each job posting.”
The “merit” principle mentioned in the School Board B hiring guidelines offers a colourblind and neutral approach to candidate assessment that fails to take into consideration the specific barriers faced by certain minoritized candidates in relation to their respective social locations (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). The document is unclear in terms of how the point of including an “equity and accommodation statement” on each job posting shall eliminate racism in teacher hiring. Finally, the policy lacks specific information pertaining to how hiring staff will be trained to implement “bias-free” hiring as well as the research that cites the validity and reliability of “bias-free” hiring in terms of teacher recruitment. School Board B’s document provides an unexamined and un-interrogated idea that it is possible for individuals to be “bias-free” and neutral when it comes to hiring practices, however research-based evidence citing how this shall be attained is not included in the document.

School Board C

School Board C is a growing school board in South East Ontario. The Board has a diverse population due to its proximity to the GTA. Several allegations of racial discrimination and harassment have come to light at School Board C from inequitable treatment of teachers toward specific communities and group members, to racism at the leadership level. School Board C’s equity and inclusive staff hiring protocols proposed the following:

a) “We are committed to creating and sustaining an inclusive, caring and safe work environment through recruitment and promotion practices that are equitable, transparent and support the Board’s mission, vision and values.”

b) “Ensure that and support the Board’s recruitment, hiring and promotion practices to identify and eliminate barriers with the goal of hiring of staff that are reflective of the broader community.”

c) “Support schools and departments to develop and deliver the required training to ensure equitable recruitment, hiring and promotion practices that will ensure staff are reflective of the broader community.”

d) “Ensure that staff for whom they are responsible identify and eliminate barriers and biases in their schools and workplaces.”
School Board C’s policy document does not provide specific, established measured steps and guidelines in terms of how the Board is to “identify and eliminate barriers and biases.” An important question that must be posed is: whose conception of barriers and biases is the Board consulting and adhering to? Also, what plan of action does the Board have in place to eliminate such barriers and biases? Based on the literature examined as well as my research findings, biases and barriers are social phenomenon and do not dissipate immediately, unpacking and acknowledging biases and barriers that prevent the full access and participation of minorities is an ongoing and interrogative process.

School Board D

School Board D is a smaller board in South Eastern Ontario. The board has not received as much publicity as the other mentioned boards in terms of unfair and discriminatory hiring practices, however the population of School Board D is becoming increasingly racialized. School Board D’s hiring practices relating to equity and inclusion are not as detailed as the previous boards. School Board D outlines the following commitments to equitable and inclusive hiring:

a) “Committed to ensuring that our hiring practices are bias free and promote equitable representation of our diversity at all levels of the school system.”

b) “Identify and remove barriers that may exist for various groups and families.”

School Board D cites the removal of barriers pertaining to both “groups and families” in its equity and inclusive hiring policy. The reference to “groups and families” signifies racially coded language that is othering particular group memberships and family structures that fall outside of the norm of white, heteronormative, and nuclear familial structures. Additionally, the document is vague as to which groups and families the Board is referring to; it is also unclear as to what specific barriers the Board is referring to. There is ambiguity concerning who shall identify and remove the barriers and the protocols in place when a family member or individual reports discrimination.
5.10 Summary of the Policies

In summary, school board commitments listed within the policy documents offer altruistic, generalized statements about how each board conceptualizes equity and inclusion. However, other than the Ministry guidelines and policies, there is no mention of the body of research, which informs the hegemonic notion that bias free, colourblind hiring is the most effective mechanism to increase teacher representation. Hence, the reason why the end goal of this research is to create a dialogical tool to encourage school leaders to self examine their positionality within structural power relations and how their social location impacts their hiring patterns and practices. As Pinto et al. (2005) advised there is an inherent ideological incongruence in place when it comes to equity and inclusive education policies in Ontario boards as well as across the province. Policies state a superficial commitment to equity, inclusion, and to some extent even antiracism, yet the stated policy commitments are never actualized or materialized; but rather left underfunded, with a lack of oversight and leadership. The gap between what the policies articulate and how they are enacted (if enacted) in schools and boards has thus become another celebratory token of neoliberal multiculturalism. Racialized and Indigenous students, communities, and families are therefore recognized, through seemingly antiracist and social justice discursive practices; however, there is no interrogation of power relations, the coloniality of schooling (Dei, 2006/2007) and the ongoing maintenance of white settler hegemony. The fact that these documents continue to be drafted by the same white settler populations and institutions, which have historically created genocidal legislation, is highly problematic. Power relations are also solidified by the very existence of such policy frameworks and educational “strategies” as they are indicative of which groups have the power, the right, or the autonomy to create such documents and which communities are not afforded such privilege. As Comeau solidified:
Current education policy documents and recommendations for reform, re-produce colonial power relations as the consumption of cultural differences, by a dominant and normative white Anglo centre, in the name of the well-being of cultural Others and the nation as a whole. (2005, p. 10)

Policy-making is a prevalent tool of colonization, control, and domination of Indigenous and racialized peoples while maintaining white privilege and white supremacy. Many of the policies are highly racialized and operate on the homogenization, tokenization, and white supremacist stereotypical conceptions of racialized and Indigenous peoples. Education policy has always been a tool of domination and colonization in the settler-colonial nation state. Education acted as overt assimilation during the recent era of residential schools whereby Indigenous bodies were disciplined, controlled, and forced to adhere to norms of whiteness by white teachers. Friere once described the purpose of education in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed as “the exercise of domination stimulates the credulity of students, and the ideological intent of indoctrinating them to adapt to the world of oppression” (1972, p. 65). The dominant representation of white educators and the increasing demographic of colonized bodies has enabled a paradigm shift in which “recognizing” difference (Coulthard, 2014) as a mechanism of assimilation into Eurocentrism has replaced more overt state sanctioned policies of white supremacy.

Furthermore, it is also important to be cognizant of utilizing the term “diversity” embedded in equity and inclusive education policies. Landry pointed out “the problem is the word diversity and the language around the term which carries benign meanings that detract from more critical discussions and approaches to diversity” (2016, p. 5). It is thus imperative to critically interrogate the policy actors who determine what and how diversity, equity, and inclusivity is defined and for what end and for which social groups benefit. The discursive practices of diversity, inclusiveness, and equity infer that by recognizing and “paying attention” to difference via accommodations and modifications to fit the needs of the “other”; that
racialized and Indigenous people will believe through a false consciousness that they are being treated and viewed as equitable members of society and therefore, themselves ascribe to principles of meritocracy through unconscious assimilation. In this context, difference becomes effectively essentialized through representation, while at the same time, conformity to neutrality and colour-blindness is demanded. Corporatized quotas to aesthetically reflect the demographics of the student and parent clientele are advocated for, as long as racialized and Indigenous students, parents, and teachers remain docile, compliant and do not question the status quo. James (2012) also argued against bias free hiring in the PSE context. James noted “seeing everyone as the same, not acknowledging difference is to deny the diversity, complexity, and contradictions within society, groups and correspondingly, the multifaceted contradictions within society” (2012, p. 15).

The policies reinforce, surface level, recognition-based (Coulthard, 2014), celebratory conceptions of equity and inclusive hiring policies; however, each of the documents has omitted a critical discussion and outline of the specific processes of such policy enactment. As some authors have suggested, the policies are discursively appeasing; as arguably, the discourse of diversity is just being given lip service (Ahmed, 2012). The policies are formulated in such a manner that they shall never be enacted (Dua, 2009). Ahmed (2012) articulated the “ambiguity of commitments” that often fails to be materialized, noting: “It becomes evident that commitments are not simply doing what they are saying. Statements of commitment can thus be understood as opaque: it is not clear what they are doing if they are not doing what they are saying” (p. 116).

Segeren (2016, p. 17) has also described the policy enactment gap as an “inherent contradiction” as although there is a great deal of emphasis on equity and inclusion, the policy only asserts that the Ministry of Education and each Ontario school board is diversifying its
teacher representation to reflect Ontario demographics. However, as there is no oversight enforced to determine the composition of teachers and administrators according to race, these policies in fact do not provide any evidence that racism in the institution is being addressed (Agyepong, 2010; Ryan, et al., 2009). Additionally, the Ontario Ministry of Education has offloaded its responsibility onto individual schools and boards to create their own equity and inclusive policies that do not require Ministry approval or oversight, thus most of the policies have been vastly ineffective and unrealistic (Segeren, 2016; Agyepong, 2010).

5.11 Conclusion

Based on the findings from analyzing the policies, the voices of the participants that shall be discussed in the following chapter as well as the extant literature, there is no synchronization between what the policy commitments state: to hire a more diverse teacher workforce, and the reality of the hiring practices themselves. The policies analyzed provide altruistic statements of hiring a diverse workforce to reflect the diversity of Ontario’s students, however the policies are based on neoliberal merit-based conceptions of equity and diversity. As Jack argued: “such policies are based on capitalist ideals that in a competitive market, including teacher hiring, merit is the chief determinant in hiring decisions” (2016, p. 26). Therefore, while the teacher diversity gap is acknowledged, the education system effectively absolves itself from any responsibility to critically examine how it is situated racially and historically as an institution (Crowley & Smith, 2015; Flynn, 2015). Participants in my research suggest that equity and inclusive education policies in the Ontario context have failed to ignite any substantial or concrete changes the systems of white privilege of which publicly-funded education is institutionalized. The policy documents analyzed offer pledges to honour, promoted and represent diversity in a manner than facilitates what Lopez (2013) called “laminated equity.” That is, the statements look pleasing on paper and displayed on school walls yet fail to be materialized. The policy documents must be
problematized on the basis of the following questions: Whose notion of bias-free hiring is being considered? What research supports the discourse of bias-free and objective hiring as best practice? Who are the dominant policy actors, and who are the people that such policies are made on behalf of? Finally, how are power relations structured in the formation and implementation of the documents?

The policies exist as a neoliberal band-aid, reactionary solution to the increasing demographic trends of racialized and Indigenous people in Ontario. The neoliberal paradigm seeks to “capitalize on diversity” (Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012, p. 22) for the purposes of a global, knowledge-based economy.

The representation of diversity therefore makes excellent political, socio-cultural, and economic sense, as by setting policies in motion that call for a more diversified teacher workforce, the state does not have to challenge or disrupt the status of white privilege in education. Thus, should the teacher diversity gap fail to close, the state, in this case the provincial government, is abdicated of responsibility as it has done what it can to address the diversity issue. Therefore, the perpetuation of whiteness in education remains accidental (James, 2009) rather than reinforced by the racelessness of democratic racism (Henry & Tator, 1998; Zembylas, 2003).

Beyond the problematic discourses of bias-free hiring as a strategy to hire more racialized and Indigenous teachers, the failure of the policies and the subsequent lack of political will is threefold. First, the lack of Ministry oversight and relegation of control and accountability to school boards; second, the incompatibility of policy development and implementation between school boards, and schools, and finally; the failure of consultation with diverse stakeholders such as community members. Preceding PPM 119 (2009) the Ministry required all school boards to create their own equity and inclusive policies, which must be present at each individual school.
The Ministry offloaded the responsibility of the policy creation on the boards who were to utilize the 2009 Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy as a guideline for developing their own policies. However, the Ministry has not thus far enforced mandatory data collection in relation to race and job contract, nor is the Ministry responsible for overseeing or approving board equity and inclusive education policies (Segeren & Kutsyuruba, 2012). Second, as Segeren and Kutsyuruba (2012) asserted, PPM 119 (2009) articulated that school boards create the policies at the board level, which must be implemented at the individual school level, thus creating a “one size fits all,” top-down, bureaucratic approach to policy regardless of the specific needs and demographics of each school. Finally, the Ministry outlined its commitment to working with and consulting with diverse stakeholders in the policy making process. When referring to stakeholders, whiteness as a social identity and privileged group must be conceptualized in order to understand the stakeholders, decision-makers and policy-makers who have agency in how equity and inclusivity is defined, enacted and which groups are the beneficiaries. Moreover, the policies do not provide sufficient detail as to how stakeholders were consulted, on whose terms and what the Ministry’s definition of a “diverse” stakeholder is. The policy actors do not reflect the diversity of the community, nor do they acknowledge the racialized hierarchy in which they are drafted. The policies are created by powerful actors and administrators and based on the conceptions of equity and inclusion of the privileged locations of such actors (Kobayashi, 2009). As Segeren and Kutsyuruba (2012) explained:

The ultimate stage of policy development was tightly controlled by a small group of authoritative decision-makers at the Ministry…The process of policy development is a hierarchical exercise of the power of dominant groups in society. Despite recommendations that the broad community be engaged in the process of policy development, the Ministry controlled this process and mandated that authorities at the school board level were responsible for developing and implementing equitable and inclusive education policies (p. 149-50).
Ontario lacks the political will required to enforce the enactment of the policies. This is evidenced by the organization and roles of responsibilities outlined by the Ministry of Education. Policy governance is diluted and offloaded from the shoulders of the government and onto school boards, who then place enactment responsibilities into the hands of administrators. Segeren elaborated on the top-down implementation of policy governance as follows:

The trickle-down of policy responsibility from institutions such as the Ministry of Education to school boards for developing equity policies and ultimately schools and school leaders…despite these lofty goals contained within the policy texts, the Ministry of Education has abnegated much of its responsibility to school boards and schools. The policy documents in Ontario’s Equity Strategy describe the Ministry’s role as one of support and guidance. (2016, p. 194).

The implication of the “trickle-down” scenario of policy governance outlined by Segeren (2016) is that school boards and individual schools themselves are responsible to write their own equity and inclusive education policies. Boards and schools are meant to simply report the progress of the implementation of their policies to the Ministry, however, there is no oversight in place for how the policies are drafted and how the outcomes of success are measured. Segeren (2016) synthesized this troubling phenomenon as contradictory in a neoliberal context whereby accountability and transparency is reinforced in terms of educational outcomes, but not in terms of policy. Segeren stated, “school boards and schools are not held accountable for equity work…unlike literacy and numeracy initiatives that are tested through EQAO, there is no formal mechanism for ensuring boards and schools are doing equity work” (2016, p. 194).

The lack of political prioritization in addition to minimal funding and resources places a great deal of autonomy and power in administrators to decide how much equitable and inclusive educational policies are to be followed or adhered to (if at all). Policy construction and enactment omit the ways in which white social-cultural group dominance determines access to social and political power and operates on the premises that all groups in a “diverse” society like Canada have equitable access to the principals of meritocracy (Schick & St. Denis, 2005).
It is evident that power relations are un-interrogated in the process and outcome of policy-making, as dominant actors speak on behalf of minoritized people on the basis of the settler-state’s conceptions of what is good for racialized and Indigenous people and communities. This manner of policy making is colonial and emphasizes the racialized power dichotomies that exist between the neo-colonial settler state and marginalized identities through the narrative of democratic racism (Henry & Tator, 1998).
Chapter 6:
Findings and Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings and themes of the data collection in relation to the privileging whiteness in education and specifically teacher hiring and advancement through meritocratic conceptions of objective hiring. The findings and discussion are contextualized in relation to the following findings based on the data collected from the semi-structured interviews including: beliefs about the importance of teacher representation, perspectives of teacher and administrative representation, processes of racialization throughout teacher hiring applications, experiences of racism in the hiring process, nepotism and favouritism, and the effectiveness of equity and inclusive education polices in relation to teacher hiring. The chapter will discuss ongoing barriers to diversifying the teaching profession as well as suggestions for overcoming the multifaceted challenges that will be detailed in Chapter 7 and 8.

6.2 The Importance of Teacher Diversity

Participants had varying beliefs about the importance of teacher representation in terms of student success and creating and sustaining partnerships with the community. Some participants found that race played an important role for student success and wellbeing, while others believed that teaching skills took precedence. The perceptions strongly varied in accordance with race. For example, Steven, who self identifies as a Latino male, provided his view of the importance of teacher diversity:

Teacher diversity is very important to me and the learners in our community and society as a whole, because without saying it with words, it allows [students] to see the potential that they have. It allows them to see that if they can apply themselves at school, they too can be at the front of the classroom someday. It lets them know that it isn’t only white people who can be teachers.
Steven’s comments point to an alignment with a neoliberal concept of diversity (Engin, 2015; Jack, 2016; Lingard, et al., 2013; Morris, 2016). Steven’s conception of the importance of teacher diversity is equated more with representation rather than disrupting the status quo of white privilege in the teaching workforce. The neoliberal concept of diversity is one in which “differences in people are viewed as positive provided they support neoliberal ideals of individual progress and attainment” (Jack, 2016, p. 26). While Steven acknowledged the need to increase the proportion of non-white teachers he did not make reference to the systemic, structural, and institutional foundations of the educational system that contribute to the dominance of white teachers. Neoliberal narratives of equity and inclusion that encapsulate politicized buzz words of equity and inclusion cannot be divorced from performance and accountability discourses that focus on student achievement by silencing inequitable access to resources. As Engin (2015) suggested, neo-liberal inspired social justice education narratives are a mechanism to mandate conformity to globalized and market-driven initiatives of education that are interested in creating an economically productive citizenry. Engin asserted that, “neoliberal policy and accountability standards exert more inequalities in educational settings by disadvantaging already poor performing social groups, and mainly students of colour” (2015, p. 178). Neoliberal notions of diversity cannot be divorced from the increasingly business-focused model of education, whereby diversity is commodified as a strategy to hire diverse bodies to maintain accountability to the public as consumers as long as those diverse candidates represent dominant group values such as individualism (Jack, 2016).

Thomas and Jennifer, on the other hand, felt differently about the role of teacher diversity in relation to student success. Both participants felt that teacher representation was not the most important thing, and that being a good teacher should take precedence. Thomas said:
I don’t really think teachers need to represent diversity in order for their students to be successful. I see all of my students as people and all of my students have the same chance in my classroom to be successful because I facilitate a classroom community culture where everyone is embraced and everyone feels welcome.

Jennifer shared Thomas’s sentiments concerning the importance on “good teaching” and elaborated on Thomas’s view:

I think teacher diversity is important, but I don’t think that a teacher’s quality should be overlooked. At the end of the day the best teacher needs to be hired for the job and if you are a great teacher then everyone will do well in your class. If you have a diverse teacher but they can’t set up positive learning experience for the kids it’s kind of irrelevant.

Jennifer and Thomas both self-identify as white and have similar perspectives relating to the role and importance of teacher representation. The discursive practices relayed by Thomas point to colour-blind and multicultural models of acceptance and tolerance (Thobani, 2007) are perpetuated through the denial of white privilege. White people generally do not tend to see themselves as racialized or as occupying an ethno-racial group identity; therefore they do not necessarily see themselves as participants in processes of white supremacy and racialization (Crowley, 2016; Gillborn, 2010).

During the course of the interview, Thomas did not acknowledge his position of privilege as a white male in relation to his success in gaining employment in his school board. Kendall (2002) mentioned some of the challenges and resistance encountered when discussing white privilege with white participants:

Privilege, particularly white or male privilege is hard to see for those of us who were born with access to power and resources. It is very visible for those to whom privilege was not granted. Furthermore, the subject is extremely difficult to talk about because many white people do not feel powerful or as if they have privileges others do not (p. 1).

Jennifer and Thomas both draw on meritocracy in the sense that the best teacher deserves the job and that diversity should not take precedence over merit. The discursive practices of colour-blindness and bias-free hiring narratives, which champion the ideology of meritocracy effectively, minimize and silence historical and contemporary structures and systems of racism.
Meritocratic ideologies of hiring the “best” candidate for the position based on objective qualifications and skills “allow white individuals to explain social inequalities as the result of individual ability and effort rather than due to historical and contemporary racism” (Crowley, 2016, p. 5). The lack of awareness of endemic institutional and systemic racism embedded in the education system demonstrated by both Thomas and Jennifer points to a lack of awareness of both how they are situated in a racialized settler-colonial society as well as the implications of their whiteness. Although Jennifer’s comment mirrors the same raceless narrative in her statement, later on she does acknowledged her privilege as a white woman in the teaching profession. This revelation shall be analyzed in the upcoming paragraphs.

Amal and Steven, Gurleen, Judy, and Tania felt that teacher diversity was both important and necessary. Jennifer and Thomas, who both identify as white, felt markedly different because they were more focused on teacher performance and how effective the teacher is rather than the significance of the social location of the teacher. Steven and Amal drew attention to the importance of empowering students by the symbolic representation of teachers who look like them in the classroom. Amal, whom self identifies as a West Indian female, held similar sentiments to Steven regarding the importance of having teachers that look like the students in their schools. Indian female. Although she strongly advocated for the hiring of teachers that reflect the school community’s population, she also commended white teachers for engaging in equity work. Amal summarized her beliefs about teacher representation as follows:

Teacher representation is so important, but I also applaud the white teachers who are willing to integrate into their student’s culture. But that isn’t always enough: teachers need to also embody their student’s identities and culture. We need to model for our students, diverse students need to see a physical body that represents them. They need to see a successful person who represents their diversity so they too can know they have the opportunity to be successful and work in a decent job in this country.

Amal’s recognized the importance of one not assuming that all racialized teachers will be champions of social justice and antiracist education. However, racialized teachers in the
classroom are shown to benefit both white students and racialized students alike (Brown, 2014; Ryan, et al., 2009; Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Teacher representation from racialized communities that is reflective of students has widespread benefits for students, such as: increased attendance, a more positive association with school, better family involvement in the education process, and closer community collaboration (Villegas & Davis, 2008). Diverse teachers are also necessary to dismantle white supremacy both in terms of teacher and administrative representation, as well as pedagogical practices. Whiteness is thus as Brown suggested both a “privilege and hegemonic force…whiteness as hegemony is evident in the knowledge, values, experiences and values of being valorized in society and in educational settings” (2014, p. 328). Schools thus are highly racialized spaces whereby the normativity of whiteness is reinforced through ahistorical narratives of education as an equalizer (Sleeter, 2017; Brown, 2014). The dominance of white teachers in contrast to highly diverse student demographics firmly demonstrates the inequitable and racialized distribution of power in society. As noted in Chapter 2, there is an overrepresentation of racialized and Indigenous people in precarious and low-paying occupations and an underrepresentation in professional positions such as teaching.

Although Amal commended white teachers that engage in social justice and antiracist pedagogical practices and work, white teachers cannot provide the counter-stories and experiential knowledge required to de-base the privileging of whiteness in education (Sleeter, 2017; Solorzano & Delgado, 2001). While some white teachers do become effective critical social justice educators and allies of racialized and Indigenous students and their families, there are strong indicators that white fatigue (Flynn, 2015) and resistance take hold (Crowley, 2016; Crowley & Smith, 2015; Flynn, 2015; Sleeter, 2017). Furthermore, addressing social justice education and diversity does not counter the deficit lens from which many white teachers view racialized students and their families from (Sharma & Portelli, 2014; Sleeter, 2017). Sleeter
(2017) discussed the dominance of white teachers through the three components of CRT: interest convergence, colour-blindness, and experiential knowledge. As Sleeter noted, racism is “endemic, institutional and systematic” and a fundamental mechanism of organizing society to benefit white interests and needs (2017, p. 160). Therefore the overrepresentation of white teachers is by no means accidental, but one which is orchestrated to benefit the white supremacy within education as a socializing institution. The prevalence of white teachers ensures that Eurocentric worldviews, values, and norms are reinforced at the expense of alternate epistemologies (Sleeter, 2017).

Ryan et al. emphasized the significant role of teacher diversity that is not only beneficial for racialized students but for white students as well. The authors posited that the representation of non-white teachers demonstrates:

The extent to which people of colour are represented or not represented in the ranking of teachers and administrators and carries with it considerable significance as this representation will have impact on what and how students learn. (2009, p. 5)

Participant views regarding teacher representation were clearly informed by each participant’s social location, 7 out of 10 felt that teacher representation is important, 2 did not find it substantial and 1 participant was unsure whether or not it was relevant. The literature demonstrates the benefits of a diverse teacher workforce extend to all children, as white children are more likely to develop a positive perspective of racialized people as invaluable members of society (Villegas, et. al., 2012). When racialized and Indigenous students have teachers that are reflective of their social location, they are more likely to be engaged in school, develop a positive attitude toward their education, and envision themselves in professional positions. Villegas, et al. outlined:

When students fail to see minority adults in professional positions and instead see them overrepresented in the ranks of non-professional workers, they implicitly learn that White people are better suited than people of color to hold positions of authority in society, (2012, p. 285)
Teachers who reflect the social location of their students are better able to act as role models for racialized students, bridge the gap between home and school, provide resources for families, engage in more effective dialogue with parents and community members, and implement rich, authentic learning tasks that go beyond Eurocentric paradigms of learning and close the achievement gap (Turner, 2015).

6.3 Diversity as Meeting Quotas

The teacher diversity gap was apparent to 9 out of the 10 participants, many of them noting that white teachers and white administrators are overrepresented, while non-whites are underrepresented. When asked if teacher representation was adequate in her board, Gurleen responded: “No definitely not, it’s mainly Caucasian with one or two token teachers just to look like they are doing something to diversify the pot”. In terms of leadership positions, Amal remarked: “Admin is mainly white, with very few minorities, and a lot of admin I see are still white and male.”

Christine, who self identifies as a Black woman, mirrored Amal’s observation of the lack of racialized school administrators in Southern Ontario. In particular, Christine pointed to the absence of Black principals and vice principals, indicating that she had only encountered one Black administrator in the various schools she has worked in. Christine articulated: “There was one Black VP at one school, but I think that was more a way for them to be accountable because it’s an inner city school and there was a lot of community push for that in previous years.”

Two participants drew attention to the issue of tokenization in the sense that they felt they had been hired because of their race due to school board pressures to meet quotas. Ronald shared his views on how and why he was hired at his board as the following: “Race definitely has something to do with hiring, I’m a Black male, they needed to meet quotas so that’s why I was hired.” Olivia, who self identifies as a West Asian female, also believed that her social location
worked to her advantage; she stated: “it worked to my benefit, because I had no experience but they wanted to be more diverse with their hiring so it helped me overall.” Olivia felt positively about the role her “otherness” played in her career advancement. While Ronald explicitly mentioned quotas and pressure from the board to hire more racialized and particularly, Black male teachers, Judy also alluded to tokenization in relaying her experience as a Black woman working in a suburban school with a diverse study body. Judy noted that both administrators were white and that all of the teachers were also white except for her. She stated:

I kind of feel a bit like the token Black teacher at my school, a lot of the students are Black or non-white but the teachers are white. There are other diverse staff members, but they aren’t teachers or administrators. They are support staff, like ECE’s (Early Childhood Educators) and TA’s (Teaching Assistants) and clerical staff and janitors.

Although the theme of “tokenization” was raised throughout the interviews as some of the participants expressed feelings of being hired to meet board-directed quota objectives, it is important to examine the concept of tokenization and how its narrative perpetuates racism. Kanter (1977) identified three processes that mark tokenism: performance pressures, boundary heightening, and role entrapment. Kelly expanded on the threefold nature of tokenism in reference to Black teachers in white dominated schools as follows:

Performance pressures are due to high visibility. Boundary heightening occurs when differences between the token and the dominants are polarized or exaggerated. Role entrapment emerges from stereotypes about the token in larger society used to incorporate the token into the dominant’s world. (2007, p. 101)

Throughout the multifaceted processes of tokenism, the minoritized body is always on constant display, always an all-encompassing representative of their entire racial identity and finally, an expert in diversity matters (Kelly, 2007). Tokenization must be examined in the context of racialization in the sense that racialized teachers as indicated felt that they were tokens in their white dominated schools. Participants such as Ronald, Judy, and Olivia who expressed their feelings of being hired simply to meet diversity policies indicated that they believed that
they had been hired based on their ability for the board to meet equity quotas rather than on their
talent. The invisibility of white privilege operates within matters of teacher hiring, as white
participants did not believe they were hired to meet quotas but rather they felt they were hired
because of their ability. The privileging of whiteness, whereby white and white-passing
successes are attributed to merit, individuality and industry are never questioned or written off as
“reverse” racism and unfair advantages (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Leonardo & Zembylas, 2013).
However, the successes of racialized and Indigenous bodies are dismissed. Critical Race Studies
is crucial to examining the dominance of objectivity, meritocracy and race neutrality in terms of
teacher hiring. The perpetuation and reproduction of racism in recruitment processes in relation
to quotas and discourses of affirmative action serve to systematically stigmatize and stereotype
racialized and Indigenous applicants by the undermining of qualifications, skills and competence
(Villegas, et al., 2012; Villegas & Davis, 2008). Despite the claims of equity and inclusive hiring
practices increasingly advocated for by school boards providing the illusion that schools are
welcoming spaces, racism, and the marginalization of racialized teachers continues to flourish
through micro aggressions (Hubain et al., 2016; Jack & Ryan, 2015).

Judy’s observation distinctly highlights the racialization of the education hierarchy, in
which white bodies dominate leadership and permanent teaching positions. On the contrary,
racialized and Indigenous employees are hired, but they are often overrepresented in caretaking
and support work and not in positions of authority. This relates back to scholars such as Villeges
et al. (2012), James (2012), and Ryan et al. (2009) who discuss the symbolic importance of
students seeing teachers that embody their social locations for their sense of self and engagement
with the education system. The overrepresentation of Black and Brown bodies in support
positions and almost nonexistent representation in administrative and permanent teaching
positions reinforces the racialized power relations of the education system. Because data
collection is not mandatory, it is impossible to decipher whether or not commitments expressed
to close the teacher diversity gap are being adhered to. Moreover, in the two cases of school
boards that do collect census data, the school boards may claim that they have diversified their
workforce, however, the correlation between race and job/contract status is not explicit.

The data revealed that racialized participants overwhelmingly believe white bodies
dominate permanent teaching as well as administrative positions and that racialized teachers
were assigned to schools for aesthetic purposes, in order to make it appear that the board is doing
something to represent student demographics. As the literature review and analysis of the
documents suggest, this representation was seen as more of a visual display rather than a
proactive restructuring of the education system. Chapter 1 pointed out the troubling statistic
revealed by Turner (2015) that a mere 2% of principals and 5% of vice-principals are racialized.
The correlation between an overwhelming white majority school leadership population
responsible for hiring decisions and the wide teacher diversity gap must be problematized. The
resistance to name and acknowledge racism and white privilege in the education system that has
resulted in the dominance of white teachers and school administrators perpetuates the teacher
diversity gap through participation in wilful ignorance of the “institutionalization of whiteness”
in education (Solomon et al., 2005, p. 147). The invisibility of whiteness of a collective social
and racial identity removes the onus of white school leaders to interrogate white privilege by
claiming merit-based, “bias-free” teacher hiring practices (Matias, et al., 2014; Leonardo &

Various scholars examine the reluctance and resistance of the education system in
particular to change (Pinto & Portelli, 2012; Solomon, et al., 2005; Solomon & Daniel, 2015).
The same is true in terms of engaging in critical discussion of race. Turner summarized the
resistance of naming and discussing race in the educational system as follows:
There are many individuals and organizations that continue to resist any suggestions that racism exists in employment policies and practices in Ontario school boards and classrooms. This continued resistance ignores the evidence of historical and current racial discrimination throughout the Ontario labour market and education system. (2015, p. 2)

The denial of white privilege in hiring practices that is manifested through neutral policy objectives assumes an equality of power relations in which social location is irrelevant as whiteness is unnamed as the settler-colonial norm. Pinto, et al. (2012) highlighted the lack of critical dialogue on the part of school administrator oversight of the NTIP. The study suggested that administrators demonstrated a fundamental lack of understanding in issues of social justice. For example, the authors noted that in their study one administrator had “conflated equity with assessment” (p. 11), while other school leaders’ understanding of equity and inclusive education, reflected liberal multicultural education discourses of “equality and tolerance.” The authors described the silencing of social justice by school administrators, the authors indicated: “School administrators silence on the issue of social justice, equity, and diversity—even when prompted to discuss such issues—is emblematic of the lack of attention paid to critical-democratic schooling for teacher and student empowerment” (p. 13).

Additionally, in another study carried out by the same authors, it was revealed that views of what constitutes a “good teacher” are embedded by whiteness. The research suggested that principals often consider “good teachers” to be those who are more concerned with classroom management skills rather than implementing social justice teaching practices. The authors asserted:

School administrators hold tremendous power, and their conceptions of good teaching privilege some, and marginalize others. Those marginalized, at worst, risk losing their professional certification as teachers. Moreover, this powerful position held by principals can reproduce and reinforce existing school cultures, or transform the way teachers teach and students learn from their leadership roles and influence over their staff. (Pinto et al., 2005, p. 74)
The Equity Hiring Toolkit for Ontario School Administrators centres the role of administrators in the perpetuation of the teacher diversity gap. The purpose of the Toolkit is to provide a framework for school administrators to start thinking about and examining their social location, positions of power, and belief systems and how such factors inform hiring practices that privilege white applicants at the expense of racialized and Indigenous candidates.

6.4 Encounters of Racialization in Recruitment

Three of the participants, one being South Asian, one East Asian, and one West Indian had reported that they had encountered racism in the hiring process in regard to assessment of their language proficiency and credentials. Steven and Ronald, both male, one who identified as Black and one who identified as Latino, had both experienced a demand to show their identification and OCT cards upon arrival for a daily OT assignment. Amal similarly described an experience of racism when she went to an LTO (Long Term Occasional teaching assignment) interview at a school stating:

I came to the school where I was to be interviewed for the LTO and they seemed to think I wasn’t qualified because even after the interview, and I answered all of their questions perfectly. They asked me to wait outside to take a language proficiency test. I don’t even speak another language; I come from an English-speaking country! I got so annoyed watching all of these white teachers being interviewed and leaving right away but I had to stay and wait to take an English language proficiency test.

Amal, who is from an English-speaking country, draws attention to the ways in which Black and Brown bodies are marginalized and excluded from settler-colonial identity, and thus teacher identity (Mills & Pateman, 2015; Solomon et al., 2005). Amal’s skin colour served as a marker to other her from the narrative of “Canadianness” by marking her as a Brown, immigrant woman (Premji et al., 2014) although English is the only language she speaks and she does not have an accent. Amal’s innate foreignness was evidently put on display, as she was required to stay behind the other participants in order to successfully complete an English language proficiency test. Tania, who self-identifies as East Asian, was asked by office staff if she “spoke
Chinese” during a supply teaching assignment when a Mandarin-speaking ELL (English Language Learner) was having trouble communicating with his homeroom teacher. Tania was assumed to be Chinese based on her East Asian heritage, based on dominant conceptions of orientalism and how “Chinese” identities are constructed in the white, settler-colonial imagination (Thobani, 2007; Razack, 1998).

Steven encountered hostile racist circumstances when attending an LTO interview at a school:

I was really prepped for the interview and I couldn’t wait to interview for this position. But when I got to the school they thought I wasn’t even a teacher. They asked me if I had gone to university and which university had I obtained my education degree. They asked me for my OCT card and my driver’s license and they photocopied both and stapled them together and put them in a folder. I speak Spanish and have a little bit of an accent and they told me that as part of the interview process I was required to take a language proficiency exam. It didn’t just happen at this interview either, I have shown up to a handful of schools and the office personnel or admin has asked me for my ID and my OCT card.

Steven was born in a Central American country and moved to Southern Ontario at the age of 12. Steven’s first language is Spanish and English is his second language, which he speaks with an accent. Steven’s encounter alludes to his experience of being othered by the educational system. His Brown skin and accent immediately racialize him and place him outside the hegemonic white, feminized teacher identity (Childs, et al., 2010; Landry, 2016; Pinto et al., 2005; Solomon, et al., 2005). Prior to this study I had heard of many situations similar to Steven’s experience where racialized colleagues of mine had their credentials and competence questioned when claiming their teacher professional identity.

Ronald, like Steven, also described his experiences of going to different schools and being asked to show identification, and even questioned if he is a certified teacher. He stated:

I remember the first time it happened, it really hurt. I had just started supply teaching and I went up to the front desk in the office to sign in and the lady in the office said “who are you?” I told her that I was there to supply and gave the name of the teacher I was covering. She said she would need to see my ID and proof of my teaching qualifications; I was baffled I asked her why she needed that. She said it was just “policy.” I knew it
wasn’t and I knew then and there that I didn’t belong and my status as a teacher would always be questioned.

Ronald, being a Black male, is exceptionally marginalized from the teaching narrative. Based on the extant literature, Black males in Ontario have disproportionate expulsion and suspension rates due to entrenched anti-Blackness in the education system. Furthermore, racialized streaming processes also strongly contribute to the leaks in the “pipelines” that operate to spill Black bodies out of the educational pipeline (Ryan et al., 2009).

Although Jennifer had emphasized the importance of being an effective educator over social location for student wellbeing and learning, she understood her privileged identity and named the barriers that others face while accessing employment. Jennifer discussed obstacles to teacher hiring, specifically that of IETs as follows:

Systemic racism is a big barrier to employment because only certain kinds of experiences and certain kinds of education and life experience and backgrounds are valued and others are not validated or ranked as important. I remember when I was in teachers’ college; there was a woman from Pakistan who always supplied for my mentor teacher when she was away. I was hired as an LTO at that same school shortly after I graduated and she was still supplying. I felt bad because I heard she had been supplying for something like seven years and couldn’t get on the LTO list or get anything but supply jobs.

Jennifer’s status as a white woman in a white, female dominated profession makes her privilege institutional in the sense that her social location represents those who hold powerful positions in the education system. Jennifer recognized her identity as a privileged one in the teaching profession, as a contributing factor to her relative ease in obtaining teacher employment within her school board. Jennifer’s recognition of her privileged social location as a white woman demonstrated a small milestone in racial consciousness. However, regardless of how well-meaning this admission was, it does not necessarily mean that she understands how she is complicit in the structures of white privilege (Applebaum, 2011; Crowley & Smith, 2015; Leonardo, 2002).
Steven, Ronald, Olivia, and Gurleen, as well as many of the other participants that were interviewed, do not fit into the white settler-colonial narrative of teacher identity that is founded on the narrative of white, feminine, heteronormativity. Arguably, it is realized that they are not suited to be contracted to teach Eurocentric values and norms to racialized and Indigenous children for assimilative purposes (Mills & Pateman, 2015). Teacher identity is not neutral and must be contextualized in relation to the various parallels, which exist between the feminized, white, heteronormative teacher identities that dominate the teaching profession. The hegemony of the white female educator is by no means accidental; rather it is the result of gatekeeping surrounding the profession through regulating bodies and policies such as the OCT (Ontario College of Teachers) as well as through racialized admissions processes within Ontario faculties of education, and hiring and advancement processes among school boards. The dominance of the white, heteronormative, feminized body in the teaching profession is often blanketed by normative discursive practices of meritocracy and the implementation of neoliberal “inclusive” and “equitable” educational policies and documents to address Ontario’s increasingly diverse (non-white) student population.

Dei (2007) has drawn on his findings that whiteness is dominant within structural racism, therefore race cannot be salient, as education has and continues to be other racialized and Indigenous bodies as foreign and deficit. Race must be centred at the forefront of social justice and anti-racism approaches to education, rather than silenced by notions of “bias-free” hiring and promotion. Dei emphasized the prevalence of race and racisms within neoliberal educational institutions, and informed:

Racial groups exist and they exist in hierarchies of power. Such hierarchies of power are only meaningful in a competitive culture with asymmetrical relations in positions of power and influence. The competitive nature of our communities itself helps produce racialized subjects. But social groups are racialized differently, some for power and
privilege, others for punishment. For those racialized for privilege there is usually a false sense of superiority and entitlement to the privilege. (2007, p. 10)

Equity and inclusive recruitment strategies in education illustrate a race-less and equal playing field for all qualified candidates to advance within. As Dei (2007) suggested, the policies assume a landscape free of barriers and balanced power relations that conjure up the neoliberal myth of meritocracy (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Lui, 2011). The myth offers a fallacy of equity of opportunity in hiring, that if one works hard enough they can reach any limit, regardless of their social location.

When conceptualizing the feminized, white, heteronormative, virtue-laden dominant teacher identity it is important to keep the colonial narratives of femininity and “civilization” in mind, as well as their historical parallels to the genocide of Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. It is critical to draw on the sexual contract in Mills and Pateman’s work, in which white men were historically the only people to be classified as “persons” and white women could attain such status if married to white men. As Mills and Pateman articulated: “race is about reproduction and sexual relations, about purity, degeneration and the right human stock” (2015, p. 141). In this racialized and gendered hierarchy, white women are located on the second rung of the so-called racial “food chain” as both “sub-persons” and “subcontractors,” Mills described the positioning of white women as follows: “contradictorily located, they are sub-persons with respect to the white male, but are nonetheless superior to the different variety of non-white male sub-persons, and certainly to the non-white female sub persons” (2007, p. 179). There are substantial connections to be drawn across time and space between the dominant white, middle class, female teacher and the white, female missionaries and nuns who were responsible for the imperial “civilizing” missions both within the residential school system, as well as in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Mills (2007) pointed to the centrality of white women as agents of colonial ambitions, morals, and values, very much simultaneous with contemporary Eurocentric
“character education” embedded in Ontario school boards. Mills explained: “stress was also laid on (white) women’s particular affinity for morality and much civilization work was undertaken at home and abroad” (2007, p.147). Mills noted that the London Missionary Society began its recruitment of white women in 1875, and by 1899 white women had outnumbered white male missionaries. In essence, white women became the pillars for upholding the virtues of “civilization” in the era of the “White Man’s Burden” (Kipling, 1899) and imperial expansion.

White women as the dominant majority in the teaching profession are also responsible for upholding and maintaining neoliberal, capitalistic values and morals for the white patriarchal settler state. Jennifer’s experience in her teaching role as well as her relative ease progressing through the hierarchy of teaching contracts illustrates the privileging of white women in the profession. The reproduction of the neo-colonial settler state through the racial contract of education (Mills, 2015) is premised upon the ongoing perpetuation of the status quo of white women assimilating colonized bodies and acting as “white saviours” socializing and “educating” their students on the basis of the fallacy of white supremacy and hegemony. The embodiment of the white, feminized educator is so powerful that it detrimentally impacts racialized and allied students, educators, and families alike, thus preventing solidarity between all communities involved and implicated in the educational system (Abawi, 2017).

The prevalence of white female educators acts as a disservice to pedagogical and epistemological experiences of racialized and Indigenous students in Ontario classrooms, due to a deficit of social justice, or anti-racist education as well as lived experiences outside of their white communities, families, and friendship circles within their personal lives. As Landry pointed out: “so few of today’s white, middle class teachers who represent the majority of teachers in Ontario, have the knowledge and ideologies of an anti-racist educator that is, the understanding and beliefs that lend to critically challenging issues of race and racism in the
classroom” (2016, Landry, p.7). The dominance of the white, feminized, middle-class “good teacher” operates to both exclude and delegitimize the racialized participant’s claim of teacher identity.

6.5 The Effectiveness of Equity and Inclusive Education Policies

The teachers interviewed displayed a passion for social justice education, and although they felt that the focus on equity and inclusive educational policies were as important, overall, they did not feel that schools and school boards in general were really enacting the policies set out in the documents. For example, Ronald felt that the policies were just rhetoric for school boards to cover themselves, saying:

The policies don’t really do anything. I mean when I have taken AQs, I’ve referred to them and it’s all just a bunch of rhetoric with suggestions. But there’s really nothing in place, there is no public accountability or monitoring to even see if schools even have a policy.

Ronald pointed out the lack of accountability and oversight in the policies, although his school board is one of the two Ontario boards to collect race based data, he felt that the policies did not change teacher demographics.

Thomas was one of the only ones who felt that the policies were highly effective and that his school was a very diverse and inclusive community. Thomas felt the policies were fair and democratic, and defended the policies stating:

Well, the school boards are trying their best. They are specifically hiring people that deal with diversity issues and we are trying to accommodate everyone as best as we can. Do you know of any other system in the world that does that? I don’t, so I think people should just stop complaining because we learn about every culture in my classroom and I always use lots of diverse materials and encourage my students to talk about their culture and traditions. I think my school and my board does a great job. We had a huge influx of Syrian refugees and my board really did a great job in accommodating the needs of the new students and families.

Thomas leverages “white talk” (Solomon & Daniel, 2015) to remove himself of any form of “individual responsibility for race privilege, or any social and economic advantages that may
accrue from the practices of white privilege in the broader society” (Solomon & Daniel, 2015, p. 193-194). Thomas’s discourses of subtle multiculturalism of understanding difference while maintaining the status quo of white privilege attempts to divorce broader structural issues such as Western imperialism and militarization from white saviourism. In this sense, Thomas both takes up the role of a white saviour and portrays his board as an institution of saviourism by praising the support of Syrian refugees while failing to connect the displacement of racialized refugees to ongoing colonial endeavours. The dysconcious racism (King, 1991) espoused by Thomas as well as within the narratives of the policy documents perpetuates white privilege in teacher recruitment due to the failure of policy-makers, teacher education programs, and administrators (who are overwhelmingly white) to disrupt the normalized hegemony of whiteness in education. Schick and St. Denis (2003) proposed the denial of inequity and the denial that race matters subsequently perpetuates racism by normalizing racialized power imbalances. Equity and inclusive education policies allude to a celebratory discourse, whereby differences are “celebrated” so long as systems of white supremacy remain intact (Comeau, 2005; Thobani, 2007; Schick & St. Dennis, 2003). The denial of Thomas to acknowledge his location and positionality informed his belief that hiring was meritocratic as “meritocracy assumes that power is equally available and distributed, thereby ignoring social, historical and political conditions” (Schick & St. Denis, 2003, p. 64).

Olivia, who wears a hijab and self identifies as female, West Asian, and Muslim, had a different perspective from the other racialized participants. Olivia seemed to generally ascribe to the belief of merit-based hiring over diversity matters. Olivia welcomed the equity and inclusive education policies at her school board and felt that the schools she worked at were implementing the policies as best as they could:
I know about the policies, I have not really read all of them, but I think my board is at least trying to put the policies into motion and be more reflective of the community. No school is going to do it perfectly, but I think my board is doing a pretty good job.

Olivia felt that because she had not encountered racism in her own hiring and teaching experiences, that racism simply did not exist in teacher hiring. On the contrary, she felt that her “diversity” had helped her to obtain employment at her school board. Olivia’s views ascribed to a discourse of liberal multiculturalism, one that celebrates differences while failing to critique and recognize white dominance. Her views of equity and inclusive education policies—although she admitted to not reading them thoroughly—are based on a positive alignment with multiculturalism as an equalizer for Canadians who work hard and contribute to society regardless of race. As Solomon and Daniel articulated: “Multiculturalism policies have played a primary role in constructing this belief in equanimity of Canadian racial interactions and have embraced and celebrated difference, primarily focusing on harmonious and celebratory cultural artefacts and practices” (2015, p. 198). It is evident that as long as Olivia conforms to, emulates, and embodies dominant capitalist views and values of individualism and ability, she will benefit professionally. Olivia’s perspective thus distances herself of any encounters of racism due to her ease in obtaining a position on her board’s LTO list.

Tania and Amal however, in opposition to Olivia’s beliefs, both felt the policies were meaningless; Tania’s response contained a great deal of important questions:

The policies don’t do anything, they really are just there so that the public can feel better, but nothing changes. I looked over them and thought to myself who even wrote these? I really wonder who is in charge of these policies and who decides how to even address these kinds of issues?

Amal’s response was very similar to Tania’s, Amal argued:

The boards don’t care about equity. They want people to think that they are being equitable and welcoming diversity, but they don’t. It’s all just coded language so that they can keep on hiring whoever they want and then when minorities bring up the fact that there are too many white teachers, schools can just respond ‘well we put these
policies in place, so it’s not our fault if only they weren’t successful’, it just puts the blame on minorities and the emphasis off the racism in the system.

Racialized participants felt that the policies were just as Ahmed (2012) had referred to as “happy talk,” and that the documents effectively held empty promises that were baseless, and that there was no way to know whether or not policies were being followed and how hiring selection occurred. The questions posed by Tania and Amal were fascinating, as Tania pondered which actors had the power to create the policies. Amal argued that the policies were a mechanism to present a fallacy whereby school boards were taking action to implement equity and inclusive education policies by shifting the blame and removing the emphasis on whiteness and thus perpetuating the “othering” of minorities. Gillborn (2005) argued that educational policy is never constructed from a neutral and objective standpoint, rather dominant groups in power inform policy priorities, and benefits and outcomes form policies. The implementation of the policies is often ambiguous as they lack proper documentation and oversight; therefore there is a lack of public information and scrutiny. Gillborn lamented by stating that “the importance of looking beyond the superficial rhetoric of policies and practice, in order to focus on the material and ideological work that is done to legitimate and extend racial inequity” (2005, p. 492).

Policy as colonization (Cherubini, 2010) is firmly intact; as Gillborn asserted: “The role of education policy is the active structuring of racial inequity” (2005, p. 485). Racism becomes harder to pinpoint within the framework of equity and inclusive education policies, as state policies have shifted from overtly racist assimilationist policies to discursive practices embedded in democratic racism (Henry & Tator, 1998). The stated and official policies of liberal multicultural education and diversity-initiatives in publicly-funded education are stated to be reflective of Ontario’s “changing” and “diversifying” demographics (Lingard, et al., 2013; Rezai-Rashti, et al., 2017; Segeren, 2016). Thus the discursive fluctuation from multicultural and equality education to equity and inclusive education is merely a representational public relations
attempt to appear more social justice oriented toward a more diverse student “clientele” rather than a commitment to reform the educational system through antiracism approaches.

The altruistic stated objectives embedded in the discursive practices of the policies overwhelmingly normalize the innocence and neutrality of whiteness as unmarked and invisible through pervasive narratives of meritocratic hiring practices. Whilst the documents reinforce neutral, colour-blind approaches to teacher recruitment and promotion, it is evident that applicants to teaching positions are racialized from the moment they fill out the required sections of the board application. Teacher hiring and promotion cannot possibly be considered neutral as the profession itself as an entity is one that is fraught with white normative conceptions of morality, embodiment and socialization, all of which are highly politicized (Kelly, 2012). The efficacy and validity of equity and inclusive education policies in terms of diversity hiring initiatives are difficult to gauge due to the lack of mandatory data collection. Although some of the participants were employed at the two boards that collect race-based data, an overall picture of the teacher diversity gap is challenging to understand. The policies call for a more adequate teacher representation to reflect Ontario’s ethno-racial population composition, but fall short of enacting accountability and oversight mechanisms for policy objectives to be attained.

6.6 Nepotism and Favouritism

The purpose of Regulation 274/12 is to put a halt to endemic nepotism and favouritism within the school board. However, references are an imperative component of the hiring process and those who have school board administrator referees are placed at a considerable advantage to those who have not secured an administrator reference. There is evidence that favouritism and nepotism remain endemic within Ontario school boards, regardless of the legislation. Turner reports that this favouritism is exasperated due to the current teacher surplus. In her words:
Given the over-supply of teachers and limited job openings, there is much more opportunity hoarding going on within school boards as administrators try to keep the available positions for those in their own personal networks or those who look like them (2015, p. 21).

Carr and Klassen (1997) have also cited the hostility of other white teachers as a barrier to racialized teachers securing employment, or performing their job requirements on the basis of “reverse discrimination” due to affirmative action policies that white candidates argue are unfair as these policies prefer to hire based on ethno-racial affiliation rather than merit-based recruitment. The authors provide insight from their data, inferring “some racial minority teachers believed that their white colleagues had often made it difficult for teachers of colour to carry out their duties or advance through the educational hierarchy” (Carr & Klassen, 1997, p. 73). Of the 10 participants in my study, 8 believed that nepotism and favouritism still play a significant role in hiring and promotion. One participant believed that the Regulation had effectively eradicated favouritism and one cited no opinion. For example, Ronald argued that nepotism is still alive and well:

Definitely it does. Some principals have their set of individuals they want to hire. It might not be for good reasons or it might not. But some supplies are cliquish with staff members and then staff members suggest people that they like to the admin and they have that pull with them.

Gurleen echoed Ronald’s views of the role nepotism and favouritism in teacher recruitment:

[Favouritism and nepotism] have not been eradicated and are still there. This game of education it has become a game because it’s all about who you know rather than your skills. Your skills should benefit the school, the students and the community, not networking and who you know.

Judy acknowledged some strides her board is making to curb nepotism, but still felt that there are ways around Regulation 274/12:

It all depends; I believe it is individual based because admin is trying harder to implement the policies. Now they post the LTOs that come up and they never did that before. And they interview people now instead of just choosing them. But then some people want to know why they are being called in to be interviewed when the admin already has someone in mind.
Although under Regulation 274/12, administrators must select candidates by their seniority number from the LTO list and offer the position to those with the top five seniority numbers. Most of the participants believed that administrators could avoid the Regulation’s requirements. Steven and Amal both noted that administrators did not need to post the LTO position; they could simply hire someone who they felt would be best for their respective school.

Amal elaborated on the manoeuvring on the part of administrators:

They do not really need to post the job, they can just choose someone they like and then fill the position, who is really going to be regulating whether or not each job is posted. I’ve also seen so many LTOs go to teachers who aren’t even on the list [LTO list].

Steven had also noticed the prevalence of OTs in LTO assignments, stating: “I don’t really know that the point of the Regulation is to be honest, because I’ve seen lots of OTs get LTOs and people on the LTO list cannot even get an LTO.” Despite the purposes of Regulation 274/12 as a way to eradicate an “old boys network” or “old girls network,” all candidates felt that the Regulation was detrimental to all teachers, not only for racialized and Indigenous teachers.

Thomas felt that the Regulation was “ridiculous, because teachers should be hired by their ability not their seniority number.” Although the reasons for the overall disapproval of the Regulation differed, all participants agreed that the Regulation was harmful to the profession as there are too many loopholes and ways around the Regulation’s mandates that continue to allocate recruitment authority to school administrators.

Equity and inclusive teacher hiring policy documents are based on the foundation of meritocracy. Alvarado defined meritocracy by stating that meritocracy is often used with a positive connotation to describe a social system that allows people achieve success proportionate to their talent and abilities (2010, p. 11-12).

The ideology of meritocracy in obtaining employment assumes that applicants will be rewarded with employment if their hard work, talent, and skills merit it. What meritocracy omits
is the analysis and acknowledgement of the racialized social and power relations encapsulating settler-colonial Canadian society. Turner’s study (2015) found that personal connections continued to inform administrative hiring decisions due to a lack of school leader accountability. Turner described the prevalence of nepotism in Ontario school board hiring and how it maintains the teacher diversity gap:

Hiring based on personal connections means that all qualified educators are not able to compete for job openings equally and, as a result, the best and brightest teachers are not being hired…hiring based on personal connections limits the racial diversity of the teacher workforce and therefore, reproduces the status quo (2015, p. 21).

Regulation 274/12 has not been effective enough to impede the discretion and autonomy school administrators enjoy to hire who they choose. A requirement of Regulation 274/12 is that school administrators must post all LTO jobs to ensure that all candidates have an equitable opportunity to apply to teaching positions based on their ranking and/or position on the board’s LTO list. However, as my findings demonstrated, some participants had been in “rolling LTOs” meaning they had not applied or been interviewed for the LTO contract but happened to be consistent and liked by the administration. Therefore, rather than the vice-principal or principal posting the position, they effectively left the LTO un-posted and turned the daily occasional work of an Occasional Teacher (some who are not on the LTO list) into an LTO position.

6.7 Bias-free Hiring as Democratic Racism

Most of the participants were also skeptical of the idea of bias-free hiring; 7 felt that being bias-free was not possible, and 3 argued that administrators and hiring committee members should put their biases aside and be neutral when hiring and promoting applicants. Most of the participants believed that a person’s bias toward another individual or group should not deter them from hiring the best person for the position. However, when asked if it is possible for anyone to be completely bias-free, all 10 participants believed that each individual carries some form of bias.
Olivia felt that bias-free hiring is a must when it comes to hiring teachers for publicly-funded teaching positions, stating:

Bias-free hiring, yes, it is a great policy. Overall it works well because principals shouldn’t be biased when they’re hiring.

Olivia, being a racialized woman, did not acknowledge specific barriers that she, or teachers who look like her (being highly visible in an Islamophobic context) may face while advancing through her teacher career. Olivia categorically believed that equity and inclusive policies, including hiring measures, were beneficial to everyone. Olivia emphasized: “putting the biases aside to hire the best teachers is fair to everyone, if I was a parent I would want my child to be in a classroom with the best teacher.” By not acknowledging or naming the intersectionalities that have acted to prevent like her from entering the teaching profession, she unconsciously ascribes to performing whiteness, as she does not rupture the status quo. The norm and dominance of whiteness in education has been perpetuated through hegemonic narratives concerning both the types of bodies are considered eligible to be teachers, and the identities that constitute “good teachers” (Pinto et al., 2012). The discourse of whiteness is evident in both teacher recruitment and teacher education programs where Whiteness informs the teaching professions culture (Solomon et al., 2005). The authors articulated the teacher socialization process throughout pre-service teacher education programs as the “institutionalization of whiteness” that effectively perpetuates white normativity in the teaching profession and informs the ideology of teacher identity as one based on character, morality, and care (Morris, 2016; Solomon et al, 2005).

Zemblyas (2003) referred to the socialization and performativity encapsulating the teacher identity as the “teacher self.” The teacher self is constructed through the Foucauldian notion of subjectivity that is required to understand how individuals are placed both within historical and contemporary spaces alike. Butler (1997) described performativity as ongoing
discursive actions that demonstrate practices located within a myriad of political, social and
cultural landscapes. Butler (1997) outlined three aspects of performativity including: speech-act
as a way of doing things linguistically; affinities with rituals, rules, and ceremonies, and finally;
the essence of meaning being derived from the presence of such performing bodies. It is both
problematic and unrealistic to categorize all racialized and Indigenous teachers as antiracist and
social justice educators as the pervasiveness of Eurocentric curriculum, norms, and endemic
white privilege in settler-colonial contexts such as Ontario, have facilitated a climate that non-
white bodies must ascribe to whiteness, perform whiteness and essentially assimilate to be
successful (Comeau, 2005).

Thomas felt that when it comes to hiring, although the biases people carry with them
should not come in the way of selecting the best teacher. He narrated:

Boards should be bias-free when they hire teachers they shouldn’t look at race or gender
or anything else other that whether or not that person is a good teacher and a good fit in
the school.

Even though Thomas believed that being fully one hundred per cent was not possible, he still felt
that this was the best practice when it came to hiring. Thomas argued that as a teacher one had to
“check their biases when they enter the classroom” and therefore principals should do the same.

Other participants were not as confident in the idea of bias-free hiring, Christine stated:

You can strive to be bias-free, but no one can actually be without bias, because you are
always going to be influenced by your experiences and values.

Tania’s response toward bias-free hiring was:

There is always a hidden agenda; do they have a negative connotation about some
minorities? If a VP or Principal has a negative concept of a group, they will be bias
because racism is difficult to name, it can be used as a way to be racist without being
racist.

Steven concluded:

I don’t know why they create bias-free policies. Everyone comes with bias it’s human
nature. There is really no such thing as bias-free, because if there was such a thing, we
wouldn’t see so much inequality, poverty and social problems, not just here but everywhere, everyone holds biases, everyone has been socialized and affected by different environmental or cultural factors and influences.

The uncritical accounts of equity and inclusivity omit antiracist praxis and social justice pedagogy from creating and facilitating dialogue through “courageous conversations” (Singleton & Hays, 2005) by encouraging bias-free hiring approaches. The critical interrogation of one’s social location required to interrupt the pervasiveness of white privilege within power relations is silenced by the hiring policies. The neoliberal contexts in which these policies are created and implemented are top-down and bureaucratic accountability mechanisms to ensure accountability to the public as a customer service approach.

Of the 10 participants, 9 believed that it is impossible to be completely bias-free when it comes to hiring. The Law Society of Scotland draws attention to the importance of coming to terms with unconscious biases in lawyer recruitment. The Report noted:

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness. Unconscious bias is more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one’s own conscious values (Law Society of Scotland, p.5).

Equity and Inclusive educational policies that promote bias-free, objective hiring and promotion as a means to diversify the teaching demographic are implemented in such a manner that racism is never named or discussed (Ahmed, 2012). The policies offer a neutral and objective narrative toward hiring and advancement through the discourse of meritocracy and hiring the “best qualified” candidate. Conceptions of good teachers are often framed in relation to Eurocentric standards of suitability based on settler-colonial norms of teacher identity, valid experience, and those candidates most likely to maintain the status quo of white supremacy in education (James, 2011). Objective-based hiring both privileges and benefits whiteness by making unsubstantiated altruistic commitments to diversifying the teaching profession, while simultaneously omitting oversight as to ensure that such policies are never materialized (Dua,
2009). The policies do not reveal strategies to facilitate self-awareness and understanding of the role, nature, and manifestation of biases within hiring.

The protocol of bias-free hiring emphasizes meritocracy, therefore ensuring that school boards remain a raceless and genderless public space. Equity and inclusive policies continue to be created and implemented by Eurocentric and white normative accounts and definitions of equity, inclusion, and diversity (Kobayashi, 2009) to ensure that the assimilative legacy of education continues and thus never needs to mention or interrogate past and ongoing colonialism and racism rampant within the Canadian educational context. Although overt bias has dissipated, as Holmes & O’Connell (2007) mentioned, unconscious bias continues to thrive and flourish; thus, rather than turning a blind eye to unconscious and unexamined biases by denying the very existence of individual and societal biases, we must name and acknowledge the racialized disparities in teacher and administrative representation (Sheridan, 2009). Sheridan emphasized the fact that it is impossible to be immune to bias, noting that:

Unconscious bias and assumptions is the tendency of our minds to judge individuals based on characteristics (real or imagined) of a group…we all have unconscious biases and assumptions. The key is to know that we have them (2009, p. 23).

Stereotypes and biases unequivocally impact how we conceptualize and ascribe meaning to people (Bodenhauser, Macrae & Garst, 1998); social psychologists found that stereotypes associated with particular racial groups are in fact “overlearned” (Biebly, 2000) and furthermore: “Individuals whose personal beliefs are relatively free of prejudice or bias are susceptible to stereotypes in the same way as people who hold a personal animosity toward a specific group” (Biebly, 2000, p. 122).

The findings from the research demonstrate and solidify the polarizing racialized power relations within the teaching profession that are rooted in the narratives of colonial, settler-state conceptions of identity and belonging (Thobani, 2007). Although the participants were
representative of various diverse social locations, most participants in the study noted the lack of racialized and Indigenous administrators and permanent teachers, as well as tokenistic diversity hiring agendas of certain boards in relation to mainly urban schools. The documents that emphasize bias and barrier-free hiring do not cite how such measures are possible, or the research pertinent to the policy-making and decision-making processes of neutral hiring. The vast majority of administrators are white and the fact that white school leaders make the hiring decisions, rather than diverse administrative panels, is vastly problematic. It is also interesting that Ministry discursive practices continue to perpetuate the narrative of neutrality and objectivity following the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s findings concerning the detrimental impact of the Ontario Safe Schools Act on racialized students. The Safe Schools Act implemented a one-size-fits-all approach to school discipline based on the premise that educators would adhere to the policy in a manner that treats all students equally. The colourblind approach resulted in high discrepancies in expulsion and suspension rates based on race, particularly among Black students (James, 2012). Furthermore, it is impossible to assert a bias-free policy approach as countless studies have indicated that racialized students are much more likely to be placed in behavioural and special needs programs (James, 2012; Gillborn, 2005).

White privilege is perpetuated by bias-free hiring that does not acknowledge the role or presence of unconscious bias as well as the fact that the power of decision concerning who gets promoted or hired is in the hands of white-dominated administrators across Ontario school boards. The omission of dialogue concerning race, power relations, and the assimilatory past and present role of education is facilitated through the discursive practices and ideological incongruence (Solomon et al., 2005) of equity and inclusive education. I shall further discuss the fallacy of bias-free hiring in Chapter 6.
6.8 Conclusion

The study draws attention to the differential experiences faced by teachers employed by Ontario publicly-funded school boards in accordance to their ethno-racial identity. The findings from the semi-structured interviews denote several thematic patterns among the majority of the racialized participants, including the following: the tokenization of racialized bodies within “urban” schools, the predominance of white administrators, as well as overt experiences of racism such as having to prove one’s professional status as a teacher as well as the questioning of participants command of the English language regardless of country of birth or origin. In general, regardless of racial identification, 90% of participants felt that the concept of “bias-free” hiring was problematic, based on the premise that most felt that one could not be completely bias-free. However, regardless of the fact that the majority of the participants believed that it was not possible for people to be bias-free, some did agree that having an objective and neutral hiring policy was a positive thing. The “othering” of racialized teachers, in terms of being asked to produce their identification and teaching license, and the assumption that English is not a participant’s first language due to social location, is associated with race. The white participants had never been asked to show their identity, OCT certification, or been made to feel like tokens in their profession. The data suggests differentiated treatment in terms of hiring experiences, treatment by colleagues and staff as well as skepticism concerning the validity, actors and power relations that led to the emergence and emphasis of PPM 119 as well as Ministry-mandated equity and inclusion policies at board levels.
Chapter 7:
Closing the Diversity Gap

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will discuss my findings as they relate to the closing of the teacher diversity gap. First, the embedded racialization of teacher applications is analyzed. Then the lack of mandatory data collection and reporting is assessed, as well as the hegemonic discourse of bias-free hiring, and the means by which online teacher applications that appear to be neutral, are in fact raced through complex meaning-making structures informed by power relations (Gee, 2001). Finally, concrete examples of how racialized meanings and social locations can be ascribed to particular candidates by unpacking each application section (please see Table 4) with critical questions that challenge the objectivity of the teacher application process as bias-free.

7.2 Racialization without Self Identification in Teacher Applications

The reiteration of bias-free and objective hiring and promotion as best practice has been a significant discursive theme throughout board and provincial policies and documents. An area of the teacher hiring process that is generally left uncontested is that of the teacher applications themselves. Teacher applications do not explicitly ask candidates to self-identify as a racialized minority or an Indigenous person. However, candidates are racialized automatically by completing the seemingly bias-free and merit-based applications for teacher employment. The process of racialization occurs through what appears as objective demographical questions, such as: name, address, postal code, Canadian or international educational experience, employment experience, language, and so forth (please see Table 3). As the data findings alluded to in Chapter 6, bias-free hiring policies operate through democratic racism (Henry & Tator, 1998) in the sense that questions are not objective, but rather that they are embedded within subtle mechanisms of meaning making (Gee, 2001). As Carr and Lund accentuated:
There are racialized aspects to all parts of peoples lives, including where they live, employment positions they attain, who they befriend, who they employ, who they marry, the types of associations and clubs they may join, and the innumerable other markers of social integration. (2010, p. 231)

Certain international employment or educational experience can also be devalued and delegitimized as “foreign.” An address from a highly ethnicized or low income and/or priority neighbourhood can also be identified. Name-based hiring discrimination is a process not only within the teaching profession, but also across employment sectors in Canada. Oreopoulous and Dechief (2011), for example, outlined the racialization faced by candidates according to their names in terms of obtaining employment, showing that when the name is altered the results are markedly different. The authors stated: “One of the most striking results from this work is the substantial difference in call-back rates as a result of simply changing an applicant’s name. Applicants with English-sounding names received call-backs 40 per cent more often than applicants with Chinese, Indian or Pakistani names.” (2011, p. 9) These statistics are based on Canadian data and demonstrate the fallacy of the bias-free narrative emphasized and promoted through meritocratic, neoliberal ideology, which is founded on both white privilege as well as white supremacy. The section of the application form concerning references in the online applications also likely contributes to the marginalization of racialized and Indigenous teachers, as many have non-Canadian referees who are not affiliated with Ontario school board administrators and therefore hold less prestige in the competitive application process.

7.3 Analysis of Teacher Hiring Applications

The following section outlines the various sections of the teacher hiring applications of various publicly-funded school boards across Ontario. I have used pseudonyms to protect the privacy of the school boards discussed. The purpose of Table 3 is to demonstrate the complex ways in which discursive practices operate and are never neutral (Ball, 1994; Gee, 2001). The questions posed on the online applications appear as objective and standard, however in Table 4
I deconstruct the neutrality of the language of each application question to outline how candidates can be racialized.

**Table 3: Ontario School Board Teacher Hiring Applications**

**Part 1 – School Board A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Personal Information</strong></th>
<th>Name, Date of Birth, Address, Phone Number, Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualifications</strong></td>
<td>OCT Number, AQ (Additional Qualifications, ABQ (Additional Basic Qualifications))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certificates</strong></td>
<td>Professional Development and Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td>Contract Type: Occasional, Long-Term, and Permanent. Location of Experience and Duration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Additional Information</strong></td>
<td>Community involvement, leadership, educational background, extracurricular activities, knowledge, skills and experience serving a diverse community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Skills/Activities</strong></td>
<td>Extracurricular activities, hobbies, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cover Letter</strong></td>
<td>Cover letter specific to each specific job application on the board site</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3: Ontario School Board Teacher Hiring Applications
**Part 2 – School Board B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Contact Information</strong></th>
<th>Name, Date of Birth, Address, Phone Number, Email Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment Preference</strong></td>
<td>Casual, Long Term, Permanent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Information</strong></td>
<td>Experience working in Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certification</strong></td>
<td>OCT Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skills</strong></td>
<td>AQ/ABQs, Professional Development, Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>University/College educational background, degrees and diplomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Work Experience</strong></td>
<td>Location, duration, sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extracurricular Activities</strong></td>
<td>Hobbies, volunteer experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>Supervisory References</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Documents</strong></td>
<td>Transcripts, teaching license</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agreement</strong></td>
<td>Authorization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Ontario School Board Teacher Hiring Applications
Part 3 – School Board C

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio</th>
<th>Applicants set up a generic portfolio to apply to various positions at different boards from one site. Applicants must pay a yearly fee per board</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Information</td>
<td>Name, DOB, Contact Information, Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>OCT Registration Number, AQ/ABQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Skills</td>
<td>Language Proficiency and Fluency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Teaching and non-teaching experience, duration and location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Place and Institution where all degrees and diplomas were conferred</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>List three references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resume/Cover Letter</td>
<td>Upload cover letter and resume, applicants may alter cover letters/resumes in accordance with the specific positions they are applying to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting Documents</td>
<td>Teaching license, transcripts, letters of recommendation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pollock (2010) and the 2012 OCT Transition to Teaching Report indicated that candidates with credentials obtained abroad face steep barriers in terms of obtaining employment in publicly-funded boards. The above applications serve to discern which candidate’s credentials are valued as legitimate, such as those offered in American, British, or Australian faculties of education, and which applicants hold delegitimized qualifications that are conceptualized through a deficit construct (Portelli & Sharma, 2014). The same phenomenon holds true in terms
of experience, the segment concerning experience determines whether or not applicants have Canadian professional experience. This is especially important in relation to teaching experience as teaching experience is only valued if it has been undertaken in the Canadian context.

The section concerning extracurricular activities on two of the listed applications provides an opportunity to privilege whiteness, as extracurricular activities are very much correlated with socio-economic status. Applicants who are immigrants or refugees and came to Canada under very stressful economic situations, as first-generation immigrants and refugees, or those who fled immense violence seldom had the opportunity to engage in the luxury of extracurricular activities, which require substantial disposable income. The second application form listed in Table 3-2, goes further in its application requirements, through a contradictory approach. The application asks applicants to fill out a section outlining their particular experiences working with a diverse community.

In general, the forms use a neo-liberal customer service discourse, which symbolically demonstrates the Board’s altruism and commitment to diversity. However, as I have shown in my examples, this discourse simultaneously systematically others and racializes applicants based on their “diversity” experiences working within their own racialized, ethnic, or Indigenous community. In this particular segment of the application, the form indirectly requires applicants to self-identify on a subtle level, as such the seemingly neutral and colourblind, meritocratic application process automatically categorizes the white candidates from the racialized and Indigenous candidates.

7.4 The Fallacy of Bias-Free Hiring

Based on the extant literature and research findings, bias-free hiring, so often perpetuated throughout the discourses of both provincial and school board documents, is both a fallacy as well as a vehicle for greater stratification of racial disparities in teacher and administration
positions. The concept of bias-free hiring in itself must be problematized as it contradicts the very definition of equity and adheres to the multiculturalist focus on equality or sameness without a regard for one’s particular and unique social location. One cannot be bias-free, the situatedness of the context, power relations both at the individual and institutional levels, and between the person in a position of power and authority (hiring committee and administrators).

The relationship of that person’s social location in relation to that of the applicant must be acknowledged, discussed, and contested in order to effectively engage in dialogue to unpack the distinct barriers, including historical and ongoing biases an applicant may face during the recruitment, promotion, and retention process.

Women in Science & Engineering Leadership (WISELI) researchers Fine and Handelsman (2012) draw on popular policies of objective employment. The authors discuss the processes and protocols of diversity hiring in the Post-Secondary Education (PSE) context. The researchers outline common yet highly ineffective and often detrimental practices that occur in the diversity hiring at the university. The first strategy indicated is that of suppressing or minimizing bias. The authors contended the following:

After becoming aware that unconscious bias and assumptions about groups of people can influence the evaluation of individuals, one common approach is to strive consciously to banish biased thoughts from ones’ mind; to avoid or suppress thoughts about group stereotypes. Paradoxically, research shows that such attempts can backfire. Attempting to suppress a thought can actually reinforce it and may unintentionally increase bias in evaluation. (2012, p. 44)

Furthermore, the authors additionally cite the problematic hiring method of relying on objective ranking measures as a mechanism to reduce bias in the hiring process, they noted:

Another common method of attempting to avoid the influence of bias is to rely on the objectivity inherent in mathematics and numbers to develop a system of assigning scores or points to applicant’s materials and to rely on this ‘objective’ measure to evaluate and compare applicants. Designing or relying on some type of numeric evaluation system can be very helpful in ensuring a fair and equitable process, but this practice in and of itself will not eliminate bias because each assigned score may be subject to bias. Even if the
influence of bias on each assessment is minimal, adding these scores or points together can significantly increase the influence of bias (p. 45).

A study conducted by Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the University of Chicago collected hundreds of resumes of applicants with similar educational backgrounds and skill sets and submitted them to various companies, including “equal opportunity employers.” The study concluded that resumes with European-American sounding names received 50% more call-backs than African-American sounding names (Hassouneh, 2013). The employers had never met the applicants and the perceptions of applicants although many of the companies cited that they were “equal opportunity employers” were based on racialized perceptions and ascribed attributes of the candidates (Hassouneh, 2013).

As long as the narrative of bias-free hiring continues to dominate Ministry and board-level hiring policies, the teacher diversity gap will not close; rather it will be perpetuated through the guise of meritocracy that does not see colour or social location. Bias-free hiring is a prime example of colourblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Zemblyas, 2003), as it purports to only select candidates based on their individual merit and ability. This strategy assumes that all candidates have had equitable access to resources, education, and opportunities to compete for the position (Bonilla-Silva, 2006).

7.5 Interrogating the Racialization of Teacher Hiring Applications

As pointed out in the previous section, online applications are not neutral or objective, but contain a multitude of meaning-making mechanisms that effectively categorize applicants along racial lines. The purpose of Table 4 is to argue that discourse is never neutral nor is it bias-free, the following table serves as an example of how applicants can become “othered” via conscious and unconscious biases, beliefs and preconceived notions. The four school board teacher hiring application themes are listed on the left column of the table; on the right column, the neutrality of the discourses of the application categories are critically unpacked.
Table 4  
Critically Examining Bias-free Teacher Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Category/Section</th>
<th>Critical Reflection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Personal Information-Name, address, D.O.B, Contact Information | • Does the applicant have a Euro-Canadian name? Does the candidates’ name signal a particular ethno-racial affinity? How might name discrimination factor into your decision (pronunciation, loyalty or affinity to an ethno-racial, cultural or religious group identity)?  
• Is the candidate’s age a factor-perhaps this is due to obtaining Canadian equivalency in teacher certification?  
• What does the contact info reveal about the neighbourhood the candidate resides in, how might this affect hiring preferences? |
| Education | • Did the applicant obtain their education in Canada?  
• If the candidate went to university abroad, especially if they went to university in a non-Western country, how might this information impact your perception of their educational credentials? |
| Qualifications | • Did the candidate initially receive qualifications in another country? What barriers might the candidate have or continue to face (IETs) when seeking employment in Ontario school boards?  
• How do you view qualifications received abroad in relation to Canadian qualifications, do you consider one above the other? |
| Language Skills | • Based on the languages the candidate is proficient in, do you believe that English is their first language?  
• Does proficiency in other languages make you question the candidate’s command of the English language? |
| What languages are given preference over others? If a candidate speaks French and English vs. a candidate who speaks Punjabi and English, how do different bilingualisms conjure different stereotypes of the applicant’s identity? |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Has the applicant had most or all of their work experience in Canada?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is it acceptable for Canadian teachers to teach abroad and it is considered valid experience, but those who have taught abroad and then seek employment in the Ontario system are not provided with the same validity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the applicant has most of their professional experience completed abroad, what rich experiences from their former system can be implemented into the Canadian system? How might different pedagogies enrich student learning?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extracurricular Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is your conception of extracurricular activities?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How might the ability and the time to engage in extracurricular activities be a pursuit of great privilege?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you considered that for many people whether they have grown up in Canada or abroad, extracurricular activities are a luxury as they require a middle to upper-middle class social-economic status?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What about applicants who are first generation Canadians or low-income residents that could not pursue these kinds of activities because they had to work and help their family with living expenses, and/or pay to attend post-secondary education? How does this category privilege certain groups over others?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What skills are valued by the Ontario education system</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• What about the skills that are required to relate to racialized and Indigenous students, families, communities and epistemologies?
• What skills might racialized and Indigenous applicants offer from their real life experiences that will be relevant and meaningful to students and communities in navigating the school system rather than feeling pushed out of the system?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• References from Ontario and Canadian administrators are valued greatly, what about the applicants who have not been able to secure a reference from a Canadian administrator because volunteering in the school board was not a viable or realistic option?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How are references from abroad valued or devalued? Does your board contact references outside of Ontario and/or Canada, why or why not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are references from employment outside of the educational system given the same amount of privilege? How might privilege, nepotism and favouritism still implicate which candidates have access to administrative references and which candidates do not?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 goes through all of the common application sections as demonstrated in Table 3 and outlines the importance demonstrating the complex mechanisms by which biases and positionality consciously and/or unconsciously arise in relation to each applicant’s social location. Table 4 contains the major teacher application components including: personal information such as content pertaining to the candidate’s ethno-racial location and social-economic status based on the applicant’s name and address. The other sections are education and
the corresponding questions that ask administrators to examine their own biases in terms of foreign-earned credentials in relation to Canadian credentials and the possible barriers that IETs may face in light of the OCT reports and Pollock’s (2010) findings discussed above.

The section on language skills asks questions about whether a candidate’s language skills have an effect on how administrators perceive the applicant’s command of the English language and whether or not they find certain language proficiencies to be a liability (Pollock, 2010). The section that addresses experience, similar to educational credentials, is meant to interrogate what types of experiences and knowledge and in what spaces are constituted as relevant experience to gain employment as a teacher in Ontario. Finally, the last section on references is meant to draw attention to the narrow forms of acceptable and legitimate references for applicants. In relation to nepotism, the questions ask administrators to consider how some references are more privileged than others in relation to an applicant’s social and cultural capital. For example, an applicant from a privileged social location will arguably have the capacity to perform volunteer work at a public school in order to gain a reference from a school board administrator. Meanwhile, an IET applicant may only have references from abroad, and those references will not be provided with the same degree of prestige as a Canadian administrator’s reference.

The purpose of Table 4 is to provide an example of the ways that neutrally-positioned discursive practices, such as the questions posed in Table 4, in relation to teacher applications for Ontario school boards are embedded with narratives that position and mark an applicant’s social location without the need for the applicant to self-identify. Indicators of one’s social location may be correlated to gender, race, Indigeneity, social-economic status, nationality, citizenship, and so forth. Therefore, it is imperative that the dominant narrative of objective and “bias-free” hiring is removed by encouraging school leaders to embark on transformative praxis (Wane & Cairncross, 2013) by examining their own belief systems, assumptions, and ideas in order to
acknowledge the specific barriers that some candidates may face when seeking employment, as well as how these hidden or overt biases might inform hiring patterns.

7.6 Summary

The chapter outlined the mechanisms in which social location and identity are constructed throughout teacher application processes. Meaning-making is formulated in various ways, as demonstrated in Table 4 where I interrogated the ways that bias-free applications are loaded with discursive practices informed by power relations, hidden power, narratives, and agendas (Bowen, 2009; Foucault, 2002/1972). I also argued that bias-free hiring is not only unrealistic, even with the best of intentions it in fact perpetuates inequities in teacher hiring. Therefore, it is essential to remove the narrative of bias-free hiring and encourage school leaders to acknowledge and understand their own social location, beliefs, ideas, and biases (unconscious and conscious) inform their hiring practices.

When applying to publicly-funded school boards in Ontario, a statement detailing the particular school board’s commitment to equity, inclusion, and the hiring of diverse candidates often accompanies teaching postings. Equity statements attached to these postings are a requirement under the Employment Equity Act (James, 2011) and they often incorporate a “lip-service” (Ahmed, 2012) narrative of “welcoming” diverse applicants (James, 2011). However, although school boards are required to post the equity statements, there are no accountability and oversight measures intact to assess whether school boards are hiring the diverse applicants they purportedly welcome to apply.

As a component of the Doctor of Education degree, I have engaged in a Creative Professional Activity to raise consciousness among school leaders of issues of bias in hiring and provide a practitioner-based outline to facilitate critical action and praxis (Dei, 2007; Lopez, 2015/2013). The EHT sets the stage for a journey of self-transformation (Wane & Cairncross,
2013) and critical awareness of power relations by removing the dominant assumption of “bias-free” practice through self-examination and action. The findings from data, policy analysis, and literature contributed to the creation of the Equity Hiring Toolkit for School Administrators is detailed in the following chapter.
Chapter 8:
Implications for Practice

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of the chapter is to review the research findings as well as the proposed suggestions for practice in relation to the dominant policy discursive practices of bias-free hiring within teacher recruitment in Ontario. The findings from the data collection designated a strong correlation between race and employment in the teaching profession within the Ontario context. As relayed previously, equity and inclusive education in the Ontario context has been plagued by a lack of accountability due to the Ministry of Education’s transfer of responsibility, autonomy, and oversight of the policies to the school board level without accountability mechanisms in place. The policies continue to function symbolically as the teacher diversity gap does not show indications of closure.

The suggestions proposed to analyze the privileging of whiteness in teacher hiring are fourfold. First, the implementation of mandatory data collection for each board that is publicly accessible. Second, the re-articulation of the discursive practices of equity and inclusion that name and acknowledge racism in hiring by removing the narratives of objectivity and instead challenging biases. Third, the chapter draws on the centrality of the role of school administration in hiring processes by calling for critical practice and action. The disruption of the status quo of bias-free hiring in teacher recruitment by advocating for school administrators to critically examine their role in teacher hiring by interrogating how their social location and biases impact their recruitment practices. Finally, the chapter concludes with the overview of the Equity Hiring Toolkit for Ontario School Administrators that outlines the roadmap for principals to engage with. Based on the findings from the interviews, the policy analysis, and literature review, it is clear that the equity and inclusive policies relating to teacher hiring are vastly ineffective. The
research findings have enabled me to create the EHT as a proposal to close the teacher diversity gap in Ontario by moving beyond neoliberal equity and diversity narratives and exploring the pervasive structure of white dominance in the education system.

8.2 Mandatory Data Collection

Although Ontario’s Education Equity Action Plan (2017) calls for boards to collect demographic data on students, families and employees, currently only two school boards in Ontario collect race-based data on staff members and employment status. Ontario and Canada in general lag behind the American educational context detailed demographic data is collected in the U.S in both educational realms of the public school system as well as Post-Secondary Education (PSE). Canadian universities and colleges in addition to publicly-funded elementary and secondary schools are not required to collect race-based data (James, 2009). The lack of mandatory racial data reporting on employees and students alike has transpired into significant policy gaps in terms of materializing equity and inclusive education policies, specifically when it comes to ensuring that Ontario school boards are adhering to the policies by hiring and promoting more racialized and Indigenous teachers. The data collection should happen at the board level and be reported to the Ministry, which should then publish an annual report on demographic data in relation to job or contract position.

There tends to be a common assumption that Canada is a post-racial society, and therefore there is no need to discuss race, as it is commonly perceived, that race and racism are American problems (Siddiqui, 2015). Siddiqui conveyed that in Canada race-based data must be collected across all areas of society, from health care to education, otherwise the denial of the problem of endemic racism ingrained in society will be both perpetuated and magnified. James (2009) suggested the mandatory collection of quantitative data available each year that specifically demonstrates the numbers of racialized and Indigenous educators and the specific
employment type, allowing the correlation between race and job status to be determined. This proposal of mandatory and specific reporting will not offer a panacea to the institutionalized white supremacy in the education system, but it will be a first step to implementing oversight and accountability in relation to equity and inclusive education policies to eradicate the teacher diversity gap.

8.3 Reconceptualizing Equity and Inclusion

The above paragraph delineated the importance of mandatory data collection that details teaching contract status and race. Therefore, although there are repeated calls throughout the documents to diversify teaching and administrative staff, there are no concrete measures in place or oversight to determine whether or not such diversification is actually occurring. The recommendations for reducing the teacher diversity gap in the policies provide mere verbatim about equity and inclusive competence training (Schick & St. Denis, 2005) for the purposes of practicing bias-free hiring standards. However, there is no information regarding what the equity and inclusive training or workshops will entail, who the providers will be, how materials for the professional development initiatives are selected or what criteria they are based on.

Additionally it is important to be cognizant of the fact that even if there is race-based data collection on employees, equity and inclusive hiring must go beyond merely meeting quotas in a representational manner. In order for the staticity of teacher identity and the teaching profession to be interrupted, there must be a paradigm shift through a CRT lens that counters the dominance of whiteness in education. One, which brings the discussion of, racialized power relations and the normativity of whiteness in education to the forefront of policy-making processes. There is an inherent lack of social justice, power relations and antiracism rooted within conversations of diversity, equity and inclusion. The discourse of the policies at the Ministry and board levels reinforces a multicultural education narrative. These multicultural discourses recognize the
diversity of candidates, but do not draw attention to the racial structures of the education system that have amounted to the systematic overrepresentation of white bodies in leadership and permanent teaching positions.

Equity and inclusive education policies thus provide the illusion that critical actions are being undertaken to address fundamental systemic, systematic and institutional discrepancies in society, however these discursive practices are constructed to capitalize on the commodification of difference (Comeau, 2005). Equity and inclusive education policies concerning bias-free teacher hiring, thus offer the fallacy of neoliberal meritocracy in the sense that the province is doing all it can to accommodate othered identities, therefore the education system abdicates itself of responsibility if the diversity gap sustains itself. The re-framing of equity and inclusive discourses in education must be focused more on aspects of anti racism and social justice conceptions of power relations that sustain inequities, rather than recognition-based, reactionary policies and terms formulated without dialogue or consent.

8.4 Encouraging Critical Action and Praxis for School Administrators

Several scholars point to the importance of white teachers to examine their own unchecked biases (conscious and subconscious) and how their social location relates to their interactions with the students in their classrooms (Dei, 2007; Egbo, 2011; Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lopez, 2013; Matias & Mackey, 2016; McIntosh, 1989; Milner, 2003; Ryan et al., 2009; Wane & Cairncross, 2013). Lopez (2013) noted that equity and inclusiveness in schools must move beyond ‘laminated equity’, therefore, teachers must “excavate” their social location. The critical examination of social location involves the interrogation of preconceived biases, conceptions, values, beliefs and how their identity impacts their pedagogies (Dei, 2007; Carr & Klassen, 1997; Lopez, 2013). Vinnik (n.d) underlined: “white educators have historically viewed diverse students as ‘other’ (or foreign) and have perceived their role to be that of ‘helping minority
students’ to be more like whites, i.e. them” (p. 3-4). This is not an isolated issue; in fact there is a plethora of related examples within popular culture, such as films Dangerous Minds, Freedom Writers and Crash, all of which invoke strong narratives of white saviourism and white innocence (Razack, 1998).

Shifting the burden of responsibility (Matias & Mackey, 2016) from the blaming of racialized and Indigenous bodies being the centre of the problem, white teachers and administrators must “own the emotional burden of race” (Matias & Mackey, 2016, p. 48). Thus whiteness as a social and racial category must be acknowledged as well as the privileges and benefits that accompany whiteness as identity. Whiteness therefore must be centred to dismantle power relations in education, as Vinnik (n.d) reinforced:

White teachers must be charged to explore the power of this history and its inherent assumptions. This includes an in depth inquiry of their own racial and cultural identities, which often generates considerable fear and discomfort, largely derived from fear of their own racism (p. 4).

Teachers as professionals, who are intertwined with the public, must be cognizant of the complexity of their own identities as well as the identities of their students and the communities they work within. This is especially important in Ontario schools, as a high percentage of students and their families are immigrants and refugees, as well as racialized and Indigenous. These identities are not neutral discourses, but constructed within a paradigm of white-settler normalcy, in which issues of citizenship, language and belonging are also intimately implicated. Dei (2003) outlined the importance of educators understanding the complexity of identity indicating “a key tenant is that educators must begin to understand their students through the lens of race as a salient part of their myriad identities” (2003, p. 3).

Bias-free hiring initiatives are enveloped in the notions of meritocracy that privilege whiteness (Giroux, 2005). Discussions on topics of race and racism are often difficult ones and met with resistance (Singleton & Hays, 2005). Carr and Lund (2010) outlined the reluctance of
discussing race in the Canadian context: “Racialized identities are problematic and highly
contested notions, and the topic of racism is not usually addressed openly in polite company
(2010, p. 231).” Racism is manifested in multifaceted ways, where it was once easier to identify
and name racism through overtly racist laws and policies, such as the residential school system,
South African Apartheid and Jim Crow laws. Systemic and institutional racism has intersected
with neoliberalism as it has morphed into a race-neutral phenomenon that attributes social
inequities through the othering of racialized and Indigenous bodies via the inherent denial of

While it is critical that teachers, especially white teachers, engage in and develop a
critical consciousness of the role their whiteness plays on educational outcomes (Egbo, 2011),
school administrators must also take part in transformative antiracist work (Levine-Rasky, 2000).
The “burden of race” (Matias, et al., 2014; Matias & Mackey, 2016) should also apply to school
administrators; however, administrators have largely been ignorant of critical antiracist work.
The teacher self-critical examination stems from the impact their instruction and curriculum
delivery has on racialized and Indigenous students. However, the purpose of critical awareness
and the examination of social location for the majority white Ontario school administration ought
to be framed on the impact of white privilege on hiring practices. Levine-Rasky (2000) discusses
the importance of dismantling colour-blindness in the education system and the dangers of not
taking part in critical work. Although referring to teachers in the U.S context; Levin-Rasky
emphasized the essentiality of interrupting the:

Belief that the individual is the sole determinant of his or her own school success even
though this meritocratic ideology that fails to take into account how schools contribute to
inequality in society has long been discounted on empirical and practical grounds. In the
same vein, the reluctance or refusal to engage the issue of race and diversity may be the
result of an uncritical acceptance of the status quo. (2000, p. 25-26)
School administrators and teachers alike (both of which are dominated by whiteness) must be charged with situating their social locations, positionalities and power relations to critically examine how their whiteness perpetuates the status quo of white privilege in teacher hiring. Developing an awareness of the inequitable playing field that racialized and Indigenous applicants encounter while interacting with the education system through both antiracist and critical whiteness praxis and counter-stories (Matias & Mackey, 2016). Counter-stories or counter narratives (Razack, 1998) enable a space for racialized and Indigenous staff, activists, community members or academics to provide personal accounts of their own barriers and experiences of racism. Matias and Mackey (2016) discuss the importance of counter-stories in convergence with self-examination. The authors lamented the outcome of their study of the benefits of the two noted strategies on white teacher candidates:

The combination of reflecting upon counter stories and systems of oppression and developing their knowledge of a marginalized community helped them understand critical whiteness and colourblind racism. (2016, p. 41)

School administrators in Ontario, as well as teachers, many of who have limited experience in interacting with people who do not look like them must be encouraged to engage in transformative knowledge (Levine-Rasky, 2000). As Levine-Rasky (2000) stated, a critical knowledge base concerning race is required due to the fundamental lack of understanding the specific barriers and obstacles confronting racialized and Indigenous candidates from entering the profession. While the main purpose for critical consciousness among teachers in diverse schools is to become aware of the way white privilege manifests itself to push minority students to the margins. The purpose for administrators is to become aware of how whiteness operates through colour-blind notions of bias-free hiring, which as the research findings determine, prevent non-white teachers from being recruited.
8.5 The Equity Hiring Toolkit for Ontario School Administrators

From the findings of the study, it is evident that the teacher diversity gap in Ontario is perpetuated by the race-neutral narrative of bias-free hiring that assumes the equality of opportunity for all teachers based on principles of merit. The Equity Hiring Toolkit is framed through an Applied Critical Leadership framework (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). The Applied Critical Leadership lens embeds a transformation approach to challenge seemingly objective, but racially charged social processes in the education system. The framework is rooted in a CRT perspective and advocates for collaboration between racialized and white leaders to instil social transformation in educational leadership (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012).

The closure of the teacher diversity gap has been acknowledged and analyzed in an Ontario, Canadian, American (as well as the European Union [EU]) context in very similar manners. The problem of the lack of teacher diversity is generally centred on: reducing graduation gaps between racialized students and their white counterparts, increasing enrolment rate of marginalized groups in PSE and attracting more racialized students to the teaching profession (Bireda & Chait, 2011; Bristol, 2015; Vinnik, n.d.). Though there is discussion on how to recruit and retain racialized teachers and prevent turnover as well as the role of discriminatory practices in hiring, there is a lack of attention drawn toward the importance of administrators engaging in antiracist praxis and action to racialize the teaching population. The Center for American Progress: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce detailed strategies that have been implemented in different states and districts to diversify the teaching population. The document referred to the diversity gap as “troubling”. While the minority student population in the U.S is 40.7%, over 90% of the teaching population is white (Vinnik, n.d). The guide pointed to four strategies that are widely utilized throughout the country including: alternative certification programs, most notably, Teach for America, Urban Education Enrichment Program,
the New York Teaching Fellow and the Boston Teacher Residing Program. These programs offer different pathways for teacher certification and access to teaching employment specifically targeting racialized candidates. The second strategy is known as “Grow-Your-Own Programs” that involve school district partnerships with local universities to prepare school board employees who are not teachers to obtain teaching licensure. The third strategy suggested involves Early Outreach Programs that are responsible for attracting minority high school students to the teaching profession before they reach college to streamline them into teacher education training. Finally the Traditional Certification route focuses on recruiting more minority students into teacher education by admitting more students from districts with high Black and Latin populations. The U.S, unlike Ontario and the EU has more traction to determine the closing of the diversity gap, due to detailed statistics released by school districts that provide information about student and school personnel demographics.

In the EU context the focus on diversifying the teaching population to reflect increasingly non-white European populations has centred on what the European Commission describes as: migrant/minority teachers. An EU Report entitled: Study on the Diversity within the Teaching Profession with Particular Focus on Migrant and/or Minority Background released in 2016 drew attention to the barriers faced by migrant/minority populations in accessing the profession. Although the document does not provide detail as to the concrete definition of what it denotes as a migrant/minority identity, it appears to be an all-encompassing category similar to the term “visible minority” in Canada. The Report indicated the underrepresentation of migrant/minority teachers in the EU due to factors such as: lower academic achievement, structural barriers including racism, poor affirmative action policies, and the lack of foreign credential recognition. The document cited discriminatory barriers to the accessing of and practicing in the teaching profession as follows: “Relative marginalization/isolation as the minority staff member within
the teaching workforce; a lack of desire to play the role of the ‘intercultural ambassador; risk of discrimination in the workplace and a lack of career progression’ (p. 10).

The Report indicated that 67 policies exist in EU legislation to diversify the teaching population. The policies are divided into four categorical themes including: to enrol more pupils of migrant/minority origin into teacher training, to support the completion of teacher training education to promote access to the profession for migrant/minority populations, and to provide support for those teachers once they have entered the profession. The drawback of the policies is similar to the Ontario context, that being the lack of data collection as well as a formal evaluation process to measure the accountability of the policies.

The importance of schools refraining from the push out of Black and Brown bodies from the education system and thus “leaking from the pipeline” (Ryan et al., 2009) the intention of the EHT is to deconstruct the way that school administrator identities impact how teachers are hired. The Toolkit provides a practical antiracist approach to diversifying the teacher population, by encouraging action as well as practice rather than empty discourses of equity and inclusion from a top down mechanism. The Toolkit seeks to challenge the whiteness of the teaching profession from the frontlines, by facilitating transformative learning (Levine-Rasky, 2000) among school administrators who are directly charged with teacher hiring. The Toolkit challenges school administrators to think about their own positionality and social location and the means by which preconceived notions, biases and beliefs are embedded within each of us both consciously and subconsciously and from this critical practice to facilitate critical action.

**Overview**

As earlier mentioned, the mandate of the EHT is to encourage constructive dialogues about the operation of biases, beliefs, power and privilege and the importance of self-examination of to raise consciousness of the role of race in matters of teacher hiring. The Toolkit
is not meant to be a static linear tool, but rather a framework, which encourages the troubling of hiring practices, dominated and perpetuated by white privilege. As discussed, teachers are called on to examine their social location and how their identity implicates their pedagogical approaches, the same must be encouraged for school leaders when it comes to teacher recruitment. Based on the research findings and literature, it is redundant for teachers alone to self-examine (Dei, 2012; Lopez, 2013; Matias et al., 2014; Solomon et al., 2005) if white, female teachers continuously dominate the teaching profession. This section will discuss the components of the Equity Hiring Toolkit and how it can operate to challenge the racialized policy narratives of “bias-free” hiring in publicly-funded Ontario school boards.

**Image 1: Equity Hiring Toolkit**

The first section of the Toolkit provides an overview of the increasingly diverse population of Ontario. The information provided under the heading: ‘Goals of the Equity Hiring Toolkit’ reiterates the key demographical information presented in Chapter 1 of the thesis. The Toolkit is based on 5 Action Items framed through an antiracist theoretical framework, as antiracist education calls on educators to self-examine and excavate (Dei, 2007; Lopez, 2013) their social locations and how their position within power relations impacts their teaching (and in this case hiring practices).
The second component of the Toolkit lists the 5 Action Items: Understanding Social Location, Understanding Biases (conscious and unconscious), and the Importance of a Diverse Teacher Population, Strategies and Steps to Eliminate Barriers in Hiring, and Leadership and Professional Development. As previously noted, understanding and unpacking social location is vital to antiracist praxis as it will provide school leaders with the tools to self reflect on their unique identity and specific positions of power and/or oppression. The second Action Item offers information and strategies to both understand and uncover biases. Bias can be conscious or unconscious and can be manifested in multifaceted ways, regardless of the intentions of the individual. The purpose of this Action Item is to dispel the fallacy of bias-free hiring perpetuated throughout hiring policy narratives. In order to eradicate the teacher diversity gap, it is imperative that school leaders (as well as teachers and other educators) consider and interrogate their ideas, beliefs, misconceptions and attitudes toward certain peoples and communities. As Schick and St. Dennis (2003) expressed: “social positions are never neutral” (2003, p. 56).

Action Item 3 enunciates the importance of a racially diverse teaching population in relation to the educational success of racialized and Indigenous students (Howard, 2010). Research determined that racialized and Indigenous teachers are more likely to facilitate student engagement by having higher standards for minority students than their white counterparts and by being more inclined to implement culturally responsive pedagogical approaches (Edge, 2014; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Racialized and Indigenous teachers have also been found to engage in and create more positive relationships with families and community members (Howard, 2010; Ryan, et al., 2009).

The fourth Action Item: Steps and Strategies to Eliminate Barriers in Hiring addresses issues of representation, individual school equity and inclusive education policies which each school is mandated to have as well as school leader perceptions of their board’s commitment to
closing the teacher diversity gap. The final Action Item entitled: Leadership and Professional Development calls on school leaders to think about their school climate, their own professional learning initiatives in relation to equity and inclusive education as well as challenges that may arise, such as guilt, when they engage in critical dialogue. Antiracist educational leadership training can be achieved alongside social justice and antiracism professional training. Rather than union or Additional Qualification (AQ) professional development endeavours, this type of training can occur through partnerships with universities that host experts in the field; most notably the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education’s (OISE) Department of Social Justice Education.

The final section of the Proposed Equity Toolkit is the assessment chart. The assessment chart is an open-ended graphic organizer for school administrators to consider and document the goals they might have in relation to the five Action Items. The chart can be employed to consider the implementation of their professional goals, measuring them and reflecting upon their progress within a timeline. Different goals may require differing timelines and may relate to various aspects such as: ongoing professional development and learning in relation to equity and inclusive education. School administrators can engage in dialogue with racialized staff members about some of the challenges and barriers they have encountered while seeking employment in their board. Moreover, school administrator’s can collaborate with racialized and Indigenous teachers to co-create and co-facilitate an equity and inclusive, social justice or antiracism workshop for staff and community members.

**Applied Critical Leadership Framework**

The 2012 Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) distinguishes between leadership and management in education. The document referred to management as the maintenance of the status quo, short-term goals, smooth operation of the education system, and ensuring things are
done right. Leadership on the other hand, takes an oppositional approach to management, in which, leadership entails change, the disruption of the status quo, and focusing beyond short-term goals and on the long-term organizational directives. The OLF detailed leadership endeavours as occurring in alignment with the following concepts: goals, principles and values, constraints, solution processes, and mood (2012, p. 46). The Applied Critical Leadership (ACL) framework speaks to the OLF’s comparison between leadership and maintenance, as the leadership approach advocated for by the OLF speaks to the transformative leadership purpose of ACL (Santamaria et al., 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). The definition of ACL is outlined as:

A model of leadership practice where educational leaders consider the social context of their educational communities and empower individual members of these communities based on the educational leaders’ identities (i.e. subjectivity, biases, assumptions, race, class, gender and traditions) as perceived through a CRT lens. (2012, p. 5)

ACL distinctly relates to CRT introduced in Chapter 3, as ACL provides a CRT lens when examining the racialized structures of race and white privilege embedded in societal power relations. From the CRT perspective of ACL, collaboration between racialized and white educators for collective social change is best facilitated. Santamaria and Santamaria (2012) expanded on the transformational aspect of ACL as one, which is utilized to “disrupt the status quo practices and critical pedagogy to challenge assumptions and organizational norms” (2012, p.165). ACL encourages leaders to ask themselves critical questions by engaging in courageous conversations (Singleton, 2005) and dialogue with racialized bodies. Santamaria and Santamaria (2012) contended:

ACL leaders ask themselves questions such as, “in what ways does my identity (i.e. subjectivity, biases, assumptions, race, class, gender and traditions) interrupt my ability to see other perspectives, and therefore provide effective leadership?” (2012, p. 23)

The authors articulated attributes of critical leaders as follows: a willingness to engage in critical and courageous conversation, the utilization of consensus in decision-making processes
rather than individual autonomy, and finally, the consciousness of biases and stereotypes as how they are motivated (Santamaria et al., 2014; Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012). Critical conversations that emphasize counter stories and counter narratives from racialized and Indigenous leaders to disrupt the status quo of the dominance of whiteness are essential to the implementation of the EHT. ACL can be incorporated to facilitate successful learning outcomes for critical transformational leadership as it provides voice to racialized and Indigenous leaders, community members and educators that are generally silenced. ACL can additionally be applied to all leadership levels through the collaboration of school administrators, superintendents and directors of education to attract, recruit and retain more racialized and Indigenous teachers. An example of this is the proposed mentorship program put forward by the Peel District School Board that aims to partner aspiring administrators with current administrators (The Journey Ahead, 2015). The program seeks to recruit and develop leaders from racially diverse social locations; however, the mentorship program does not mention the pairing up racialized mentors and mentees. The collaboration of racialized and Indigenous mentors and mentees will be a challenge due to the dominance of white school administrators in Ontario. ACL also sheds light on the normativity of whiteness as an invisible social marker by interrogating preconceived notions, biases and stereotypes to the forefront rather than systematically omitting their importance.

**Implementing the Toolkit-Critical Leadership Praxis and Action for Ontario School Leaders**

The implementation of the Equity Hiring Toolkit for Ontario School Administrators is not meant to be a one-session professional development-training segment. In order for the EHT to be properly implemented, the process of self-transformative Applied Critical Leadership (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012; Wane & Cairncross, 2013) through critical self-examination must occur. The critical process of self-examination of dispositions, beliefs and values will allow
for the development of a critical consciousness, which Capper et al., (2006) defined as the need to “possess a deep understanding of power relations and social construction, including white privilege, heterosexism, poverty, misogyny and ethnocentrism” (2006, p. 213). In this case the development of critical consciousness will inform administrators of how their dispositions and positionality of white privilege correlate with the social location of the teachers they hire. The processes of critical consciousness take time as they involve both dialogue and reflection before action can be materialized. Antiracist practice is best devoted to in dialogue and solidarity with racialized and Indigenous people in the form of storytelling, counter narratives, counter stories and courageous conversations (Egbo, 2011; Matias & Mackey, 2016; Singleton & Hays, 2005).

Singleton and Hays (2005) focused on the Four Agreements for courageous conversations on race to take place between white and non-white educators. These Agreements include: staying engaged, experiencing discomfort, speaking your truth, and the expectation and acceptance of non-closure. Singleton and Hays (2005) advocated for a safe space where a diversity of opinions, rather than the dominance of whiteness is normalized. The authors contended:

Through normalizing the presence of multiple perspectives, we can avoid a situation in which one dominant way of understanding race invalidates all other experiences and points of view. We discover just how racialized our own identities and viewpoints have been (2005, p.20).

Secondly, Singleton and Hays (2005) draw on the emotionality (Ahmed, 2004) raised in antiracist work. Singleton and Hays (2005) argued that white educators engaging in antiracist practice and action need to “expect to feel discomfort” (2005, p. 20) in order to progress. They noted: “Each of us must let go of the racial understandings that we have been holding onto in order to move forward” (p. 20). Thirdly, Singleton and Hays (2005) call on all participants to speak their truth, without the fear that they may offend anyone, as much of the beliefs conceptualizing race are misconceptions (p. 21). Finally, participants must expect and accept a
lack of closure, rather than concrete answers to complex issues. For the majority of white school administrators in Ontario, questioning and challenging ideologies and conceptions of race is not an easy task. A more thorough analysis of the challenges and complexities that arise when engaging in critical antiracist practice and action will be detailed below.

The EHT offers practical tools to lead to critical action. I suggest enactment of the Equity Hiring Tool through a professional development workshop series called: Critical Leadership Praxis and Action for Ontario School leaders. The series will ideally target both current and aspiring school leaders based on the five Action Items of the Toolkit. Each class should focus on one action item per session, whether this is one class per week or biweekly. Faculties of Education across the province offer Additional Qualification (AQ) courses, where professional development credits that are earned after completion of initial teacher certification. Faculties, especially those with critical race and antiracist scholars are ideal spaces for the workshop series to take place. The proposed workshops should adhere to Singleton and Hays (2005) Four Agreements and involve counter narratives and counter stories by encouraging racialized and Indigenous leaders, administrators, academics and community groups share experiences of race and racism. The purpose of the antiracist professional development is not to explicitly target school administrators, but to facilitate a safe space for the unpacking of whiteness and social location. An Ontario Faculty of Education that has a strong social justice foundation, most notably the Department of Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), would ideally host the Critical Leadership Praxis Action for Ontario School Leaders course. Departments similar to the Social Justice Education program at OISE have exceptional antiracist scholars to facilitate the awareness of critical consciousness among predominantly white teachers. The following chart entails suggestions for the implementation the
five Actions of the EHT in the Critical Leadership Praxis and Action for Ontario School Administrators workshops. A more extensive list follows the chart.

**Table 5**

The 5 Action Items: Critical Praxis and Action for Ontario School Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Workshop Learning Objectives</th>
<th>Impacting Leadership</th>
<th>Professional Goals</th>
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</table>
| Understanding Social Location       | • Critical self-examination of social location utilizing the social location web (see EHT)  
• Consider what group and social identities you are part of and whether these groups are dominant or minority groups  
• Collaboration with educators of all roles from various social locations to hold courageous conversations  
• White privilege and its dominance in education-teacher diversity gap | • Reflect on the staff at your school-is there an overrepresentation of one identity group among the teachers  
• Consider other staff members social locations in support positions and clerical positions is there a difference between those demographics and teaching demographics?  
• Create an antiracist forum at your school made up of various educators and community members to empower community voices and needs of the community | • What are some indicators and measures that you will establish as a leader in your school to ensure these practices are carried out successfully?  
• Accountability measures  
• Community and antiracist team consultation  
• Collaboration with academics for antiracist literature and resources for ongoing professional development |
| Uncovering Biases                                      | Importance of Diverse Teachers                                      | Reflect on power relations-
as a leader what positions of power do you occupy? |
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<td>- Biases and stereotypes are informed by social location</td>
<td>- Positive impact of racialized and Indigenous teachers on students of all social locations (Villegas &amp; Irvine, 2010; Ryan et al., 2009)</td>
<td>- What feelings and emotions have you encountered when thinking about your social location and biases that you may not have addressed?</td>
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<td>- Acknowledgement that bias is implicit</td>
<td>- Pedagogical importance-moving beyond the Eurocentric curriculum and grounding other perspectives</td>
<td>- Establish an allyship with ‘critical friends’ (Lopez, 2015) at your school-antiracist forum and with other educators and community members</td>
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<td>- Unconscious vs. conscious bias</td>
<td>- Importance of teachers representing the community and forming culturally</td>
<td>- Reflect on the importance of a teaching workforce that represents the student population-role models, mentorship and the formation of a positive sense of self</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Importance of understanding how biases operate to inform hiring decisions-people are more likely to hire those that look like them</td>
<td>- Antiracist forum to attend teaching hiring fairs and recruitment</td>
<td>- Assess the needs of the school and community to ensure that candidates are reflective of the student population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does your social location impact your hiring preferences? Interrogating and challenging your positionality on an ongoing basis</td>
<td>- Consult with forum, community as well as assessment of demographics to ensure your staff is reflective of the community</td>
<td>- Create specific</td>
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<tr>
<td>Steps to Eliminate Barriers</td>
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<td>• Address the barriers that certain candidates may encounter when seeking teaching employment</td>
<td>• Establish mentorship programs for OT and LTO teachers so that non-permanent teachers can be paired with mentors who reflect their social location for positive networking and professional growth</td>
<td>• Consult with senior teachers about their willingness to have a mentorship program</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Consider the importance discussed in Action Item 1 of social location and differentiated experiences</td>
<td>• Culturally appropriate NTIP mentorship</td>
<td>• In consultation with the antiracist forum at your school make a list of suggestions that go beyond the confines of administrative references</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Examine teacher hiring applications and the ways that the applications may marginalize some applicants by discussing the teacher application tool chart that provides concrete examples of implicit bias and racialization in hiring processes (Chapter 7)</td>
<td>• Extracurricular activities expanded to community involvement (religious, cultural, Ethnic, etc.)</td>
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<th>Leadership and</th>
<th>• OLF leadership</th>
<th>• Ongoing</th>
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appropriate relationships with parents and community-increasing public confidence in education (Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009)

make the profession more accessible for candidates in the community

equity and inclusion mandates for your school

• Conduct interviewing with antiracist equity forum (employee members) present

Leadership and
Suggestions for Implementing the 5 EHT Action Items

1. Understanding Social Location:
   • Critical self-examination by addressing the social location web -locating yourself on the web and understanding relative positions of power/oppression. What dominant groups do you belong to? What marginalized groups do you belong to? How do you navigate and negotiate those roles? As Movement (2014) mentioned: “Many dominant group members have never acknowledged or become aware of their unearned privilege. They don’t recognize it affects the way they communicate with non-dominant group members” (Movement, 2014, p. 99).
   • Reflection and discussion of how ones’ own social location, group identity and individual identity impacts hiring decisions and hiring preferences. Consider your staff at your school; is there an overrepresentation of one group in particular? Think about your staff
representation at all levels and consider how different identities might occupy different positions within your school.

- Discussion of the ways identities are created, imagined and perpetuated through a lens that privileges whiteness and how teacher identity is socialized. Consider how you may hire those who look like you or are from a similar social location to yours.

- Collaboration between racialized and Indigenous school administrators and white administrators that provides for courageous conversations (Singleton & Hays, 2005). Encourage racialized and Indigenous school administrators and teachers alike to collaborate and share as well as to centre their experience and voices (Hubain, et al., 2016).

- Create an antiracist education forum at your school, where parents, community members, and staff can safely voice their concerns over racialized disparities in the education system as well as counter-narratives from these noted voices about their views of the teacher diversity gap. This can be a space for consulting, sharing and collaborating over issues of race, equity and inclusion in the community.

2. Uncovering Biases:

The University of Bristol referred to unconscious bias as: “a bias that we are unaware of, and which happens outside of our control. It is bias that happens automatically and is triggered by our brain making quick judgements and assessments of people and situations, influenced by our background, cultural environment and personal experiences” (ECU: 2013, Unconscious Bias in Higher Education, Bristol University).

Examine how biases and stereotypes whether conscious or unconscious are informed by social location by first accepting that bias is a natural and implicit reflection and secondly, by determining whether or not these cognitive processes are affecting hiring decisions (ECU: 2013, Unconscious Bias in Higher Education, Bristol University)

- Set up a hiring panel that is comprised of racialized and Indigenous staff that represent the school community to sit in on teacher interviews and provide these members with an active voice when making hiring considerations.

- Avoid making hiring decisions based on whether or not a candidate is a “good fit”, as the notion of a good or bad candidate is grounded in assumptions. As the University of Bristol report suggested: “focus instead on the specific reasons for a ‘poor fit’ and explore whether
these reasons are evidence-based or if they reflect biases and a tendency to recruit individuals who are similar to yourself” (University Resourcing Guide, 2014).

• Take the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) that “measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report. The IAT may be especially interesting if it shows that you have an implicit attitude that you did not know about” (Project Implicit, 2011).

3. **The Importance of Diverse Teachers:**

One of the key roles of school administrators is to ensure and contribute to student success and achievement (OLF, 2012). Having a diverse teaching staff dramatically improves student engagement and attitude toward school (Howard, 2010; Ryan et al., 2009; Vilegas & Irvine, 2010). Consider the following when recruiting and making hiring decisions:

• Think about how racialized and Indigenous teachers may encourage student success and reduced achievement gaps by making curriculum content more relevant

• Consider how racialized and Indigenous teachers can act as role models for students and provide an increased sense of self and positive identity formation

• Consult with your school community’s antiracism forum to determine where representation may be lacking at your school and how this may affect student excellence

• Encourage racialized and Indigenous staff members to attend hiring fairs to engage in formal and informal conversations with candidates about their experiences and commitment to working with various communities

• Hold mock interviews and information sessions with a question and answer period one evening a term to provide access for teachers to prepare for the interview process

4. **Steps to Eliminate Barriers in Hiring a Diverse Teacher Workforce:**

• Mentorship programs not only for permanent teachers who are aspiring school administrators, but also for OT and LTO teachers as well who can be paired with a mentor that reflects their social location

• Pairing mentors and mentees for the New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) that are culturally responsive
• Ensuring a diverse panel hiring committee is in place that meets the needs of the community. The selection panel should include racialized and Indigenous staff at your school to counter unbalanced power relations, as the majority of hiring committees and school administrators are white (Turner, 2015).

• Taking community experience outside of the classroom into consideration when hiring (for example: involvement in coaching, fundraising, community education and other informal educational experiences)

• More accessible references rather than only administrative references, keeping in mind that access to resources is inequitable and volunteer work at schools for the purpose of obtaining administrative references is not inclusive (PDSB, 2015)

• Engage in community outreach as a strategy to diversify the teaching population—such as flyers and recruitment materials at community centres

5. Leadership and Professional Development:

• The OLF (2012) described one of the leadership capacities for school administrators as: “Building trusting relationships within and among staff, students and parents” (OLF, 2012, p. 11). Having a more diverse teacher population that reflects students, parents and the community can enable more positive relationship and increased confidence in publicly-funded education (Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009).

• Set both short term and long-term goals for your school to diversify the teacher population—examine the demographics of the community and the province, is there an overrepresentation of one group?

• Set personal professional goals for yourself, seek out ‘critical friends’ (Lopez, 2015), be an ally (Movement, 2014) and recognize limits of your knowledge and collaborate with colleagues of various social locations

• Support from school leaders such as superintendents and directors to support and mentor more racialized and Indigenous teachers

• Collaboration with teacher education programs to discuss the teacher diversity gap and the role of teacher education programs in recruiting more diverse teacher candidates
The Assessment tool attached to the Toolkit is designed as an ongoing self-reflexive practice, where school leaders can reflect and share their emotional responses and how their dispositions fluctuate throughout the workshops (Capper et al., 2006). In addition to the Assessment, journaling is encouraged so that school leaders can reflect on each session, as well as the ways the new paradigms have shifted their professional practices and actions. The next paragraphs will discuss the complexities, challenges and emotional responses that commonly arise when undertaking critical antiracist work.

**Complexities and Challenges of Critical Praxis in Education**

When engaging in critical leadership, critical race praxis can cause various uncomfortable emotions to arise (Lawrence & Tatum, n.d Levine-Rasky, 2000; Lopez, 2015; Singleton, 2005; Theoharis, 2007). As Lopez (2015) illustrated, teaching and learning cannot continue to operate for the purposes of homogeneity as this is no longer the norm, nor is it conducive for massive demographic shifts in developing countries. Lopez (2015) advocated for moving beyond a celebratory multicultural approach that is often common in teaching and leadership and rather, to ground equity and social justice in their praxis and approaches to diversity. Lopez posited: “Addressing the needs of diverse students requires us to think about culture differently beyond celebrating and embracing diversity, to see culture as an active force of change politically, socially and economically” (2015, p. 172). Lopez (2015) articulated the resistance and “push back” that often takes place when engaging in critical equity work, such the divisions between those leaders who advocate for social justice practice as transformation and those who merely pay lip service to it.

Although the emotional responses encountered in equity work may be unpleasant, these emotions are necessary. Matias and Mackey (2016) noted the refusal to confront uncomfortable emotions and therefore the resistance to engage in self-interrogation, “maintains the recycled
nature of the hegemonic whiteness that dominates the field of education” (2016, p. 32). The guilt, discomfort and resistance to even name or engage in dialogue on the pervasiveness of white privilege was solidified in 2014 Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO) workshop. ETFO offered a workshop called “Re-Thinking White Privilege”, however the union received widespread backlash and was even accused of ‘reverse racism’. ETFO President Sam Hammond described the purpose of the workshop to the CBC as follows: “what we are trying to do is spark a conversation about this and raise awareness and a growing understanding about white privilege” (CBC, 2014). The fact that the conversation of white privilege was met with such resistance is indicative of the challenges of antiracist work in the educational institution.

Lawrence and Tatum (n.d) discussed six emotional stages that white educators encounter while carrying out critical antiracist praxis. The six stages entail: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy (p. 7). The first stage of contact is marked with an acknowledgement of taken for granted and un-interrogated whiteness. In this initial stage, white educators become aware of whiteness as a social identity rather than an invisible norm and standard through which all other identities are measured. The second stage of disintegration describes a heightened awareness of whiteness and an increased exposure of the educator to interaction with racialized people, as well as information seeking about race. Feelings of anger, disbelief, and sadness are common during this second stage. The third stage of reintegration is generally categorized by the authors of one where emotions of anger and sadness become directed toward racialized groups, whereby blame for inequities is shifted back upon marginalized identities. The fourth stage known as pseudo-independence facilitates an understanding of the disadvantages of racism by recognizing and taking personal accountability to compliance in processes of racialization, as well as taking steps to dismantle it. The fifth milestone of immersion/emersion is summarized as an active pursuit of questioning contexts of
race and seeking scholarship and knowledge on race and racism. The final stage of autonomy is
the commitment to antiracist activism and allyship. Movement defined an ally as “a member of a
dominant group who acts in solidarity with people who are targets of discrimination…. by
listening instead of talking” (2014, p. 99). The stage of autonomy comes to be from the
development of a positive, antiracist, white identity, that does not impose dominance on how to
counter racism, but rather is an active ally to antiracist initiatives.

The complexities associated with antiracist praxis are caused by a challenging of a
dominant ideological stance through the discussion of sensitive issues such as race (Levine-
Rasky, 2000). Although the emotional reactions experienced may be discomforting, as white
school administrators are generally not required to listen to counter-stories and counter-
narratives, as Levine-Rasky emphasized: “becoming aware or developing a critical
consciousness which should result in paradigm shift” (2000, p. 29). Furthermore, the well-
meaning intentions of school administrators toward racial equity must move beyond
intentionality to praxis. Lopez (2013) solidified the difference between statements of
intentionality and praxis, in the context of teachers, however her argument is equally important
for school administrators. Lopez stated, “teachers must be given the practical tools they need to
transform their good intentions into effective actions” (2013, p. 6). Lopez provided suggestions
for carrying out equity and social justice work as transformative practice rather than episodic
(2015 p. 179). She advocated for a support circle of “critical friends” (p. 179) who share a
commitment to the transformative process and keep each other on track as well as provide as safe
space to discuss challenges along the journey.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Revisiting the Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the thesis has centred on the data findings showing that policy narratives of bias-free hiring are both unrealistic, unattainable, and enhance the teacher diversity gap by incorporating a colourblind (Bonilla-Silva, 2006) approach to teacher hiring. Although inequities in teacher representation are discussed, the role of school administration is widely omitted. The minimization of the administrative role in teacher hiring practices is twofold. First, it is manifested through the assumption that all candidates regardless of social location have equal opportunity to teacher employment based on their merit. Second, the administrative role is overshadowed by seniority-based hiring legislation mandated by Regulation 274/12 that was analyzed in Chapter 5. The study has presented the ways in which equity and inclusive education continue to operate on narratives of white, settler-colonial conceptions of equity and inclusion that mention the importance of social location and teacher representation. Nevertheless, as my findings indicated, the policies fail to acknowledge the racialization of power relations within the education system by advocating for bias-free, merit-based hiring that continues to perpetuate the dominance of white, middle-class, heteronormative, female teachers in Ontario (Escayg, 2010; Gillborn, 2005; Landry, 2016; Pinto, et al., 2005; Ryan, et al., 2009).

The implementation of equity and inclusive education policies pertaining to teacher recruitment has created barriers for racialized and Indigenous bodies to enter the profession. The policies have become more social justice oriented by discussing the hiring of a more diverse workforce, the barriers that some groups face in terms of accessing education, and the importance of differentiating between equity and equality. However, although these issues are touched on, the equity and inclusive hiring policies remain contradictory. The policies call for a diversified teacher population, however, as the findings have outlined, the rhetoric of objective
hiring practices and the lack of political will demonstrated from the lack of accountability ensures that white privilege in teacher representation will continue to flourish. Therefore, should racialized and Indigenous students fail to conform to such norms and pedagogies, their ascribed “otherness” is pathologized from a deficit perspective (Sharma & Portelli, 2014). The same “othered” attributes are problematized for IETs (Pollock, 2010) and racialized and Indigenous teachers who aspire for teaching and leadership positions. As long as equity and inclusive education policies are framed within the discursive practices and power relations that privilege whiteness and the settler-colonial state, racialized and Indigenous teacher representation shall never be actualized.

The unpacking of unconscious bias requires examining the ways that stereotypes are ingrained within society (Hassouneh, 2013) as well as becoming aware of one’s own biases through a thorough self excavation (Lopez, 2013) as a starting point to antiracist hiring praxis and policy. The Equity Hiring Toolkit for Ontario School Administrators provides a practical first step to increase consciousness of issues of race and social justice by encouraging administrators to examine their own social locations as well as inherent biases—whether they are conscious or subconscious—and how one’s positionality within power relations in a racialized institution, such as education, may inform hiring practices.

9.2 Future Research Directions

The following section details future research directions to be undertaken.

1. Equity and inclusive education policies in relation to teacher hiring in other Canadian provinces and territories.

The research focused specifically on Ontario’s teacher diversity gap in relation to equity and inclusive education policies and “bias-free” hiring initiatives. I chose to research the Ontario context because Ontario is the most ethnoracially diverse province in Canada; also, I have
worked as a teacher in Ontario’s publicly-funded education system. Future research endeavours might focus on governmental actions, policies, and strategies to recruit Indigenous teachers in areas of Canada that have high Indigenous populations. For example, the importance of interrogating settler-colonial discursive practices of governmental policy documents in relation to hiring Indigenous teachers and Indigenizing schools.

2. **Examining how other global regions enact policies to diversify the teaching workforce**

Ontario is not unique in terms of its diversifying demographic shift. The United States and Western Europe are global regions that have high rates of immigration and racial diversity. Scholars from the American context have called for teacher representation by increasing enrolment of African American and Latino/a candidates in teacher education programs as well as recruitment into the education system (Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Examining in detail teacher hiring policies in the U.S. context to close the teacher diversity gap may offer insight to the differences in discursive practices, measures, and accountability, between Ontario and the U.S. Europe has witnessed an influx of African and Middle Eastern migrants, refugees, and immigrants. A possible future research direction may be to further analyze educational policies in relation to the recruitment of what the EU Commission referred to as migrant/minority populations.

3. **The examination of perspectives and dispositions of school administrator’s conceptions and experiences of equity and inclusive educational policies in relation to teacher hiring**

Because the research focused on the voices of Ontario teachers in relation to equity, inclusion hiring policies, and the teacher diversity gap, it would be interesting to implement the study to discern the perspectives of school administrators. Interviewing principals and vice-
principals as research participants would garner insights into their experiences engaging in equity and inclusive policies, perceptions of hiring and bias, and their role and commitment to closing the teacher diversity gap. Examining the role of administrators in terms of their hiring patterns and in hiring racialized and Indigenous staff, it will be important to understand how they might interact and engage with the Equity Hiring Toolkit.
Equity Hiring Toolkit for Ontario School Administrators

Goals of the Equity Hiring Toolkit

Ontario is the most diverse province in Canada. According to Statistics Canada (2011), some 26.1 per cent of Ontarians self-identify as a “visible minority”, and another 2.4 per cent self-identify as Indigenous. Statistics Canada defines visible minorities as: “persons who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour and who do not report being Aboriginal”. Although the population of Ontario continues to diversify, the teaching profession has not kept pace with Provincial demographic changes, and there is a significant teacher diversity gap. Only 9% of elementary school teachers and 10% of secondary school teachers are racialized or Indigenous. There is even less diversity at the school leadership level with 2% and 5% of principals and vice-principals respectively, self-identifying as racialized (Turner, 2015).

The Equity Hiring Toolkit provides the strategies and guidelines for school leaders and hiring committee members to embark on the journey of self-interrogation and self-transformation through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens. This lens is important to understand how and who school leaders hire (Sleeter, 2017; Wane & Cairncross, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 1998). The Equity Tool Kit is designed for school leaders (Vice Principals, Principals, Superintendents as well as other hiring committee members) to facilitate and encourage the recruitment of a diverse teaching staff that is reflective of Ontario’s population.

The Equity Hiring Toolkit adopts CRT theoretical framework by calling on school leaders to examine their social location (identities) in order to understand how their social location is correlated with their hiring practices The Toolkit adopts an Applied Critical Leadership (Santamaria & Santamaria, 2012) approach to understand how positionalities, biases and stereotypes operate to inform teacher hiring.

The 5 Action Items of the Equity Hiring Toolkit

1. Understanding Social Location and how it impacts hiring decisions
2. The Importance of a Diverse Teacher Population
3. Uncovering Biases (Conscious and Unconscious)
4. Strategies and Steps to Identify and Eliminate Barriers in Hiring
5. Leadership and Professional Development
Image 2 Equity Hiring Toolkit 5 Action Items

Key Terms

Diversity The presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization, or society. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and socio-economic status (Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009, p.4).

Equity A condition or state of fair, inclusive, and respectful treatment of all people. Equity does not mean treating people the same without regard for individual differences (Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009, p.4).

Inclusive Education Education that is based on the principles of acceptance and inclusion of all students. Students see themselves reflected in their curriculum, their physical surroundings, and the broader environment, in which diversity is honoured and all individuals are respected (Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy, 2009, p.4).

Personal Racism Racism at the personal level encompasses the attitudes, feelings, and beliefs that are held about people of colour generally, and about specific groups of racialized people, such as African Canadians. This includes biases, prejudices, and stereotypes; both those we hold at a conscious level and those that we hold unconsciously (Turner, 2015, p.4).

Institutional Racism Institutional racism includes the written polices, procedures and practices, which create barriers to the hiring, advancement and full inclusion of racialized employees in the workplace (Turner, 2015, p. 4).

Systemic Racism Systemic racism includes institutional racism and racism that is embedded in the organizational culture. Systemic racism can be embedded in written policies, procedures, and practices that create barriers to the hiring, advancement, and full inclusion of racialized employees. Organizational culture includes the unwritten rules and cultural norms that determine
how things get done in the organization and what and who is important. The organization's culture sends powerful messages that can maintain racial disparities and racial hierarchies within the workplace (Turner, 2015, p. 4).

**Cultural Racism** Exists within the organizational culture in the unwritten rules and cultural norms that determine how things get done in the organization, who is valued in the organization and who is not (Turner, 2015, p. 4).

**Antiracism** Antiracism (Carr, 2016; Dei, 2007; Dua, 2009) is concerned with the operation and pervasiveness of power relations. Antiracism argues that power relations are informed by race and are never neutral but operate through language, institutional structures and social relations.

**The 5 Action Items**

**Action Item #1 Social Location**

Social justice, equitable and inclusive hiring praxis requires school leaders to examine their own social location (identity) and how it informs their beliefs, ideas, perception and interactions with minority teachers (Lopez, 2013). As Wane and Cairncross (2013) stated: “We have had concepts and beliefs related to other peoples, other ethnic groups, and other races implanted in our individual and collective consciousness. These beliefs constitute a garden of socio-cultural norms” (p. 52). Using the Social Location Web below, think about your identity and where you would place yourself on each branch.

**Image 3 Social Location Web**

*Please feel free to add any additional branches that reflect your needs*
Based on my locations on the branches of the web, what positions of power do I hold?

What privileges are associated with my group identity? How do I know this?

Does my identity impact how I think about minority teachers?

Who do I consider to be a “good” teacher? Why, what aspects or characteristics of those/that teacher make him/her a good teacher?

Does my staff reflect the diversity and population make up of the community? Does it reflect the demographics of Ontario?

**Action Item #2 The Importance of Teacher Representation**

Having a diverse teaching population that reflects students and the community is vital to student success. A teaching staff that represents the community reduces the achievement gap by providing students and families with a sense of belonging, engagement and participation in school activities and learning as students in particular develop a positive sense of self by being able to visualize themselves in positions of power (Ryan et al., 2009). Having a diverse teaching staff also impacts how and what students learn, as teachers who reflect their students are better suited to implement culturally relevant teaching pedagogical practices. Teachers who represent the community are also better equipped to communicate with, relate to and develop positive relationships and dialogue with families. As indicated in the 2014 Equity and Inclusive Education in Ontario Schools Guidelines: “board and school staff should reflect the diversity within the community and be capable of understanding and responding to the experiences of diverse groups within the board’s jurisdiction…school-community relations improve when students, parents, and community members see themselves represented in their educational institutions”(p. 18). Closing the teacher diversity gap can reduce the student achievement gap. Consider the following questions when thinking about the diversity of your staff:

- Do my staff members represent the demographics of the community? Do they represent the population of Ontario?

- In my experience, are diverse teachers most represented in permanent, LTO or OT positions?

- Do I encourage racialized teachers at my school to take on leadership roles; do I mentor those who wish to become school leaders?

- Do I have high expectations of minority students and teachers?

- Does my school board collect race-based data to assess teacher representation annually? Why or why not?
Action Item #3 Uncovering Biases

According to extensive studies by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, bias is “implicit”. Bias can be intentional (racism, sexism, ableism) or unintentional (such as unconscious bias) in which someone may not even be aware of their behavior. However, biases often have detrimental impacts on minority applicants seeking employment. In order to minimize unconscious biases, and remove barriers, it is important that hiring committees are aware that conscious and unconscious biases exist and take steps to minimizing them such as understanding your own ideas, beliefs, values and preconceived notions that impact stereotyping. Some questions to consider when uncovering conscious or unconscious biases are:

- How have these ideas and beliefs impacted me?
- What types of beliefs about other racialized or Indigenous groups are widely held by my group identity?
- Do I also hold these beliefs but suppress or refrain from discussing them due to political correctness and/or social norms? (Wane & Cairncross, 2013)
- Do I make assumptions about candidates when hiring based on their social location, such as: race, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, citizenship, gender, etc.?
- Do I have different expectations of different applicants based on their race and/or identity?

Action Item #4 Identifying and Eliminating Barriers in Hiring

As indicated by the teacher diversity gap, certain applicants face specific barriers when trying to obtain employment as a teacher. The Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) prohibits discrimination on the following grounds: race, sexual orientation, dis/ability, gender identity, religion, nationality, age and so on. However, although these forms of discrimination are banned, systemic, systematic and institutional barriers remain intact and detrimentally impact certain social and identity groups. Some thoughts to consider in relation to identifying and eliminating barriers are:

- What types of barriers might affect my staff and applicants when applying for promotion or for a position within my school/board?
- How do my colleagues and I identify barriers? Do we collaborate with community members and partners to engage in dialogue about types of barriers facing certain staff members from full participation in work place?
- Have staff members come to me or other school leaders that I work with about allegations of discrimination?
- What types of supports and resources does my school board offer to resolve issues of discrimination if an applicant or employee feels discriminated against?
Does my school facilitate an inclusive and equitable culture that ensures that all community members and staff feel confident to apply for postings?

**Action Item #5 Leadership and Professional Development**

Equity and antiracist praxis requires a lot of ongoing work in order to challenge the barriers and inequalities that continue to permeate our society. Although a lot of improvement has been made, there is still a lot of progress to be made. Ongoing professional development and learning of equitable and inclusive education must be undertaken not only by school leaders responsible for making hiring decisions, but also for all educators working within Ontario’s diverse school boards. Mandatory social justice and antiracism workshops should be provided at the board level, or can be created and delivered by staff members as a part of their professional development. Allocating leadership positions to staff members to educate and develop workshops on equity and inclusive education can be a great way to empower staff. At times having critical dialogue about different forms of oppression can become uncomfortable, the important thing to remember is that these are teachable moments (Lopez, 2013, p. 12) and the point is not to assign guilt or blame, but to engage in constructive conversations (Singleton, 2005). Some items to consider in relation to leadership and professional development are:

- Do I take part in professional development initiatives to better serve the community of learners I work with?
- What types of professional development and leadership opportunities are available for administrators in my school board?
- Do I encourage my staff members to engage in equity and inclusive professional learning endeavors?
- Is my school a safe space to have critical conversations and reflection?
- Is my school’s equity and inclusive education policy relevant and reflective of the needs of the community that my school serves?

**5 Action Items- Assessment Tool**

Based on the Action Items Assessment chart, think about some personal or collaborative goals you might have in relation to the 5 Action Items discussed. You do not need to fill it all out at once, this is meant to be a reflective piece where you can think about different benchmarks and goals you would like your school and/or yourself and colleagues to address. Different Action Items can have different timelines, as this is meant to be an ongoing tool to enhance your professional learning and practice in relation to equity and inclusive hiring and education. For example, a goal might be: “I will take part in more professional learning about equity and inclusive education”, or “I will engage in conversations about my staff’s perceptions of hiring and the challenges they have faced in their journey as a teacher”.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Steps/Strategies</th>
<th>Measures Taken</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<td>Social Location</td>
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<td>Importance of Teacher Representation</td>
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Appendices

Appendix A

Informed Consent

Study Name

Troubling the Teacher Diversity Gap

Diverse Students, White Teachers: Contemplating Equitable and Inclusive Hiring Practices in the Ontario School Boards-Original Study Name (Revised to above)

Researcher

Zuhra Abawi, Doctor of Education Student

Department of Social Justice Education, OISE/University of Toronto

Email: Zuhra.abawi@mail.utoronto.ca

Purpose of the Research

The research will look specifically at the processes of equitable and diversity teacher hiring practices, recruitment, advancement and retention within the Ontario school boards. Ontario is home to the most diverse student demographics, however statistics show that there is a substantial teacher diversity gap. The study is interested in the practices and policies that boards and administrators implement when recruiting and promoting teachers. The research examines the ways that school boards represent the diverse student demographic in their employment and promotion processes and what is the correlation between race/ethnicity and teacher employment status. The research is interested in obtaining the perspectives and experiences of Ontario teachers in terms of how they experience and perceive equity and inclusive hiring and commitment of their boards toward such practices.

What you will be asked to do in the research

You will be asked a series of questions which relate to how you self-identify (race, ethnicity, etc.) as well as your experience in the board, contract type, education, qualifications and employment status in your particular school board. You will be asked to discuss your experiences and perceptions of your board’s commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion and how the board demonstrates these commitments within their schools. You will be asked to draw on personal experience, observations and your opinion of teacher diversity, administrative commitment and board commitment to teacher diversity hiring, promotion and representation within your board.

Risks and Discomforts
Some participants may experience slight discomfort when discussing questions concerning their social location (race, ethnicity) and the specific positions of power and/or oppression that they experience. Conversations concerning race and teacher hiring can often be highly politicized and thus, some participants may feel uncomfortable discussing them. There is a likelihood that some participants have never been asked to interrogate their social location and how their identity implicates and informs their teaching practices.

**Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You**

Your participation will contribute to literature concerning teacher diversity, representation and equitable and transparent education policies that move beyond ‘equality’ and ensure that hiring practices are responsive and reflect the life experiences and social locations of teachers throughout all stages of the hiring process. Your participation will contribute to ensuring that Ontario school boards uphold values of democracy and equitable access to meaningful employment opportunities. Furthermore, your perspectives and insight shall assist the researcher in developing a document that boards can utilize as a teacher diversity-hiring tool when recruiting and promoting teachers.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff or the nature of your relationship with OISE/University of Toronto either now, or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the Study**

You may stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, OISE/University of Toronto, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible.

**Confidentiality**

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

**Questions about the Research**

Participants may list any questions they have concerning the research project.
Legal Rights and Signatures

I, consent to participate in this project and wish to voluntarily participate in the study conducted by Zuhra Abawi. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form and my signature below indicates my consent.

Participant:                          Date:

Principal Investigator:  Zuhra Abawi        Date:
Appendix B

Interview Guide

1. Demographic data- please put a checkmark beside the ethno-racial identity that best describes you (check all that apply)
   - Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, Afro-Latino/a)
   - Latino/a
   - Indigenous (North American: Cree, Micmac, Algonquin)
   - White (European heritage: Italian, German, Irish, Polish)
   - South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, etc.)
   - West Asian (Afghan, Iranian, Turkish)
   - Arab (Egyptian, Libyan, Iraqi, Lebanese)
   - South East Asian (Filipino/a, Laotian, Thai, Cambodian)
   - Central Asian (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan)
   - East Asian (Chinese, Mongolian, Japanese)
   - South Pacific Aborigine/Indigenous
   - Other (please specify)

2. Education and Training- Please put a checkmark beside all that apply
   - 3 year B.A plus Teacher Education program
   - 4 year B.A plus Teacher Education program
   - Some Masters degree
   - Completed Masters degree
   - Some Doctoral degree
   - Completed Doctoral degree
   - Other

3. How many AQ/ABQs have you completed?
   - 0
   - 1-3
   - 4-6
   - 6-8
8-10
Have you completed or started any PQP training? Yes No (circle one)

4. Where did you complete your teacher education program?
   • In Canada
   • In the United States
   • Abroad (outside of Canada and the U.S)

   If you checked abroad, please indicate where

5. How long have you been employed as a teacher?
   • 0-1 years
   • 1-3 years
   • 3-5 years
   • 5-7 years
   • 7-10 years
   • 10 +

6. What type of position are you hired for at your board:
   • Occasional Teacher (OT)
   • Long-Term Occasional (LTO)
   • Permanent Probationary Teacher
   • Permanent Teacher
   • Administration

7. How long did it take to get hired as an OT after graduation?
   • I was hired while still a pre-service teacher
   • Immediately after graduation
   • 6 months-1 year after graduation
   • 1-2 years after graduation
• 2-3 years after graduation
• 3+ years

8. If you are an OT/LTO, how many LTO positions have you had? How many LTO positions have you applied to and been interviewed for? Applied to and been hired? Please discuss all (including the length of the LTOs)

9. How would you describe your experience(s) when seeking promotion (for example from OT to LTO or LTO to permanent? What types of barriers or challenges were involved in the process? Please describe.

10. What are some of the greatest challenges of advancing through the complex teaching hierarchy?

11. Regulation 272/12 was passed in 2012 in order to make teacher hiring more transparent and to ensure school boards were accountable in their hiring processes in terms of nepotism and favouritism. Do you believe that nepotism still plays a considerable role in teacher hiring, why or why not?

12. How does the administration at your school, or your board in general adhere to, or follows equitable and inclusive hiring policies and curriculum implementation?

13. What is the essence of diversity and do you believe it is important for there to be diversity in teacher representation and curriculum?

14. In your opinion, is there a lot of teacher diversity in the school/s you work at? What about diversity among the administration?
15. Why is it important for educators to represent the diversity of students and the communities in which they work?
Appendix C

Recruitment Material

Are you an Ontario Teacher employed by an Ontario School Board?

Are you interested in participating in a study about the processes of equitable and diversity teacher hiring practices, recruitment, advancement and retention within Ontario school boards? Do you believe that nepotism, favouritism and bias serve as barriers to teacher hiring? Do you wish to voice your perspectives and experiences about teacher diversity?

To participate in the study, you must:

- Candidates must be employed as a teacher (OT, LTO, Permanent teacher) or teacher with administrative qualifications (PQP Part 1 and/or 2)
- Candidates must work for a school board in Ontario in which the study is focused upon
- Participants can be from any age range, gender, ethnicity, dis/ability, race, religion

If so you wish to participate, or know of colleagues who would find this work of interest please contact the researcher: Zuhra Abawi (Doctoral Candidate, OISE/UT)

Email: Zuhra.abawi@mail.utoronto.ca
Appendix D

Participation Letter

Date:

Dear X:

Title of Research: Troubling the Teacher Diversity Gap: the Perpetuation of Whiteness Through Discourses of Bias Free Hiring in Ontario School Boards

Name of Researcher: Zuhra Abawi, Doctor of Education Candidate, Department of Social Justice Education, OISE/University of Toronto

Invitation to Participate:

I am writing to invite you to participate in a semi-structured, face-to-face half hour interview for the purpose of my doctoral research which is to understand Ontario teacher perspectives and experiences with equity, inclusive and diversity hiring policies and practices within their school boards in terms of teacher recruitment, promotion and retention. This research will assist me in understanding how these provincial and board policies are implemented and how effective they are in terms of addressing the Ontario teacher diversity gap. I wish to understand the following:

1. How do school boards act to ensure that student diversity is represented within staff demographics? 2. How does the historical and social norm of teacher identity as a White, heteronormative, and feminized profession continue to perpetuate and inform teacher hiring practices and advancement? Finally, how is job status within the board (OT, LTO, Permanent, Administration) racialized?

Participation in the Research:

Your participation is completely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the process at any time.

Description of the Research:

The research will look specifically at the processes of equitable and diversity teacher hiring practices, recruitment, advancement and retention within the Ontario school boards. Ontario is
home to the most diverse student demographics, however statistics show that there is a substantial teacher diversity gap. The study is interested in the practices and policies that boards and administrators implement when recruiting and promoting teachers. The research examines the ways that school boards represent the diverse student demographic in their employment and promotion processes and what is the correlation between race/ethnicity and teacher employment status. The research is interested in obtaining the perspectives and experiences of Ontario teachers in terms of how they experience and perceive equity and inclusive hiring and commitment of their boards toward such practices.

What you will be required to do:

You shall only be required to participate in one half hour interview in a neutral location/space of your choice in which you shall be asked questions about your perceptions and experiences of teacher hiring in relation to equity and inclusive policies and practices within your school board.

Potential Harms/Risks:

There are no harms or risks associated with participating in this study.

Benefits of your Participation:

Your participation will contribute to literature concerning teacher diversity, representation and equitable and transparent education policies that move beyond ‘equality’ and ensure that hiring practices are responsive and reflect the life experiences and social locations of teachers throughout all stages of the hiring process. Your participation will contribute to ensuring that Ontario school boards uphold values of democracy and equitable access to meaningful employment opportunities. Furthermore, your perspectives and insight shall assist the researcher in developing a document that boards can utilize as a teacher diversity-hiring tool when recruiting and promoting teachers.

Confidentiality and Anonymity:

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. Your name, location, employment information and any other personal information will not be used in the study or ever disclosed.
Storage of the Data:

All data will be stored under lock and key. One copy of the data will be stored under lock and key in my home office for two years, another copy of the data will be stored under lock and key in the office of my supervisor: Dr. Njoki Wane in the Department of Social Justice Education at OISE/University of Toronto.

Researcher Contact information

Zuhra Abawi
Department of Social Justice Education
252 Bloor Street West
OISE, University of Toronto
Toronto, ON, Canada
M5S 1V6
Email: Zuhra.abawi@mail.utoronto.ca

Thank you for considering this request.

Signature of Researcher: __________________________

Date: _________________________