CHAPTER 13

Locating Racial Microaggressions Within Critical Race Theory and an Inclusive Critical Discourse Analysis

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This chapter builds upon work by Saloojee and Stewart (2016) as we argue that the concept of racial microaggression in the contemporary era has great utility for an analysis of race, racism and the everyday experiences of people of colour in our society and on our campuses. In particular, an understanding of racial microaggression allows for greater awareness of the often subtle, barely discernible and barely detectable manifestations of racism that can emerge on campuses in classrooms and in everyday conversations and interactions between people of colour and White people. Microaggressions as modes of interaction between members of historically marginalized communities and members of the dominant society reveal how the ideology of racism is secreted in these interactions and reveal the ways in which power and privilege are taken

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for granted in everyday actions and interactions. And within the university environment, this can take many forms including interactions between students, faculty and students, faculty and faculty, and the classroom and university climate and environment.

Much of the literature on racial microaggression is from the USA, and it situates racial microaggression in the context of Critical Race Theory (CRT). This understanding speaks directly to the importance of naming racial microaggressions as covert racism and not allowing it to elide into the vapours of nothingness.

There is little substantial Canadian research and literature on microaggressions, the uniquely Canadian contribution to the study of microaggression is to extend the analysis of racial microaggression from a critical race perspective to locating it with a broader inclusive critical discourse analysis (CDA) or what others have called a Critical Race Feminism and Anti-Colonialism perspective.

Racism, Microaggression and Racial Microaggression: Theorizing Microaggression in an Inclusive Discourse Analysis

In 1969, Dr. Chester Pierce, an African American psychiatrist, medical doctor and scholar, introduced the notion of "offensive mechanisms" when he said, "To be black in the United States today means to be socially minimized. For each day blacks are victims of white 'offensive mechanisms' which are designed to reduce, dilute, atomize, and encase the hapless into his 'place.' The incessant lesson the black must hear is that he is insignificant and irrelevant" (p. 303). In 1970 in a chapter "Offensive Mechanisms," Pierce extends this concept and first introduces the term microaggression to explain what he called the "subtle and stunning" forms of offensive actions,

> Most offensive actions are not gross and crippling. They are subtle and stunning. The enormity of the complications they cause can be appreciated only when one considers that these subtle blows are delivered incessantly. Even though any single negotiation of offense can in justice be considered of itself to be relatively innocuous, the cumulative effect to the victim and to the victimizer is of an unimaginable magnitude. Hence, the therapist is obliged to pose the idea that offensive mechanisms are usually a microaggression. (pp. 265–266)

A decade later, he distinguished between microaggressions and racial microaggressions when he wrote of the everyday racism encountered by

Black people in the USA and used the term "racial microaggression" to refer to: "The subtle, stunning, repetitive event that many whites initiate and control in their dealings with blacks can be termed a racial microaggression. Any single microaggression from an offender to a defender (or victimizer to victim) in itself is minor and inconsequential. However, the relentless omnipresence of these noxious stimuli is the fabric of black–white relations in America" (1980, p. 251). In 1995, Pierce speaks to microaggressions and its impacts on the victims of racism and sexism,

> the most grievous of offensive mechanisms spewed at victims of racism and sexism are microaggressions. These are subtle, innocuous, preconscious, or unconscious degradations, and putdowns, often kinetic but capable of being verbal and/or kinetic. In and of itself a microaggression may seem harmless, but the cumulative burden of a lifetime of microaggression can theoretically contribute to diminished mortality, augmented morbidity, and flattened confidence. (Pierce, 1995, p. 281)

Pierce's rich and incredibly textured research and theorizing on microaggression and on racial microaggression forms the basis for the emergence of CRT and in turn is firmly situated by scholars on the terrain of CRT (Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014). His pioneering work also forms the basis for the work by Sue and others in the early twenty-first century.

Racial microaggression needs to be understood in the context of a critical analysis of racism and racial discrimination but it needs to simultaneously transcend the limits of CRT. The United Nations has provided a well thought out, all-encompassing definition of racial discrimination:

> 1. In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. (United Nations, *International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination* 1965, Article 1)

Racial discrimination as a form of social exclusion that has race as a social construct, at the heart of exclusion is unequal access to rights, it is unequal assess to the valued goods and services in society, it is about unequal access to the labour market, and it extends to all fields of public life. It is about incomplete citizenship, undervalued rights, undervalued

recognition and undervalued participation. The study of structured racial inequality, discrimination, rights and privileges recognizes that Indigenous people and people of colour who enter the labour market, enter the educational system and seek goods and services (among other things) will face a structure of opportunities that are mediated by their race, gender, disability, etc.

Racism manifests itself in a number of forms—as individual, institutional, structural and systemic forms of racial discrimination. The analysis of systemic racial discrimination allows us to focus not on the intentionality but on the effect of racism in general and racial microaggression in particular. For Saloojee (2003), the study of racial inequality and racial discrimination is a study of racialization—how human differences are structured, imbued with meaning, continually reproduced and used to deny people access to the valued goods and services in society.

> Structured racial exclusion is the process by which individuals from the dominant white racialized group in society are better positioned (than are individuals from subordinate racialized and marginalized minority groups) to secure a greater share of society's valued goods, services, rewards and privileges and to use these benefits to reinforce their control over rights, opportunities and privileges in society. Through this process, racial inequality and unequal access to the valued goods and services in society are structured and continually reproduced. (p. 4)

Racial inequality and discrimination are historically derived, have persisted over the centuries and are constantly reproduced in old and new ways; hence, the argument that in the contemporary era, racial microaggressions are the latest manifestations of racism. The persistence of racial inequality and racial discrimination and the patterns of inequality and discrimination generally have proved to be highly resistant to change because of the powerful socio-economic, political and ideological forces which maintain and reproduce the patterns. The analysis of racial microaggression has to be located within an inclusive CDA—an analysis that begins with CRT as the essential analytical framework. Locating racial microaggression in the context of CRT is an explicit recognition of the centrality of covert forms of racism in the everyday experiences of people of colour, and it allows for an understanding that racial microaggressions are intimately linked to institutional, structural and systemic racial discriminations and oppression.

In the 1990s, the anti-oppression perspective was initially seen as challenging the dominant discourses in social theory. While throwing the limitations of the dominant discourse into sharp relief, the anti-oppression framework was unable to deal with the specificity of racism. It was unable to deal specifically with anti-Indigenous, anti-Black racism and Islamophobia.

An anti-racism discourse uses race as the lens through which to understand multiple interlocking systems of oppression (Dei, 1996). For anti-racism scholars and practitioners, intersectionality is vitally important. Within an anti-racism discourse, "race" is the lens through which we understand power differentials and how multiple sources of oppression and discrimination including inequality, poverty, gender, ability and heterosexism interact. Racism is about power and privilege, and it about how one group believes itself to be superior to others and exercises power and privilege over others based solely on phenotypic characteristics. Mari Matsuda (1991) has defined CRT as: "… the work of progressive legal scholars of color who are attempting to develop a jurisprudence that accounts for the role of racism in American law and that works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of eliminating all forms of subordination" (p. 1331). Along with others, Matsuda (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993) identifies the following five themes which define interdisciplinary CRT:

1. A recognition that racism is pervasive in American society;
2. A scepticism towards dominant discourse that focuses on neutrality, meritocracy and colour-blindness;
3. Understanding the relationship between racism and the advantages and privileges that accrue to White people in a racially stratified society;
4. Validating the experiential knowledge of people of colour; and
5. Social change—ending racial domination and oppression as part of the goal of eliminating all forms of discrimination, oppression and injustice.

The discourse of anti-racism posited by CRT scholars, however, has been critiqued by Lawrence and Dua (2005) on a number of important grounds (i) ignoring the complicity of people of colour in the historic project of settler colonialism and the oppression of the Indigenous peoples of Canada; (ii) not understanding that people of colour have power

and privileges and access that Indigenous people simply do not have; and (iii) misunderstanding the roots of modernity—as not beginning with slavery but beginning with colonialism and settler colonialism and the genocide against the Indigenous people of the world. In addition, the anti-racism discourse has been critiqued for its reductionism—focusing on race as the entry point to analysing systems and structures of oppression. In so doing, a progressive discourse contributes to the creation of a hierarchy of oppressions (Williams, 1999). As Williams (1999) notes: "Single standpoint politics have the potential to create hierarchies of oppressions in which groups eschew their points of commonality for open competition and thus become unproductive to the achievement of equality" (p. 214).

There is therefore a need for an inclusive critical discourse framework that allows the scholar, the teacher and the practitioner to understand the complexity of interconnected oppressions faced by people of colour, women and LGBTQ2S, while at the same time allowing them to focus on the specific and dominant form of oppression. According to Lê, Le and Short (2009), CDA "aims at unearthing the intricate relationship between power, dominance and social inequality in different social groups" (Lê et al., 2009, p. 9). Critical discourse is concerned with how discourse produces inequality and is transformative (Lê et al., 2009). It is important to distinguish an inclusive CDA from an anti-oppression framework because the latter subsumes what needs to be highlighted—for example, anti-Indigenous racism or Islamophobia. We argue an inclusive CDA is based on a CRT foundation; however, we distinguish an inclusive CDA from a CRT framework because the latter does not specifically address Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, discrimination and oppression of Indigenous people and the oppression and discrimination faced by members of the LGBTQ2S community.

In a similar vein, Pon, Gosine and Phillips have called for a Critical Race Feminism and Anti-Colonialism arguing "Due to its increasingly mainstream status, we propose jettisoning anti-oppression perspectives in favour of critical race feminism and anti-colonialism. We assert that these emergent perspectives more effectively theorize white supremacy, anti-Black and anti-Native racism, and how the nation's exalted subject is inseparable from the welfare state" (Pon et al., 2011, p. 402).

Whether one calls it "inclusive critical discourse analysis" or "Critical Race Feminism and Anti-Colonialism," what is important is to focus on the central tenets of an inclusive CDA which includes notions of

human agency and power-sharing, reflexivity, understanding the individual and the family in a sociopolitical, historical and cultural context and understanding the relationship between a dominant identity and form of oppression and multiple and interlocking identities and oppressions. Racial microaggressions can best be understood in the context of an inclusive CDA because it allows for a nuanced understanding of the many different forms of microaggressions that are manifest and that are directed at people of colour, at LGBTQ colleagues, at Muslims, etc.

Whiteness, Racism and Racial Microaggression

An inclusive CDA (firmly rooted in an anti-racist, feminist, anti-colonial framework) is one that allows for an analysis of the specificity of anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, anti-Asian racism, sexism, Islamophobia, homophobia and ableism while at the same time understanding interlocking systems and structures of oppression. It allows for an analysis of the subtle distinctions in the forms that anti-Muslim, anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-Latino, anti-LGBTQ2S, anti-women and other forms of microaggressions take.

Building on the seminal research of Pierce (1970, 1980, 1995), Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso (2000) undertook research on racial microaggression on post-secondary campuses by utilizing CRT. Pierce's work undoubtedly opened new vistas of research and there emerged a huge body of influential work on microaggression as an expression of racism. Sue et al. (2007), in their work on racial microaggression and the Asian American experience, define microaggression as "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory or negative racial slights and insults to the target person or group" (p. 273). They provide a very useful taxonomy of microaggression when they break it down into microaggressions as verbal, behavioural and environmental and note the various forms they take as microassault, microinsult and microinvalidation.

Microassaults, closely linked to blatant overt racism, are "explicit racial derogation(s) characterized primarily by a verbal or nonverbal attack meant to hurt the intended victim through name-calling, avoidant behavior, or purposeful discriminatory actions" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 274). Microassaults are often intentional. *Microinsults* are deliberate negative, humiliating put-downs that "convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 274).

And *microinvalidations* "exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color" (Sue, Capodilupo, et al., 2007, p. 274). Since Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal and Esquilin posited this taxonomy, there has been a surge in the literature and research on racial microaggression as well as on the forms and manifestations of racial microaggression on campuses in the USA (see Wong, Derthick, David, Saw, & Okazaki, 2014). This taxonomy is a very useful starting point, but as researchers have pointed out not all racial microaggression identified by participants in their respective studies fall neatly into the taxonomy (see, e.g., Cho, 2010; Houshmand, Spanierman, & Tafarodi, 2014; Poolokasingham, Spanierman, Kleiman, & Houshmand, 2014; Rollock, 2012; Wong et al., 2014).

Minikel-Lacocque (2013) reflecting on the vast CRT literature specifically in higher education notes that "… taken as a whole, CRT research in higher education has highlighted the microaggressions and racial harassment that faculty of colour often face as well as hostile racial climates and racial profiling that students of color encounter" (p. 437). Minikel-Lacocque points to an important function of CRT to challenge "the experiences of White European Americans as the normative standard" (p. 437). Pérez Huber and Solórzano (2014) speak of the importance of CRT is highlighting how structural and systemic racism get played out in the forms of everyday racial microaggression. CRT stresses the vital importance of understanding racism through the experiences of people of colour. It is this latter notion that Pérez Huber and Solórzano speak of when they say,

> Racial microaggressions are a form of systemic, everyday racism used to keep those at the racial margins in their place. They are: (1) verbal and non-verbal assaults directed toward People of Color, often carried out in subtle, automatic or unconscious forms; (2) layered assaults, based on race and its intersections with gender, class, sexuality, language, immigration status, phenotype, accent, or surname; and (3) cumulative assaults that take a psychological, physiological, and academic toll on People of Color. Microaggressions allow us to 'see' those tangible ways racism emerges in everyday interactions. At the same time, they have a purpose. For instance, whether conscious or not, microaggressions perpetuate a larger system of racism. Microaggressions are the layered, cumulative and often subtle and unconscious forms of racism that target People of Color. They are the everyday reflections of larger racist structures and ideological beliefs that impact People of Color's lives. (p. 302)

For them, racial microaggressions are inextricability linked to and bound with institutional, structural and systemic racism.

Pierce's work (1970, 1980 and 1995), that of Solórzano et al. (2000) and the pioneering work by Sue and his colleagues (including 2007; 2008), has opened new avenues for research on the different manifestations and impacts of microaggression in higher education on students, faculty and staff. In particular, research has focused on microaggression and gender, microaggression and the experiences of Asian Americans, microaggression and Latino students, faculty and staff and microaggression and LGBTQ2S students.

There is a growing body of research on racial microaggressions research particularly in the USA, where the concentration of empirical research has been on African Americans (Constantine, 2007; Pérez Huber & Solórzano, 2014; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2008; Yosso, Smith, Ceja, & Solórzano, 2009), Asian Americans (Lin, 2010; Sue, Bucceri, et al., 2007), Latina/o Americans (Rivera, Forquer, & Rangel, 2010) and the Indigenous population (Clark, Spanierman, Reed, Soble, & Cabana, 2011). Very little research has been done in Canada on racial microaggression (see Cho, 2010, 2014; Clark, Kleiman, Spanierman, Isaac, & Poolokasingham, 2014; Hernandez, Carranza, & Almeida, 2010; Houshmand & Spanierman, 2014).

For Solórzano et al. (2000), CRT for education is different from other CRT frameworks because (i) it foregrounds race as the lens through which to understand the experiences of people of colour; (ii) it takes an intersectional approach and seeks to unearth how discourses on race intersect with those on gender, disability and class; and (iii) it looks at how education, the curriculum, the textbooks, the classroom dynamics, etc., all impact students of colour to create a hostile campus environment. They extend Pierce's work to focus on the campus climate and explore this through four interrelated questions: (1) How do African American college students experience racial microaggressions? (2) What impact do these microaggressions have on African American students? (3) How do African American students respond to racial microaggressions? (4) How do racial microaggressions affect the collegiate racial climate?

African American students spoke to Solórzano et al. (2000), of their marginalization inside and outside the classroom and on campuses—they pointed to their invisibility and singular visibility; being singled out to represent all African Americans; being ignored; having to deal with distorted stereotypes of African Americans; faculty expectations of them;

creeping self-doubt; segregation in group work; nonverbal microaggression where White faculty, students and staff impute assumptions about Black students and assumptions about their academic qualifications and how they got into university; and their individual success is not generalized to all African American students but their deficiencies are generalized (Solórzano et al., 2000). Solórzano, Ceja, and Yosso, speak of the detrimental impacts these microaggressions have on African American students—including feelings of doubt; lowering of self-esteem; frustration, isolation the pressure to negotiate these microaggressions on a daily basis while still being striving to maintain high academic standards. "The sense of discouragement, frustration, and exhaustion resulting from racial microaggressions left some African American students in our study despondent and made them feel that they could not perform well academically" (p. 69). The participants were unanimous in saying education is not a level playing field for African American students and that racism was prevalent and was detrimental to their academic success.

Sue, Bucceri, et al. (2007) undertook research on microaggression and the Asian American experience, and their participants identified the numerous ways in which microaggressions manifested in society and on campuses—including participants feeling like foreigners in their own land; assumptions about "intelligence"; assumptions about academic preferences; pathologizing cultural values and colour-blindness; denial of their racial identity; "exoticization" of the Asian woman; invalidation of interethnic differences; unequal (second class) citizenship; and communication styles, invisibility and being overlooked. With respect to the impact of these microaggressions, they concluded,

> [o]ur study provides strong support that microaggressions are not minimally harmful and possess detrimental consequences for the recipients. Most participants described strong lasting negative reactions to the constant racial microaggressions they experienced from well intentioned friends, neighbours, teachers, co-workers and colleagues. They described feelings of belittlement, anger, rage, frustration, alienation, and of constantly being invalidated. (p. 77)

Faculty, staff and students of colour all experience microaggressions differently, and this is equally true for persons with disabilities, women, LGBTQ2S and Indigenous faculty, students and staff. While there are some similarities in the forms of microaggressions and in the impacts of

microaggressions, it is important to understand the nuances and complexities which is why the Canadian contribution can be to address microaggression in the context of the multiple overlapping and intersecting forms of oppression, discrimination and power differentials. The literature of microaggression identifies a number of effects on microaggression—including feelings of isolation and alienation (Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008; Solórzano et al., 2000); a hostile campus climate (Solórzano et al., 2000); health and stress of the recipients of microaggression; self-worth and self-esteem; stereotyping (which is different for different groups of ethno-racial minorities); academic expectations (again different for different groups); power differentials; unequal citizenship; the daily struggle to continually deal with microaggressions; and second guessing whether a microaggression actually occurred. Wong et al. (2014) address the relationship between microaggression and health and well-being,

> When minorities perceive discrimination they also exhibit poorer health and mental health outcomes. Reviews of existing research … suggests that perceived stigmatization pertaining to gender, race, and sexual orientation is associated with depression, and anxiety symptoms, decreased psychological well being, lower self regard and physical health issues. (p. 193)

Their research on the impact of the insidious and subtle forms of microaggression which are becoming more common found similar results; however, they only found one study that "explicitly explored the long-term effects of experiencing racial microaggressions" (p. 193). More research and certainly more research in Canada on the ways in which different racialized minority groups experience racial microaggression is needed. And in the Canadian context, this needs to be extended to immigrant communities as well.

Sue et al. (2008) argue that "[a]lthough any group can potentially be guilty of delivering racial microaggressions, the most painful and harmful ones are likely to occur between those who hold power and those who are most disempowered" (p. 183). For Sue and his colleagues (2007, 2008), racial microaggressions reflect the conscious and unconscious world view of exclusion, White superiority and White privilege that is advertently and inadvertently imposed on ethno-racial minorities.

There is need for a nuanced concept and understanding of microaggressions, and racist and sexist microaggressions need to be understood in the context of the multiple forms of structural and systemic

discrimination and in the context of power relations in the workplace and in society (see, e.g., Sue & Constantine, 2007).

Critical race theorists and feminist scholars have used the concept of microaggressions to address the sociocultural and verbal cues directed at them that make them feel unwelcome in institutions and in the dominant society. These cues are subtle insults which are often done automatically and unconsciously and unintentionally. Similarly, Solórzano et al. (2000) described racial microaggressions as "subtle insults (verbal, nonverbal, and/or visual) directed toward racial minorities, often automatically or unconsciously" (p. 60). Mahmud (2005) considers them, "affronts to human dignity and self-respect; they are behaviors that impact not only the social existence of the victims but also potentially leave scars on their psyche" (pp. 58–59).

Central to an understanding of microaggression within an inclusive CDA are the concepts of Whiteness and White privilege. McIntosh (1990) sees Whiteness as being about the invisibility of power and privilege. Whiteness normalizes everyday racism by allowing those with power and privilege to go about their everyday lives without being conscious of their social location, their unearned privileges and what society confers on them by virtue of the colour of their skin. It also allows them to take these for granted and it makes them defensive when confronted by what the historic and contemporary legacy of racism has bequeathed them. For Gillborn (2008), "white privilege" is only one component of a larger complex of power and domination that is integral to Whiteness. Whiteness as "a way of being in the world that is used to maintain White Supremacy" (Gillborn, 2008, p. 198). Picower (2009) reflects on the tools her White students use to maintain their positions of power and dominance "…[the] tools of Whiteness facilitate in the job of maintaining and supporting hegemonic stories and dominant ideologies of race, which in turn, uphold structures of White Supremacy. In an attempt to preserve their hegemonic understandings, participants used these tools to deny, evade, subvert, or avoid the issues raised" (2009, p. 205).

Rollock (2012) notes that much of the power of Whiteness "…lies in the fact that it is often disguised and *mis*recognised, to borrow from Bourdieu … as the morally acceptable, as normal, as natural" (p. 518). Microaggression as a manifestation of Whiteness is racial microaggression which intentionally or unintentionally expresses the power and dominance of Whites over people of colour. It finds expression in the most subtle and barely discernible ways, and in what is said, how it is said, in

gestures and tones and what is conveyed are notions of superiority and inferiority, forms of exclusions and modes of othering.

As noted above, the very subtlety of racial and gender microaggression leaves the victim wondering what actually occurred. And on the other side, there is the issue of intentionality. Here, a number of questions related to deeply embedded White privilege need to be posed and these can guide future research on racial microaggressions and on the perspective of the perpetrator:

1. Did the perpetrator of the racial microaggression intend to be racist?
2. Did it occur to them they were racist?
3. Did they simply take it for granted (their unearned privilege) that they can say what they please regardless of the impact on the other?
4. Whose responsibility is it to call them on their racism?
5. What would their reaction be to being called out—especially if they see themselves as allies?

White privilege puts the victims of racial microaggressions in situations with multiple difficult points—did the microaggression actually occur? Should they name it and engage in a difficult discussion? And if they did raise it, the perpetrator could well deny it or say the victim is making a mountain out of a molehill. And last if nothing is said, the victim is left simultaneously enraged and debilitated, while the perpetrator remains blissful in their privilege. Conversely, White privilege puts perpetrators in advantageous situations where they can engage in the microaggressions and feign ignorance or go on the offensive by suggesting the victim is overly sensitive. Interestingly, a 2017 study by Kanter et al., of 33 Black and 118 non-Hispanic White undergraduate students, done at a large public university in the Southern/Midwest US students found that overt acts of racism were on the wane; however, racial microaggression was on the increase especially among those who believed minorities were too sensitive about race issues.

The White students who were more likely to be microaggressive were also more likely to support colour-blind, symbolic and modern racist attitudes. They were less favourably disposed towards Black people. This was particularly the case for White students who thought that minorities are too sensitive to issues related to racial prejudice. The overwhelming majority of Black students experienced being called “too sensitive”.

For Kanter et al. (2017), "[t]hese findings provide empirical support that microaggressive acts are rooted in racist beliefs and feelings of deliverers, and may not be dismissed as simply subjective perceptions of the target" (p. 4). Acts of racial microaggressions go beyond the realm of perception because "The delivery of microaggressions by white students is not simply innocuous behavior and may be indicative of broad, complex, and negative racial attitudes and explicit underlying hostility and negative feelings toward black students" (Kanter et al., 2017, p. 1).

The persistence and prevalence of both racial microaggression and the willingness to blame the victims and label them as too sensitive are key indicators of the power of White privilege to continually reproduce itself in new ways over generations. Both speak voluminously to power and privilege in the educational system and in society at large. And the effect on the victims is to denigrate them, deny them their lived experience, alienate, reinforce their subordinate status and attempt to silence them. This is the exercise of White power and privilege.

Rollock (2012) calls these the "rules of racial engagement," where White privilege gets played out in multiple forms of denial—denial of intentionality, denial of what was said or how it was said, and denial of being racist. Rollock suggests that too often, racial microaggressions are missed not only because of their subtlety but because one assumes "good people" and allies cannot be racist (p. 18). Ladson-Billing speaks of the reproduction of racism in new and ever-changing ways "… our conception of race, even in a postmodern world and/or postcolonial world, are more embedded and fixed than in a previous age. However this embeddedness or 'fixed-ness' has required new language and construction of race so that denotations are submerged and hidden in ways that are offensive though without identification" (cited by Rollock, 2012, p. 519). It is up to students of colour, faculty and staff of colour and people of colour generally to manage these subtle persistent and pernicious expressions of racial microaggressions as they go about their daily lives.

It is up to the researcher to uncover these subtle forms of microaggressions that are gendered, racist, homophobic, Islamophobic and anti-Indigenous. Researchers have the responsibility of connecting the intricate dots between and among Whiteness, White privilege, denial, microaggressions in all its subtle and not so subtle forms and their effects on historically marginalized populations. On the one hand, we have critical race theorists and feminist scholars who explore and bring to the fore the concept and the expressions of microaggressions. On the other hand,

there has emerged a counter-narrative that sees any attempt to speak, for example, of racial microaggressions as "political correctness" and question why their speech has to be curtailed or at least moderated to account for the sensitivities of others. What could actually be a productive dialogue is shutdown and positions become polarized. What is clear is that microaggressions are perceived very differently by the perpetrator and the victim (and more broadly if one identifies with the perpetrator or the victim). And this becomes highly problematic particularly in a workplace when the microaggression relates to race or gender. Microaggressions have a cumulative effect. This is what Pierce was referring to when he talked of the "subtle, stunning, repetitive event that many whites initiate and control in their dealings with blacks" (1980, p. 251).

New Avenues for Research in Canada

In Canada, there is not a great deal of literature on microaggression and its effects on victims. A 2016 study by Bailey on the experiences of Indigenous students at one Canadian University found they faced a number of institutional, structural and personal barriers, including interpersonal discrimination, frustration with the university system and feelings of isolation. Indigenous students spoke of the lack of interaction with non-Indigenous students, a lack of awareness of the Indigenous history, culture, identity and a general lack of awareness of the specific issues faced by Indigenous students. As Bailey notes, the findings are consistent with those by Clark et al. (2014),

> In Clark et al.'s (2014) study, salient themes included unconstrained voyeurism, jealous accusations, cultural elimination/misrepresentation, expectations of primitiveness and isolation. Participants in the current study provided support for these themes while also emphasizing the following: interaction levels; perceptions of the university environment and the forms of racism therein; audience effects; in-class and social experiences; the university 'system'; and the persistence of racism. (p. 1266)

Poolokasingham et al. in their (2014) study identified eight racial microaggression themes targeting South Asian Canadian undergraduate students: perceived as fresh off the boat (FOB); excluded from social life; a notion that being Brown is a liability; assumption of ties to terrorism; compulsion to be a cultural expert; ascription of intelligence in stereotypical

domains; invalidation of interethnic and racial differences; and treated as invisible. Some of the findings were consistent with the literature on Asian Americans (experienced ascription of intelligence, invisibility and invalidation of interethnic differences). Five forms of microaggressions, however, "were novel to the literature on racial microaggressions in North America" (p. 200).

One study by Houshmand et al. (2014) looked at the experiences of East Asian international students on one university campus in Canada. They identified six racial microaggression themes which the students experienced: (a) excluded and avoided; (b) ridiculed for accent; (c) rendered invisible; (d) disregarded international values and needs; (e) ascription of intelligence; and (f) environmental microaggressions (structural barriers on campus). These themes are consistent with the taxonomy developed by Sue et al. However, they noted that the themes being avoided and excluded actually were experienced by international students as microinsults, microassaults and microinvalidations. The Houshmand et al. (2014) study also added to the research on microaggressions by (i) signalling the importance of "ridiculed for accent" and (ii) linking to ascription of intelligence (the notion that a student's intelligence is ascribed by ethno-racial and cultural stereotypes). Research participants spoke of an interesting duality—on the one hand, they were ridiculed for their accent (and even excluded from social groups on campus); on the other hand, in class their accent was perceived as having increased intelligence in maths and science—closer to the myth of the "Model Minority student". In addition, like other researchers noted above, they found forms of microaggression that did not fit neatly into the taxonomy—for example, ascriptions of intelligence based on accents.

Cho (2010), in her article on the experiences of self-identified immigrant teacher candidates (ITCs), debunks the myth of meritocracy and points to other important structural factors which inhibit success in entering the teaching profession. She addresses "the cultural capital that is and is not valued by schools and the ways in which the linguistic capital of ITCs is contested in schools" (p. 4). Her research points to the ways in which racial microaggressions have detrimental impacts on the employment opportunities of aspiring teachers from immigrant backgrounds.

Cho contends that the "… narratives of immigrant teacher candidates are being silenced. Their stories trouble the myth of meritocracy in education and challenge privileged ways of knowing" (p. 10). Without using

the Sue, Bucceri, et al. (2007) taxonomy, an important point of research for Cho is how the teacher candidates attempt to negotiate their way through these microassaults, the microinsults and the microinvalidations. She found that they take numerous forms including the myth of meritocracy, perceptions of capabilities, ascriptions of intelligence based on the accents and because of linguicism, being othered because of accent, skin colour, modes of dress and being benchmarked against " …the prototypical image of the Canadian teacher" (p. 10). Cho's research, while consistent with the Sue et al. taxonomy, extends it by identifying forms of racial microaggression not identified in the taxonomy. In giving voice to the narratives of the ITCs, Cho not only identified the structural and systemic barriers they faced but also identified their resilience and their agency to deal proactively with their barriers. Far from being passive victims of racial microaggressions, the narratives "illuminate the ways in which ITCs have successfully navigated the system and infused their cultural capital in their teaching and learning" (Cho, 2010, p. 18).

The research on racial microaggression in the USA has opened new avenues for research in Canada—including research on how microaggressions are experienced by different historically marginalized groups in Canada. There is scope for Canadian research to both build on the CRT framework and enhance the taxonomy of racial microaggressions developed by Sue et al. With respect to the latter, some of the areas of research could focus on:

1. How members of Indigenous nations experience microaggressions in society and on university and college campuses?
2. How South Asian, East Indian, Black Canadians, Muslim Canadians, Haitian Canadians and other Canadians of minority backgrounds experience microaggressions?
3. How linguistic and religious minorities experience microaggressions—in particular, how are microaggressions in the forms of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism expressed and how, for example, do Muslim and Jewish students, faculty and staff experience microaggressions on college and university?
4. How trans and LGBTQ2S members of our society experience microaggressions?
5. How Indigenous students, students of colour and students from other historically marginalized communities on our campuses experience microaggressions?

6. How Indigenous faculty, faculty of colour and faculty from other historically marginalized communities on our campuses experience microaggressions?
7. How Indigenous staff, staff of colour and staff from other historically marginalized communities on our campuses experience microaggressions?
8. How international students from racialized minority backgrounds experience microaggressions?

Conclusion

What the vast and increasing literature from the USA points to is that the nuanced and subtle racism as racial microaggression is deeply embedded in the everyday and is more embedded than is realized in public discourses. Too often the racist and sexist dimensions of the microaggression are not visible to those who are not affected but have detrimental impacts on the victims. In order to address microaggressions, Saloojee and Stewart (2016) found post-secondary institutions are increasingly relying on civility codes and respectful working environment policies. Existing anti-harassment and anti-discrimination codes also incorporate notions of civility and employ a regulatory framework designed to deal with formal complaints of harassment. This approach utilizes a single instrument to deal with a variety of behaviour from rudeness to discrimination and "… more importantly it poses real problems as it elides threatening comments that could be hate speech with more or less subtle expressions of derision or intimidation" (Saloojee & Stewart, 2016, n.p.).

If we argue that racist and sexist microaggressions are to be understood in the context of the multiple forms of systemic and structural discrimination, then it is important to separate anti-discrimination policies and procedures from civility policies. In post-secondary workplaces, marginalized groups who are the usual targets of microaggressions are vastly underrepresented on the academic staff, despite long-standing employment equity policies. Effectively addressing the context that gives rise to microaggressions requires systemic change.

Racial microaggressions are real and are part of the lived experiences of people of colour in society. And on our campuses, it is the often daily lived experiences of students, staff and faculty, of colour. In this chapter, it has been suggested that the uniquely Canadian contribution to the theoretical and conceptual underpinning of racial microaggressions can be located within CRT and can go beyond to locating the various forms

of microaggressions with an inclusive CDA—this needs greater theorizing. There is much to be learnt from the global research on racial and other forms of microaggressions. It is time for Canadian researchers and academics to make their contributions—the public good, the common good depends on critical engagement with this under-researched area.

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