Indigenous Adoptees' Experiences of Racism in Transracial Adoption in Saskatchewan: Discovering Truth and Being Authentic

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Social Work

University of Regina

By

Carrie J. McCloy

Prince Albert, Saskatchewan

July, 2019

Copyright 2019: C.J. McCloy

UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

SUPERVISORY AND EXAMINING COMMITTEE

Carrie Janette McCloy, candidate for the degree of Master of Social Work**,** has presented a thesis titled, ***Indigenous Adoptees' Experiences of Racism in Transracial Adoption in Saskatchewan: Discovering Truth and Being Authentic,*** in an oral examination held on July 10, 2019. The following committee members have found the thesis acceptable in form and content, and that the candidate demonstrated satisfactory knowledge of the subject material.

External Examiner:	Dr. Marlyn Bennett, University of Manitoba*
Supervisor:	Dr. Raven Sinclair, Faculty of Social Work
Committee Member:	Dr. Jason Albert, Faculty of Social Work
Committee Member:	Dr. Sarah Nikel, Adjunct
Chair of Defense:	Dr.Vivian Puplampu, Faculty of Nursing

*Via Skype

Abstract

Transracial adoption in Canada, part of the child welfare system, has adversely affected Indigenous people's families and communities for generations. The purpose of this project is to examine and analyze the experiences of racism for Indigenous adoptees who were transracially adopted into non-Indigenous homes in Saskatchewan between 1960 to 1985. Using critical race and Indigenous theoretical frameworks, the methodology for the study includes dialogical and phenomenological approaches and analysis to examine the experiences of four adoptees. The findings indicate that the experiences of racism are painful, life-long, and profound for adoptees in this study. There is value in sharing the experiences of adoptees who were adopted into white homes as their situations are unique in that they had intimate and complex experiences of racism. This research begins to fill a gap in understanding racism experienced by Indigenous adoptees in Saskatchewan and offers a clearer picture of the effects of and reactions to racism. It confirms that racism in adoption is a fundamental truth for adoptees involved in this study. The results of this study call for the acknowledgement and examination of racism and for the preservation of birth cultural identity to increase the health and connectedness for adoptees, families, and social workers.

Keywords: child welfare, qualitative study, transracial adoption, Indigenous children, Saskatchewan, experiences of racism

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to extend my appreciation, honour and respect to the participants who were courageous and thoughtful in the sharing of their stories.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my academic supervisor, Dr. Raven Sinclair, who assisted in initiating my learning journey the right way. I am forever grateful for your ability to spark an internal flame allowing me access to ancestral knowledge and a connection for me. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Drs. Sarah Nickel and Jason Albert for all of the support that I have received throughout my learning journey.

I am honoured to have been chosen as recipient for the Dr. Oliver Brass Award. Receiving this award allowed me to complete the research project and has been a significant privilege for me. I am grateful to be nominated for an academic achievement award as well.

Post Defense Acknowledgement

I would like to extend my gratitude to Dr. Marlyn Bennett for her wealth of knowledge and expertise in the areas of child welfare, Indigenous Knowledge, social work practice and research methodologies as External Examiner for the Thesis Defense. Her experience and work are inspirational to me and I appreciate her time for the review and examination of this research.

Dedication

This project is dedicated to all of the Indigenous children who have struggled with their adoptive experiences into non-Indigenous homes. I send prayers for healing and support so they may find strength to find truth and authenticity.

This project is equally dedicated to my family members who have supported me through the research process. Their patience, independence and support allowed my time and attention to be taken away from them. I hope to inspire my children to work hard to achieve all that they can in life and to fall in love with the gift of learning as I have.

Table of Contents

Abstract i
Acknowledgement ii
Post Defense Acknowledgement iii
Dedication iv
List of Tables viii
List of Figures ix
List of Appendices x
Definition of Terms xi
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction 1
Introduction to the Research 1
Purpose of the Study 2
Research Question and Sub-questions 3
Relevance to Social Work 4
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review 10
Overview and Introduction 10
Historical Background of Indigenous Peoples in Canada 10
Transracial Adoption in Saskatchewan 15
Social Worker Perspective 17
Theoretical Factors and Experiences of Racism 22
Summary 31
CHAPTER THREE: Research Design 32
Overview and Introduction 32
Methodology 32
Overview of Research Design 36
Participants 38
Data Collection 40
Reflective Journal 41
Data Analysis Procedures 42
Ethical Considerations 44
Validity and Credibility 46
Summary 47

CHAPTER FOUR: Findings 48
Introduction 48
Findings 49
Theme One: Racism in Canada 50
Normalization of racism. 50
Lack of understanding. 51
Superiority and supremacy. 52
Transracial adoption: demonstrating a racial divide. 54
Theme one discussion. 56
Theme Two: Survival 57
Intra-familial racism. 58
Lack of understanding as a child. 59
Blaming Indigeneity 60
The value placed on colour and race. 62
Lack of collective identity 63
Trauma. 64
Resilience 66
Theme two discussion. 68
Theme Three: Nowhere to Belong 70
Stuck in a category. 71
Internalized Racism and Identity Crisis 72
Anger 74
Rebelling 76
Disconnect and loss. 77
Theme three discussion. 78
Theme Four: Making Sense of Experiences of Racism 79
Racism is everywhere. 80
Acute awareness 81
Learning about racism. 82
Confronting racism 83
Dealing with it, a spectrum 84
Lifelong difficulty 85

Theme four discussion 86
Theme Five: Healing and Reconciliation 87
Internal reconciliation 87
Inspiration 89
Theme five discussion 91
Essence: Discovering Truth, Being Authentic 92
Summary 94
CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion 96
Introduction 96
Contributions of the Study 96
Ideology of Racism in Canada 96
Adoptees' Reactions to Racism 99
Survival 99
Nowhere to belong 99
Making sense of their experiences 101
Healing and reconciliation 102
Suggestions for Future Research 103
Implications for Social Work Practice 103
CHAPTER 6: Conclusion 108
Afterword: Transformations 110
References 112
Appendices 125
Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Poster 125
Appendix B: Interview Guide 126
Appendix C University of Regina Ethics Board approved Consent Form 127
Appendix D: University of Regina Research Ethics Certificate of Approval 131
Appendix E: Participant Therapeutic Resource List 132
Appendix F: Emerging Thematic Analysis Visual Representation 133

List of Tables

Table 1: Provincial Statistics on Aboriginal Children in Out-of-home Care.....5
Table 2: Principles for Assessing Quality of Qualitative Research.....46

List of Figures

Figure 1: Theory integration for the project 34
Figure 2: Processes for Data Analysis 43

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Poster.....125
Appendix B: Interview Guide.....126
Appendix C: University of Regina Ethics Board Approved Consent Form.....127
Appendix D: University of Regina Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval.....131
Appendix E: Participant Therapeutic Resource List.....132
Appendix F: Thematic Analysis Visual Representation.....133

Definition of Terms

This definition of terms and usage in this paper does not intend to be derogatory in any respect. In Canada, term usage and definitions have changed for Indigenous people throughout history. Terminology is critical for Indigenous people because terms may not have been selected themselves, but imposed upon them through colonization.

Due to the establishment of the Indian Act in 1876, First Nation people in Canada became defined by the government of Canada. The term “Indians” are known as First Nations people with Indian status under the Indian Act. First Nations became a term used in the 1970s and 1980s generally replacing the term “Indian”.

The term “Native” originated in the United States, with common usage being “American Indian” and “Native American”. Possibly due to relations of American Indians, or the similarity of issues Canadian use(d) the term “Native”.

In 1982, section 35 of the Canadian Constitution defined Indigenous peoples as “Aboriginal”, which included First Nation, Métis and Inuit people. First Nation peoples were defined by the Canadian government as status or non-status. Métis were defined by the legal context of being descendants of specific historic communities. Inuit were also defined by the Canadian government who are from specific areas of the far north.

It is estimated that there are more than 370 million indigenous people spread across 70 counties worldwide (United Nations Factsheet, n.d.). Indigenous people have distinct cultural, social, political and economic characteristics from the dominant society. The reference of Indigenous acknowledges the long settlement and connection to specific lands and is used in contemporary contexts

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

Introduction to the Research

Historically, in Canada many Indigenous children experienced the government controlled child welfare system, which is an oppressive, fully functional tool for assimilation and integration (Sinclair, 2016; McKenzie & Hudson, 1985; Fournier & Crey, 1997). According to the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) (1996), over 11,132 children of Indian status were adopted between 1960 and 1990. Transracial adoption in Saskatchewan transpired through the child welfare system in order to provide homes to Indigenous children and other racial minorities (Ward, 1984; Balcom, 2011). The separations that occurred often disconnected the children from their birth families, communities and cultural connections (Carrière, 2005).

Previous studies on transracial adoption have explored both positive and adverse experiences and effects for Indigenous adoptees. Qualitative research representing a significant voice for adoptees is emerging in which the negative effects of transracial adoption are being explored. Racial and racial identity issues are one of the challenges Indigenous adoptees face who were transracially adopted from the sixties era (Spears, 2003; Sinclair, 2007b; Maurice, 2003; Nuttgens, 2013). Other research findings and themes for Indigenous adoptees include marginalization, racism, disruption, lack of connection to birth families and difficulty with identities.

A significant gap exists in the qualitative research exploring experiences of racism in transracial adoption in Saskatchewan, from adoptees' perspectives. As Canada moves toward potential change for greater understanding of all people and becomes a more inclusive society for Indigenous peoples, research exploring experiences of racism in transracial adoption could increase awareness of the effects of racism. This research

creates potential for an increase in the understanding of the nature of racism and assists with learning ways to deal with, overcome and reduce the experiences of racism.

As a Métis researcher unraveling the colonial beginnings of my existence, I have a keen interest in reclaiming Indigenous identity. I also have invested interests in resisting colonial oppression as part of a community, acknowledging my ancestral ties and advocating on behalf of all Indigenous peoples who also have internal and social struggles. Indigenous ways of knowing, being and learning have become strengths for me in my studies and my approach to life. By examining Canada's Indigenous child removal system's policy and practice leading to the mass removal of children (Sinclair, 2016), a question remained for me. How did racism impact individuals who were part of the adoption system? The next section will explain the purpose of this study as well as examine the role that social work plays in the experiences of child welfare and adoption in relation to racism.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative project breaks new ground by offering perspectives of four Indigenous people transracially adopted experiencing racism, supporting evidence for the need for anti-racist social work practice as well as challenging perspectives on personal, ideological and institutional levels, and calls for authentic reconciliation. This project addresses the gap in research examining experiences of racism. The purpose of this phenomenological study is to encapsulate the experiences and ascribe meaning to the experiences of racism for Indigenous adoptees in their adoptive situation as well as throughout their lives in Saskatchewan.

The study reported here intends to explore personal meaning of experiencing racism. As Wilson points out, the foundation of research lies within the reality of lived Indigenous experience; Indigenous researchers ground their research knowingly in the lives of real persons as individuals and social beings, not in the ideas of the world (Wilson, 2008, p. 60). Creswell articulates that in phenomenological studies, participants must be individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being explored and can articulate their lived experience (2013, p. 150). All participants for this study have experienced racism, transracial adoption in Saskatchewan and were able and willing to speak about their experiences. By learning in great detail about the individuals' experiences, we can share much with people whose personal circumstances may initially seem entirely separate from our own (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, p.123). The experiences of racism for adoptees are focused on and described in terms of their features. This project was inductive. While the researcher was familiar with theoretical forms of racism, for example Bryant-Davis & Ocampo (2005) racist incident-based trauma, and therefore anticipated that the experiences of racism could be perpetuated by individual, institution or cultural hegemony, but there was no expectation of how the experiences of racism would manifest and there was a readiness to accept that any one of the forms of racism might not be reported. As well, there is hope that this research will benefit the social work role and it will effect change for Indigenous children.

Research Question and Sub-questions

The research question guiding this study is the following: What are the experiences of racism for Saskatchewan Indigenous people who were transracially adopted between 1960 and 1985? In order to make sense of Indigenous adoptee

experiences of racism, it is essential to understand how the establishment of policies affected Indigenous peoples in cultural, economic, physical and social ways in Canada prior to 1960.

This project also answers some of my secondary questions: What are the differences in experiences of racism for adoptees in their childhood as opposed to experiences into adulthood? How did they react to their experiences of racism? For example, did they cope, resist, find strategies, work through processes, have difficulties, experience trauma or find resilience? This study also asks: did racial identity play a role for each of the adoptees experiencing racism? Within the analysis of the research questions, these sub-questions will also inform the research process.

Relevance to Social Work

Structural racism has been evident in institutions of power, such as schools, healthcare and justice and racist ideologies have fostered a social hierarchy in which Aboriginal peoples are denied resources while dominant groups maintain authority and power (Loppie, Reading & de Leeuw, 2014, p.9). Child welfare has substantial power in the lives of the clients. Social workers have substantial power over the lives of Indigenous people in Canada. Brigit Moran, (1992), a social worker practicing in the early 1960s in British Columbia wrote “the Prince George office was using every available foster home, approved or not, for the children who were coming into care. As was predictable, some of these children suffered” (p.50). The number of Indigenous children taken into the care of the government since the 1960s has been disproportionate to non-Indigenous children. As reported by the Statistics Canada (2016), there is a disproportionate number of Indigenous children in care in Canada, Aboriginal children

accounted for 7.7% of all children aged 0 to 4, they accounted for more than one-half (51.2%) of all foster children in this age group (Statistics Canada, 2016). More Indigenous children are in care outside of their home communities than ever before, and the number has been growing every year. A disproportionate number of Indigenous children were in out-of-home care across Canada in 2008 as Sinha & Kozlowski have outlined (see Table 1).

Table 1 Provincial Statistics on Aboriginal Children in Out-of-Home Care

Province	Aboriginal children as a % of the total child population	Aboriginal children% in care	Age of children covered in child welfare legislation
Ontario	3	21	0-16
Manitoba	23	85	0-18
Saskatchewan	25	80	0-16
Alberta	9	59	0-18
British Columbia	8	52	0-19

Note. Adapted from Sinha et al., 2011, p.5; Trocmé et al., 2010, p.10 (Sinha & Kozlowski, 2013, p.3)

The table shows that in each province examined in Canada in 2008, Indigenous children are represented in the child welfare system at rates higher than their population size. The overrepresentation of Indigenous children is driven by cases involving neglect, which is linked to factors including poverty, domestic violence and substance abuse (Sinha et al., 2011). The power imbalance between child welfare workers and Indigenous families has created a situation of vulnerability for the children involved.

Due to lack of preparation and a lack of awareness of the effects on Indigenous adoptees, transracial adoption from the sixties to the mid-eighties has allowed for a passing of racial boundaries. The impact of transracial adoption has been profound for Indigenous families. Stevenson (2015) acknowledges this power imbalance as cultural

racism: “Aboriginal peoples have been subject to pervasive cultural racism that has deemed Indian parents, particularly mothers, as unfit and communities inherently disorganized” (p.67). Systemic, and evidently biased, social work practices and policies laid the framework for decisions of social workers resulting in a disadvantage of Indigenous families.

Social workers were hired in Saskatchewan in response to the increasing number of children coming into the care of the Children’s Aid Society and commissioner of the Child Welfare Act. The legislation in Saskatchewan including the Children’s Protection Act (1908) and the Child Welfare Act (CWA) instituted in 1927 guided the decisions to apprehend neglected children and place them into foster homes and institutional care. The CWA (1930) included governing policy on the adoption of children. The CWA (1965) influenced the experiences of adoptees in this study. The Child and Welfare Act (1965) outlines clearly the reasons for apprehensions to be implemented, which can be viewed as a judgment on different parenting styles:

> **Power to apprehend neglected child**
>
> **5** ... (d) whose home, by reason of neglect, cruelty, or depravity on the part of his parent or parents, guardian, or other person whose charge he may be, is an unfit and improper place for him; (e) who by reason of inadequate parental control is incorrigible ... (j) who is a child born out of wedlock whose mother is unwilling, unable or unfit to maintain him; (k) who has been found guilty of a delinquency and is likely to develop further delinquent tendencies; (l) who being of school age habitually absents himself from school and whose parent is not making reasonable effort to secure adequate training for the child. (CWA, 1965, p 8)

Children were apprehended from families who were judged to be neglectful and not fit, and in which parental control was seen as sub-standard and consequently deemed inadequate. During the time of the adoptions in this study, there was considerable pressure for families to fit into a “normal” nuclear family – a near impossibility for the post-residential school, mostly rural and impoverished Indigenous population. Some Indigenous women would bear children with non-Indigenous men and remain unwed, which was a social crime in the 1960s. As well, many Indigenous families were engaged in traditional subsistence lifestyles which were not familiar to social workers (Sinclair, 2004). Many Indigenous families struggled in their socio-economical situations due to the loss of traditional ways of life and land.

Individual cases were judged and interpreted by officers of the department following the Child Welfare Act of Saskatchewan (1965). At that time, the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) worked within the Department of Child Welfare, to enforce the Act as it was legislated. Children were taken into care and often placed into homes to be fostered or were put up for adoption. In situations where Indigenous children were apprehended because of neglect in their homes, and in which the director thought that it was in the best interest of the child to further investigate, a judge’s order was given to commit the child to the Minister for a temporary time (not exceeding one year) or permanent care (CWA, 1965, p. 12). Once children were placed in care, options were reviewed for children in need of protection and adoption. Placements included temporary homes, rescue homes or those managed by the Children’s Aid Society with legal guardianship awarded to the Minister of Welfare or the Children’s Aid Society.

The Child Welfare Act (1965) gave assistance to families who were deemed in need of help for a temporary duration. As outlined in CWA (1965), assistance was given to families, but if it was seen as being "in the best interest of the child" help was revoked in order for the child to be put before the court to decide how he/she would be committed to the Ministry (CWA, 1965, p.20). In essence, the assistance given to families was very restricted, and there was no preventative support offered for families struggling with providing and caring for their children.

The child welfare system has affected Indigenous communities in the past through apprehension, committal to the Ministry and adoption of children, and it continues to affect communities. The Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Panel (SCWRP) discusses the legacy of destruction of Indigenous families that adoption has left:

> In today's context, Anglo-American child protection workers, employed in an adversarial, deficit-orientated system, still tend to assess Aboriginal family life as disorganized and may see traditional parenting by extended family as 'inconsistent'. Many Aboriginal families feel the mainstream child welfare system is a real and consistent threat – to take their children, to put them first in homes that have no connection to the child's community, and to move on to adoption as soon as possible, severing all ties to family and community. (2016, p. 21)

Between 1960 and 1985, many children placed in the care of the Ministry and Indigenous families were given little to no resources to improve their situations. Child welfare requires exemplary work to heal, unite and strengthen Indigenous families and communities of the long-term, generational legacy left which continues to be experienced today.

This chapter has highlighted key issues in Indigenous child welfare and transracial adoption in order to explicate the foundation of the research question. The research question for this project inquires about experiences of racism for Indigenous adoptees between 1960 and 1985. This chapter also examined the relevant legislation as it relates to children placed in short-term and long-term care. Chapter one concluded with how Indigenous families continue to be affected by the child welfare system and adoption in Canada. In order to more fully understand the gaps in the research, a brief review of the literature highlights historical and Indigenous child welfare departments that led to transracial adoption across Canada, including Saskatchewan, is presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

Overview and Introduction

The following section includes a review of the literature on the historical effects of colonization of Indigenous people in Canada. An understanding of the economic, political and cultural struggles of Indigenous people due to colonization is essential to comprehend the development of social work in child welfare systems and adoption in Saskatchewan. With this perception and knowledge of the historical development of transracial adoption, the perspectives of Indigenous children can also be understood and examined.

Historical Background of Indigenous Peoples in Canada

One of the effects of colonization is that Indigenous children are overrepresented in the child welfare system in Canada (Sinha, Trocmé, Fallon, MacLourin, Fast, Prokop, et al., 2011; Sinha, Ellenbogen & Trocmé, 2013; Sinha & Kozlowski, 2013; RCAP, 1996). Some of the contributing factors to the overrepresentation of Indigenous children have been present since the first contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Since the war of 1812, when a large number of European settlers arrived, the colonial government decided that Aboriginal persons should be forced to surrender their traditional lifestyles (Frideres & Gadacz, 2012, p. 4). Indigenous people have to contend with a dominant society that extends its power position over all aspects of Aboriginal life (eg., the Indian Act) as well as other forms of legislation (Frideres & Gadacz, p. 27). At the time of negotiating treaties, many herds of the buffalo extinguished, the traditional lives of Indigenous peoples of the prairies became forever changed. First Nations people of Saskatchewan entered into Treaty agreements with the understanding that they would enter into an agreement and establish a partnership with the state. Daschuk (2013)

summarized the reality that the Cree negotiators at Treaty 6 recognized their need to adapt to the new economic paradigm taking shape in the west, and acknowledged that the conversion would be difficult, but they failed to plan for was the active intervention of the Canadian government preventing them to do so (2013, p.186). The Canadian government created an economic dependence for Indigenous people by expecting adherence to mainstream culture, enacting racialized policy and attempting to refute treaties (Stevenson, 2015; McKenzie & Hudson, 1985). There was a difference between the negative effects on Indigenous people and non-Indigenous people of Canada. Daschuk (2013) stated that the gap between health, living conditions and other social determinants of health of First Nations people and mainstream Canadians continues as it has since the end of the nineteenth century (p.186). As outlined in the white paper in 1969, Jean Chrétien proposed to end the legal relationship between the Canadian government and First Nations people of Canada, terminating the fiduciary responsibility, in essence retracting negotiated treaties (Chrétien, 1969). Understanding the consequences to the proposed retraction, Indigenous organizations and political groups organized themselves and responded by requesting action by the government to address the despair and poverty of Indigenous people (Indian Chiefs of Alberta, 1970). Political, personal and group responses by Indigenous peoples have increased because of the pressures and difficulties they have faced.

As more Indigenous people come forward voicing their knowledge and experiences and reclaiming their identities within oppressive structures in society, they can negate the consequences of racism and reframe their identity for others to better

understand them. Battiste (2013) offers a description of structural and institutional racism:

> Racism is more than race hatred or prejudice; it is about power to oppress and subordinate. It is the structural subordination of a group in society based on the idea of racial inferiority that establishes a hierarchical power relationship. (p.138)

Adoptees of this study may have experienced institutional racism and structural racism. Adoptees of this study suffered the consequence of racism which is not having a strongly developed cultural identity from childhood which included all aspects of their cultural heritage (that of their birth communities as well as the culture they were raised in).

In a publication by National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (2014), one of the most notorious forms of racism at the institutional level was the residential school system, which represented the attempted assimilation of Indigenous children (p.6). The ties between the government and the churches were apparent in the development of the residential school system. In 1880, the first residential school was established in Canada, funded by the federal government, and run predominantly by Catholic and Anglican churches (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission compiled stories of residential school survivors. It reported that by the end of the 1970s, children were being transferred from residential schools into institutional and residential care of the child welfare system. Blackstock and Trocmé (2004) stated, as removals to the residential schools were occurring, child welfare authorities were doing little to address structural risk factors such as multi-generational trauma, poverty, unemployment, and substandard housing conditions. This inattention to the social context of a colonized people and lack of response to the resultant social problems resulted in

disproportionate rates of child abuse and neglect. In 1977, Aboriginal children accounted for 44% of the children in care in Alberta, 51% of the children in care in Saskatchewan and 60% of the children in care in Manitoba (McKenzie & Hudson, p. 126). The number of Indigenous children in care did not begin as disproportionate as it is today.

As the number of children in out-of-home care increased, the long-term effects of the loss of children from their birth families became apparent. Indigenous people became aware of the sequential cultural genocide. As Kimmelman stated in 1985 in the Final Report to the Review Committee on Indian and Metis Adoptions and Placements, "The Indian people did not believe that they would lose their freedom as well as their lands. The Indian people did not believe that someday they would also lose their children, a loss that this report has accurately called cultural genocide" (Kimmelman, 1985, p. 272). According to RCAP (1996), the misinterpretation of the conditions experienced by families, along with the misapplication of Euro-Western values and social work pedagogy and practice, have resulted in inappropriate mass removals of Indigenous children and their placement into predominantly non-Indigenous homes. The view of why Indigenous children were placed out of their homes may be linked to application of Euro-Western social work pedagogy and practice, in addition to the fact that Indigenous families experiencing poverty, unstable and inadequate housing.

Historically, addressing poverty and inadequate housing has not been a priority. In Canada, the majority of child welfare cases in 1998 primarily involved neglect, which is linked to factors including poverty as well as unstable and inadequate housing (Blackstock, Trocmé & Bennett, 2004). According to Trocmé, Knoke and Blackstock (2004), Indigenous families have statistically significantly less stable housing, show

greater dependence on social assistance, are generally younger parents, have a greater chance of being parents who were maltreated as children, have higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse and are more likely to be investigated for neglect or emotional maltreatment than non-indigenousl families (p. 596). According to Sinclair, "If the continued scooping of Indigenous children through legal and child welfare agency policy channels is not challenged, the Indigenous child removal system will continue to perpetuate the same cultural genocide that has confronted Indigenous communities since contact, and the Indigenous child removal system in Canada will continue unfettered" (Sinclair, 2016, p. 15). There have been opportunities for prevention and for addressing the shortcomings in many social systems operating in society, including child welfare.

A new understanding is needed for the effect of poverty on marginalized people in society. As adoptees of this study have shown in their abilities and outcomes of the experiences of racism; the time has come for the reclaiming of Indigeneity, advancing collective identity and disrupting societal norms into revolutionize change for Indigenous people of Saskatchewan. Moran (1992) discussed the massive, cumbersome and growing welfare system in Canada, asserted that one approach that has never been tried is the granting of sufficient money to ensure every individual in Canada has a standard of living above the poverty line (p.146). Social work, the direct operative of the child welfare system, can adapt to the needs of the Indigenous children and families. Ward (1995) offers clarification on how the child welfare system could be redressed. Advocacy, when appropriately timed in fluctuations to the child welfare system, could keep the system off-balance and allow pressure to be applied at decision points and provide a voice for clients and society as a whole (Ward, 1995, p. 619). There is hope that the acknowledgment of

the voices of adoptees, adoptive parents and Indigenous families can create an opportunity for change, for the child welfare system, in child protection and adoption. In Saskatchewan, vital factors in transracial adoption need to be examined.

Transracial Adoption in Saskatchewan

From its inception within Saskatchewan, the child welfare system was created in response to the effects of colonization of Indigenous peoples. Transracial adoption offered a simple resolution to the problem of the number of Indigenous children in care in Canada. In the early 1940s, four Canadian provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario) had adoption laws that gave provincial officials the authority to compel adoption legislation and to oversee those investigations (Balcom, 2011). The CWA of Saskatchewan (1930) consisted of adoption legislation. The order of adoption dissolved the custody of the child of the natural parent(s), the child is in the custody of adoptive parents, and are nurtured, maintained and educated as if the child were a natural parent (p.32).

> In the fifteen years between 1952 and 1967, transracial adoption of Indian children became a logical solution that appeared to resolve the complex web of problems termed “child welfare” stemming from the gendered legislation, racialized poverty, jurisdictional issues, and the urbanization of Aboriginal people. (Stevenson, 2015, p.199)

Loppie, Reading & de Leeuw (2014) asserted that the installation of the Indian Act, establishment of ‘Indian reserves’ and inadequate investment in those reserves serve as examples of structural racism whereby socio-economic inequities and conditions of disadvantage are created and perpetuated (p.4). The socio-economic, cultural and

physical positioning of Indigenous peoples effected their relationship with every institution in Saskatchewan, including child welfare and adoption.

Amendments to the Indian Act in 1951 led to the provinces delivering child welfare services in Canada, which created an incentive for provincial governments to have Indigenous children wards of the government, and the number of children in care significantly increased. Fournier and Crey (1997) asserted once the provinces were in charge and guaranteed payment for each Indian child they apprehended, one percent of all children in care were Indigenous children in 1959, but by the end of the 1960s, 30 to 40 % of all legal wards were Indigenous children, even though they formed less than four percent of the national population (p.83). By 1959/60, there were 52,120 children in care, of whom about 15,000 or 29 percent, were in institutions, and 12,800 completed adoptions in Canada (Hepworth, 1980, p.74).

Transracial adoption in Saskatchewan took place within the child welfare system and involved the children deemed to be permanent wards. In Saskatchewan, many of the adoptees who were transracially adopted were either surrendered for adoption or were already in the care of the child welfare system and looking for placements, which became a way of integrating Indigenous children into mainstream society (Sinclair, 2007a; Stevenson, 2015). Balcom, a Canadian historian examining cross-border adoption between the United States and Canada throughout the years of 1930-1972, stated that adoption directors discussed which children were more likely to be placed based on desirability; white, Caucasian, Protestant infants were the top choice for adoptions at the time (p. 160). These preferences left the Indigenous children, among other groups of minorities, to be the hardest to place (Balcom, p. 160).

The idea that the future citizens needed to be reared by "proper families" as well as the pressure created by the growing numbers of Indigenous children in care, led to the establishment of the Adopt Indian and Metis (AIM) program in Saskatchewan in 1967. The program sought to secure the permanency of adoption for Indian and Métis children who were relinquished or removed from reserves in order to reduce pressure on foster homes (Stevenson, 2015, p. 216). From Saskatchewan, in the first year of operation, a total of 16 children were placed for adoption, but by 1970 the number had risen to 50 placed with AIM and an additional 137 had taken place outside of AIM (Stevenson, p. 225).

Examining the history and development of social work practice is essential to have the ability to create an opportunity for adaptation and change in response to the needs of Indigenous children and families in Canada. A view from social workers' perspectives gives an understanding of the development of child welfare and adoption in Saskatchewan.

Social Worker Perspective

The social work profession became involved in finding economic solutions for the Canadian and Saskatchewan governments to deal with economically dependent, marginalized Indigenous families. Formal processes of finding appropriate placements and adoption, including transracial adoption, began. A redefinition of illegitimacy to determine the "best interest of the child" began in order to make decisions of children's well-being in their family situations. Stevenson (2015) stated that individual children adopted by individual families provided a reduction in the financial responsibility to the government as well as providing the nurturing and permanence that was idealized by

social work professionals (p.220). The two concepts of investigation and supervision of the adoptive placement became the core of the professional approach to adoption practice advocated by professional social workers in both Canada and the United States (Balcom, 2011, p. 28).

The prevailing ideologies of "legitimacy" directed the practice of removing Indigenous children from their homes. Women who had children with non-Indigenous men were often disenfranchised because of their inability to live on a reserve or within the non-Indigenous community. The growing number of children who did not have Indigenous status led to a perceived racial problem as they did not fit the ideology of a "proper" family at the time. Normative concepts, including heterogenic and nuclear families, were the only families socially acceptable, and these conceptions of the family were projected into the child welfare system (Stevenson, 2015). A solution was needed for the increasing number of children who were surrendered or in care due to a practice of segregating children of disenfranchised mothers and placed into a system that was unable to provide care for them (Stevenson, 2015; Ward, 1984). By the 1940s, increasing numbers of social welfare professionals had come to understand unwed pregnancy in white women (as distinct from unwed pregnancy in women of colour) to be the result of deep-seated neurosis, a psychological state that made her, by definition, an unfit mother (Balcom, 2011, p. 29). For traditional Indigenous families, children born out of wedlock were accepted into the community and women were not disparaged.

Social workers within the child welfare system having understanding of the difficulties for Indigenous families and concern for their well-being have not been able to initiate change in the past and into present day. Carrière and Strega (2015) explain that it

is through relationship and engagement that workers might come to understand how a family's troubles are aggravated by political and social conditions such as colonialism, poverty, racism, stigma, lack of resources and other social injustices (p.164). Social workers may feel somewhat helpless because of their inability to assist Indigenous families and improve their situations, with a lack of resources available and the significant inherent historical and current systemic issues. Enhancing the well-being of the family members involved with the system may be on their agenda, but they do not have the means to assist them to the extent needed for change. Bridget Moran, a social worker from British Columbia, wrote to the premier in 1964 charging the provincial welfare department with gross neglect in addressing the problems of Indigenous people. Moran (1992) wrote of the power division in society: "I think that the Two Nations I found in B.C. forty years ago, the powerful and the powerless, will always be with us and that the powerful will, indeed inherit the earth" (p.148). Social workers may feel as powerless to change the situation as the families involved with the child welfare system.

The Indigenous child's identity and cultural heritage are to be taken into account for court decisions, but the best interest of the child is often decided to be the care of their immediate caregiver or foster parent.

> The liberal ideological form of the best interest of the child, in the context of First Nation child welfare, has served to constrain judicial decision making so as to minimize, and even negate in some instances, the relevance and importance of maintaining a child's First Nation identity and culture (Kline, 1992, p.393).

Smith, a lawyer, (2009) asserts that Saskatchewan courts are to acknowledge the importance of every child's cultural heritage in decisions, but with the Supreme Court's

lead, courts seem almost continually to award custody to non-Aboriginal foster parents. (p. 338). Social workers make recommendations for placements, but the decisions are made in the court system. In order for children to be considered for birth family placements in the courts, the placements need to be seen as viable options. Although legislation in the Child and Family Service Act does not specifically mention culture regarding a child's best interest, the social and psychological needs have been construed to include cultural or ethnic heritage (Smith, 2009, p. 337). This may make decision-making difficult in the court process because of lack of clarity. The issues of safety and urgency for placements may leave courts with the only options of placing with foster parents.

When assessing the best interest of the Indigenous child in the context of Canada, actions taken should not be satisfying competing needs of the courts, birth family, or adoptive or foster care family, but the child's needs. Brown, Levéillé in ***Promoting resilience in child welfare*** (2006) state that in Euro-Western societies, adoption has come to mean taking in children (on a permanent basis) who do not have another home and for Indigenous societies, it is typical to adopt children and adults is a representation of the interconnection that we all share (p.99). The importance of cultural identity development for Indigenous children seems to have been overlooked. Kenn Richard addresses how the child's best interest is defined differently for Indigenous and western views in ***Putting a human face on child welfare*** (2007).

> Both tribal societies and Anglo-European cultures are concerned with the best interests of the child, but defining best interest and considering factors related to it are clearly culturally bound. Given that the child welfare system, its legislation,

> standards, practices, and processes are crafted by the European settler, it is not surprising that the cultural context of the Aboriginal child bears little weight. What is given the greatest weight is that which conforms to the dominant paradigm. (Richard, p. 192)

Carrière and Strega (2015) state that institutional norms and practices allow for covert racism to safely live within bureaucratic structures and hide within policies, processes, assessments and day-to-day child welfare decision making which lead to disparities and inequitable outcomes (p. 116). The hidden racism in child welfare indicates the importance for social workers to become aware of their own biases and perceptions of people accessing services. As Carrière states: "Academics are eager to study and quantify the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and cultural experiences while often fragmenting the mind, body, and spirit. In doing so, as clients receiving services, we misplace and/or lose our voice and identity" (Carrière, 2005, p. 139). Social workers can become fragmented within the organization for which they work if holistic approaches are not utilized for their clients as well as themselves.

To understand the client's viewpoint and effectively redress the child-welfare system, one must conduct critical assessments leaving behind any racial prejudices toward the involved Indigenous families. Moran (1992), working in child welfare between 1951 and 1989, writes:

> And then I remember my earlier days as a social worker and recall many of our policies and actions which were acceptable then, but which would never be tolerated now: the pressure we exerted on unmarried mothers to place their babies for adoption… the Native children we uprooted from their reserves and, without

> qualm, placed in alien environments. I remember the judgments and the prejudices we took with us into disadvantaged homes – and as I remember, I realize that there have been tremendous changes in philosophies and systems, and that process of change continues. (p. 148)

Since the 1960s, the philosophies and systems have developed to become more inclusive and accepting of diverse cultures, traditions, and values since the inception of the social work profession and the introduction of the child welfare system. However, the reality remains that racism may be present for adoptees in Saskatchewan and Canada. Indigenous adoptees' difficult experiences may be due to their lack of voice in their situations; their experience of trauma is a response of racism that they have endured. (Sinclair, 2007a; 2007b, Maurice, 2003; Nuttgens, 2013). By examining the theoretical factors and experiences of racism in transracial adoption, an understanding for the need of this project can be recognized.

Theoretical Factors and Experiences of Racism

Theoretical factors and experiences of racism include fundamental issues of perceived race and racialization. The development of cultural identities is deeply rooted in history, culture and power relationships in society. Race matters because members of society have internalized racist ideas about what skin colour tells about the value and worth of a person or group of people (St. Denis, 2007, p. 1071). The participants of this study described their experiences of being stuck in a category, which is a possible effect of racialization. Prior to this study, research exploring specifically inter-racial issues and experiences of racism for transracially adopted Indigenous children has not been completed in Saskatchewan.

Until now, the experience of racism for transracial Indigenous adoptees in Saskatchewan has not been examined from Indigenous and critical race paradigms. The studies relating to Indigenous adoptees in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s express both positive and negative experiences. Some Indigenous adoptees' experiences included gains in socio-economic status, having more privilege, accepting different values, and emulating their adoptive parents (Nuttgens, 2013; Swidrovich, 2004). Swidrovich (2004) explored positive experiences of First Nations children in non-Aboriginal foster or adoptive care, including care of emotional needs, enjoying basic needs, gaining an education, having financial comfort, having advantages, privilege, long-term stability and strong family values. She did recognize issues of identity confusion, which emerged for adoptees into adulthood. Even though it is labeled as an identity issue, adoptees may have experienced racial issues or racism. Swidrovich may have directed her observations on a physical experience instead of a holistic view of the adoptee's experiences which would include emotional, spiritual, mental and physical aspects of themselves. Spears, a researcher who experienced transracial adoption, stated that by evaluating us (Indigenous adoptee) as individuals and by focusing primarily on our physical experience, the dominant society disconnects us from the larger aspects of politics and history (2003, p. 81). Studies that have been completed within the disciplines of psychology, developmental psychology, psychosocial studies, and sociology examine factors such as attachment, identity, crisis, and bonding and offer recommendations without a holistic view of the adoptee. By engaging in research following Indigenous and critical race paradigms, the connection between participants and history and politics are incorporated. Both Indigenous and critical race theory bring the understanding of many truths and ways

of knowing exist, depending on the lens being used. This project challenges the immorality of subjugation and the concept that a 'racelessness' society can exist (Dunbar, 2014, p.16). It also considers the whole person, and seeks to represent and understand injustices and offer opportunities for liberation and transformation of the participants, the researcher and all people. In previous studies, an Indigenous worldview lens encompasses Indigenous adoptees' experiences of racism to include concepts of belonging, kinship, connection, culture, heritage, spirituality, identity, and resilience, which may be seen as resilience or protective factors for adoptees (Maurice, 2003; Carrière, 2005; Nuttgens, 2013; Ungar, 2007). Indigenous perspectives value connection to one another.

For Indigenous people, the significance connectedness to the one's culture and community is exceptional because it allows for living healthy, balanced and peaceful lives. In 2005, Jeannine Carrière explored connectedness to birth home communities and the health of adoptees from Manitoba. "Adoptees in this program spoke about their connection to land or the reserve from which they come…For example, Paris explained how she returns to her mother's community and the land that her ancestors held to seek peace and a sense of balance" (Carrière, 2005, p. 182). Through her research about connectedness, the importance of connection to the land, community and ancestors are identified as necessary due to the possible positive effect on Indigenous adoptees of the ancestral and relational connection.

Often, in transracial adoption, adoptees lose this connection, as all of the adoptees in this study experienced. Connection to adoptees' home communities may assist with developing a sense of cultural identity. In 2007, Raven Sinclair, a researcher interested in

understanding identity, explored the historical period and the successes and difficulties of transracial adoption in Canada. Sinclair states that intra-familial and extra-familial racism, not identity, were primary sources of trauma for adoptees (2007a, p. 298). Adoptees in this study have discussed trauma in their adoptive situations and experiences of racism. Upon deeper analysis of the work of Carrière (2005), Maurice (2003), Sinclair (2007), there are parallels in findings including problems with identity, belonging and connectedness that could be attributed to the interracial issues and racism experienced by transracial adoptees in Canada, which is congruent with the findings of this project for all four adoptees.

The importance of collective identity and belonging should be a priority in decisions for permanent care for Indigenous children. For improvement of adoption practices for Indigenous children, the following practices should be standard: They should be placed in Indigenous homes; a connection should remain between the children and their extended family and community; if they are placed in Indigenous homes, cultural training needs to be provided to the non-Indigenous family (Carrière, 2007, p.57). In 2003, Jacqueline Maurice examined the institutional practices and policies of child welfare in Canada with a special interest in the Adopt an Indian and Metis program (AIM). In her study, the majority of adoptions were closed, and there was no connection between the child and his or her family or community. Maurice points out that issues of emotional attachment, culture, language, and spirituality are important considerations concerning the best interest of children (2003, p. 182).

The notion of attachment between the child and parent or caregiver has been used in the child welfare system to make decisions regarding care placements of children.

Attachment to non-Aboriginal parents in placements in child welfare can override the importance of belonging and kinship and inhibit the sense of cultural group identity for Indigenous adoptees. The attachment to the immediate care provider could be seen as in the best interest of the child. By applying a non-Indigenous value of attachment, children are often placed in care.

> Native children removed from their community are of the lost as future members. They are socialized into the dominant non-native culture, and as a result, they often lose contact with and come to devalue their own cultural background. (McKenzie & Hudson, 1985, p.126)

The devaluation of culture can lead to disconnection from their cultural identity, community and relations. Supporting the issue of attachment theory in transracial adoption, Neckoway, Brownlee & Castellan (2007) have researched the topic. These authors emphasize that many of the social-historical forces, including racism and poverty, have destroyed relationships that many Aboriginal families have tried to develop with their children. The authors also warn that attachment theory should not be over-extended in application by addressing maternal-infant relationships while ignoring social forces acting upon the family (2007, pp. 71-72).

Another researcher, in 2013, Nuttgens examined the life stories of four Aboriginal children who were transracially adopted in Canada. The themes in their stories were disconnection, passing, diversion, connection, surpassing, reconnection and identity coherence. In relevant research for this project, some Indigenous adoptees experienced feelings of alienation and exclusion stemming from racism and rejection in the home from peers, teachers, and community in addition to feelings of alienation from the

Aboriginal community. These feelings have led to a unique bi-racial identity causing the adoptees to experience difficulty "fitting in." The bi-racial identity, dual identity, otherness, "Indian-ness" and "Whiteness" are concepts linked to the struggle for Indigenous transracial adoptees to accept since there may be difficulties with choosing ethnic/racial identity or cultural identity.

Transracial adoption itself crosses racial boundaries in Canadian society, and without critical views, movement cannot be made to counteract the possible racism, racialization and negative influences on children in those situations and relationships. This notion of living in two worlds has been challenging for Métis people in Saskatchewan as well, as they navigate Indigenous and Western cultures with or without a unique cultural identity depending on their upbringing. Ermine (2007) offers a strategy for engaging in a space between Indigenous and Western thought worlds: "with the calculated disconnection through the contrasting of their identities, and the subsequent creation of two solitudes with each claiming their own distinct and autonomous view of the world, a theoretical space between them is opened" (p.194). A unique cultural identity of Mètis and similarly of Indigenous adoptees experiencing racism, provides a theoretical space for existence, opportunity for flourishment and preservation of identity. Spears (2003) describes her personal experience of transracial adoption: children are not "bridges between two worlds" and cannot be programmed to become anyone but who they are…Those of us who survive the experience often emerge angry at our loss and fiercely committed to our Native identity once we rediscover it (p. 82). Without the comfort of cultural identity and living in racially divided existence, enduring two

identities can be a struggle for Indigenous adoptees. Comparably, adoptees of this study were effected by internalized racism and identity crisis in their lives.

Transracial adoptees of this study were left with a void sense of belonging and the experience of internalized racism. When Indigenous adoptees aspire toward the racial identity of their adoptive parents and show signs of internally minimizing their own racial identity, disconnection may occur for them (Nuttgens, 2013). The racial confusion and incoherence for adoptees stems from the development of their ethnic identity. Ward points out, "the only strand of identity really under discussion is the development of ethnic identity. This has two aspects: identification with a racial group and absorption of cultural modes of that group" (1984, p.12). In transracial adoption, the difficult piece may be that when a child has become accustomed to a white home, it is often difficult for them to return to an Indigenous home as he or she has become accustomed to and absorbed the cultural norms of his/her adoptive family (Ward, 1984, p.13).

The dual identity or different racial identities may foster resilience. Each adoptee of this study demonstrated resilience and strength in a variety of ways. Nuttgens (2010) contends that current thought is the pressure to commit to a single racial identity comes from many sources that are related to the ubiquity of racist beliefs and values within society (p. 356). Similarly, Unger (2007) realizes that children may exist in many communities simultaneously such as the community in which the children live, the cultural community with which they identify, their community of peers and their community formed by exclusion. Children who do exist in two or more communities may experience a conflict of values, but they may know which values to follow for positive

growth (p. 3-4). Securing identity in the adoptees' cultural community, the one in which they live and with their peers, will help them develop a positive self-identity.

Nuttgens (2010) adds that if positive experiences of Aboriginal culture and Aboriginal relationships are fully integrated into the lives of the adoptive family, the negative racial stereotypes associated with their racial identity can be displaced (p.14). As noted by Maurice (2005), each adoptee, regardless of whether his/her experience with adoption was generally positive, needed to be resilient in order to face life's challenges (p.150). Indigenous adoptees of this project exhibited resilience by being an excellent student, having stability, feeling loved, excelling and sports and having inner strength. As outlined by Lalonde (2006) in ***Promoting resilience in child welfare***, whole communities can benefit from resilience.

> If the concept of resilience can be stretched to apply to First Nations, as I believe it can, then the best chances for success lie in the efforts of First Nations to reassert cultural sovereignty and to expand the indigenous knowledge base that has allowed them to adapt to and, in some cases, overcome the climate of adversity. (p. 68)

When Indigenous people preserve and partake in cultural heritage, a strength and resilience can be found in the community. For Indigenous people, understanding and gaining a sense of knowledge, including knowing family history, allow for the experience of ancestral ties, ceremony, healing, and connection to increase resilience and strength. Deloria Jr. (2006) discussed the traditional ways of life for Indigenous people. "We need a glimpse of the old spiritual world that helped, healed and honored us with its presence and companionship; we need to see where we have been, to see where we should go, and

we need to know how to get there, and that we have help on our journey" (p. xix). A practice proposed by Walmsley may align with Indigenous child rearing principles. In 2005, Walmsley explored an innovative approach to social work practice by taking into account a community response to protect children. With this approach, the child is the center of a social network beginning with the nuclear family moving outward to the extended family then incorporating the community to foster independence of the child with family and community (Walmsley, 2005, p.131). If we begin social work practice with the child at the center, child welfare will begin to transform.

In this study, the experiences of racism by Indigenous adoptees who were adopted in the sixties to mid-eighties is examined using Indigenous and critical race paradigms. For participants and I, epistemological and ontological positioning aligns with the opportunities produced by using the frameworks in a reflective telling of painful stories and valuable historical and political processes are illuminated. If race was the primary focus of analysis, a substantive critique of the structure of society would be ignored. As Dunbar (2014) states, critical race theorists and Indigenous methodologists speak to the necessity of writing their own script and storytelling is a sacred act shared from the heart that relives and recounts their history and culture (p.15). This compilation of existing research frames the need for this study. Kennedy-Kish, Sinclair, Carniol and Baines (2017) state that to better understand what we need to do now, in terms of calling to an end oppressive policies both locally and globally, we need to turn to the past to better understand what we need to do now (p.51). Historical effects of colonization of Indigenous people in Canada, influence the need for solutions of the rising number of children in care and the development of transracial adoption. The decision guiding

placements of Indigenous children lie in the hearts of social workers, so their perspective is important and influences of the lives of Indigenous families. Race matters in the lives of the four adoptees in this study, and their experiences of racism are explored.

Summary

This chapter began with an overview of the historical impacts on Indigenous people, personally, economically, socially and politically, as well as offering recommendations for correcting the problem of a marginalized population in Canada. An overview of transracial adoption in Saskatchewan and considering the perspective of the social work profession of the time offered an in-depth look at the reality within the child welfare system during the era. The review of the literature identified a gap in research relating to experiences of racism for Indigenous adoptees in Saskatchewan. Existing research is drawn upon to identify a need for the use of critical race theory and Indigenous paradigm to study Indigenous adoptees' experiences of racism.

The next chapter provides the overall research design plan. It provides a review of the methodology for this research project and offers an overview of the participants, data collection methods, data storage, and data analysis procedures used. Chapter three provides clarity on the decisions made throughout the project and details of project implementation. It concludes with a consideration of the valuable ethical considerations, validity, and credibility for this project.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Design

Overview and Introduction

This project examines the experiences of racism of Indigenous adoptees by using interpretive phenomenological analysis of data to complement the purpose of the study. Suitable for the integration of critical race theory and the Indigenous paradigm, an examination of experiences of racism underwent investigation in a holistic, introspective and comprehensive manner. An Indigenous methodology was integrated within the research process. Descriptions of participants and data collection methods are described. Data is analyzed through the lens of interpretive phenomenology. Ethical considerations and assessing validity credibility for the project were at the forefront of the implementation of the methods throughout this research. The details of the overall methodology and research design are discussed in this chapter.

Methodology

The philosophical assumptions relevant to this research project were considered in choosing the Indigenous and critical race theories. From the first contact in Canada, the policies containing Eurocentric views, values and beliefs led to assimilation and integration of Indigenous peoples into mainstream society. A critical race paradigm is well-suited for exploring the ontological, epistemological, axiological beliefs for this qualitative research as race and racism are essential elements of Canadian history and this research project. Critical race paradigm is intended to challenge the traditional Western research paradigms, narratives and theories used to explain Indigenous peoples' experiences and to offer a transformative solution to racial and class subordination in our social and institutional structures (Creswell, 2013, p. 32). The critical race paradigm has significance for the examination of the child welfare system as it applies to Indigenous

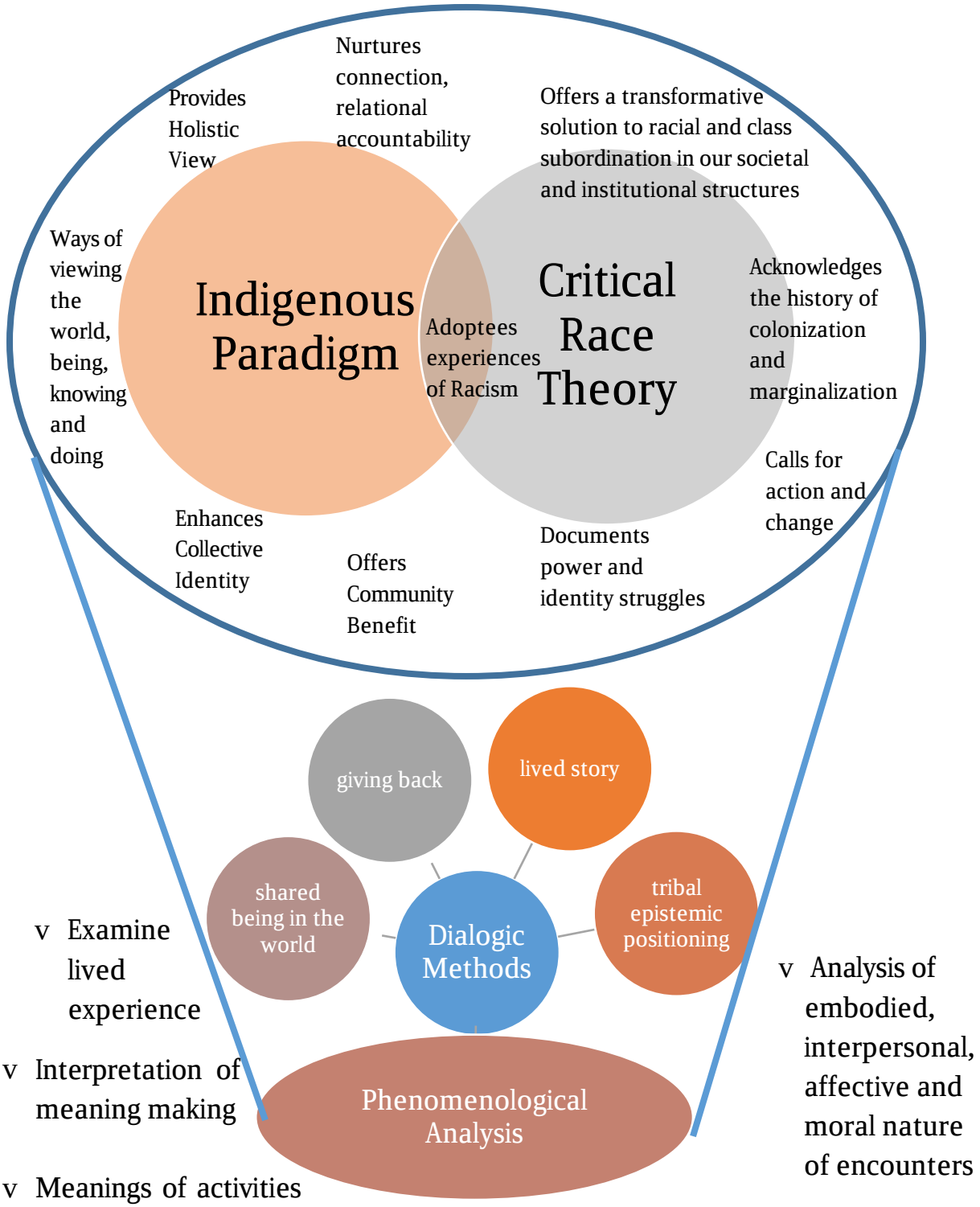
children. Critical race theory offers a transformative solution to racial and class subordination, acknowledges the history of colonization and marginalization, documents power and identity struggles and calls for action and change (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009). These qualities are imperative in relation to the adoption of Indigenous children.

An Indigenous paradigm is also suited for this research project as it is more comprehensive and may include more answers for the redressing of the child welfare system from an Indigenous perspective. Indigenous research privileges indigenous concerns, indigenous practices, and indigenous participation as researchers and researched (Smith, 2013, p.111). By reclaiming a voice in a context of historical silence, it is also about reclaiming, reconnecting and reordering those ways of knowing which were submerged, hidden or driven underground (Smith, 2013, p.73). Kovach (2009) offers clarity regarding the decision for choosing an Indigenous paradigm by stating that tribal epistemologies are the center of Indigenous methodologies, and it is this epistemological framework that makes them distinct from Western qualitative approaches (2009, p. 35). Critical race paradigm and Indigenous paradigm complement each other for this research because the process and factors of experiences of racism being explored are reflective of the experiential knowledge of the Indigenous adoptees. Ontological beliefs, as well as epistemological values, are tightly woven through identity for Indigenous peoples.

In this study, an Indigenous worldview and critical race theory provide the framework necessary to guide the research design of this project. As shown in Figure 1, Indigenous paradigm and critical race theory are the lenses through which a comprehensive framework is built and followed for this project.

Figure 1: Theory Integration for the Project

Paradigm, Methodology with Dialogic and Phenomenological Underpinnings



Adapted from Smith, Flowers & Larkin (2009) and Kovach (2009)

Figure 1. Critical race theory and the Indigenous theoretical approach provides the framework for this project. Dialogic and phenomenological approaches to examining the experiences of racism for adoptees create the foundation of analysis for this project.

This project, through its methodology, will document power and identity struggles and will be calling for action and change regarding transracial adoption in Saskatchewan. When an Indigenous person is researching, answering a call is an important moment when reminded of their race, and action becomes a goal. According to critical race theory, as described by Ladson-Billings and Donnor (2005) for someone ascending in society, the call is that moment at which, regardless of one's stature or accomplishments, race (and other categories of otherness) is recruited to remind one that he or she still remains locked in the racial construction (p. 279). As an Indigenous researcher, this is an opportunity to put into action the spirit of this project. As well, the authors ask that all scholars of colour look to the epistemological underpinnings and legitimacy of their cultural ways of knowing (p. 292). In our society, Indigenous peoples are bound in the racial constructs of hierarchy.

Through accepting a colonizing history of the social work profession in Canada, I became aware that alongside the process of reclaiming my identity as a Métis researcher, I acknowledge an obligation to my ancestors. This process of internal reconciliation allows me to define my role in helping to improve the situation for all Indigenous Canadians, including children in care and families involved in the child welfare system. Further to the acceptance of my role, my sense of a deep connection to Mother Earth, the Creator, and all living things have become relevant in the research paradigm I used in this qualitative study. For Indigenous people, due to their inseparable assumptions of

epistemological and ontological ways of viewing the world and a deep connection to all Indigenous peoples, Indigenous researchers have relational accountability that is obligatory (Wilson, 2001, 77). In honouring an ancestral tribal epistemic positioning, by illuminating lived story, and experiencing a shared experience of being in the world this project aims to give back to Indigenous communities by offering clarity on the effect of racism, reaffirms the need for anti-social work practice and holistic approaches to child welfare. The theoretical approaches have become the framework for this project. The research design has been thoughtfully implemented for this project.

Overview of Research Design

The research plan and methodology for this project included Indigenous, dialogic and interpretive phenomenological methods. A combination of both Indigenous and phenomenological methods were used for data collection, data analysis and report writing. Similarities of each are allowing for a complimentary pairing of Indigenous research and interpretive phenomenology. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) express that Heidegger's formation of hermeneutic phenomenology is interpretive, and the connections made to hermeneutics are clearly important (p.25). The authors discuss the hermeneutic circle, a process of data analysis, as a relationship. The circle is a relationship between (the researcher's biography) and you the parts (each encounter with a participant). This process becomes inherently circular, eventually drawing meaning from the data, as well as sense-making for the researcher (2009, p. 35). For interpretive phenomenological research, the contingent relationship of researchers and participants are taken into account.

Phenomenology has had two significant founders: Husserl and Heidegger. Both the founding philosophers describe phenomenology as an inquiry of examining a lived human experience and finding the essence of that experience (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.21). However, there are differences between the two approaches. Husserl believed that researchers have the ability to bracket their biases and their own experiences and maintain objectivity, while Heidegger was more concerned with the ontological question of existence itself, the practical activities, relationships and how the world appears to us and is made meaningful (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, pp. 16-17). Smith, Flowers and Larkin state "Heidegger questioned the possibility of any knowledge outside of an interpretive state, whilst grounding this stance in the lived world – the world of things, people, relationships and language" (2009, p.16). Interpretive phenomenology, according to Heidegger, describes our being in the world to involve self-reflection and sociality, affective concern, and a sense of temporal existential location (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009, p.16). For this research project, Heidegger's methods, data collection, and analysis were used and complemented with particular methods of Indigenous research.

In addition to interpretive phenomenological methods, Indigenous methods and protocols for this project involved the researcher attending ceremonies for guidance throughout the project and acting in good faith and with mutual respect at all times. Sinclair (2003) clarifies this concept of reciprocity of returning something to nature:

> Acquiring knowledge as a part of nature falls under the ethic of reciprocity whereby one must return something to nature. We do not presume to own a part

> of nature. Honouring ethic of reciprocity, therefore, is done through tobacco offerings and gift-giving (p. 128).

Tobacco offerings and gift-giving were exercised in this project for purposes of ethics and reciprocity, the guidance of the project, to honour the stories articulated and the knowledge gained throughout the project.

Ethical conduct is congruent to Indigenous ways of knowing and being in my experience as an Indigenous researcher. Reciprocity is shown with respect through a gift exchanged for the knowledge and the interaction. I ensured the handling of all records (data collection, transcription, interpretation, and write-up) were respected and honoured in the spirit in which they were given. This was accomplished by handling the stories as if they are alive, and the keeping the physical records of the data a priority by keeping them locked, erasing them from the recorder, and protecting the transcripts and files diligently. The participants for this project are Indigenous adoptees who were transracially adopted between 1960 and 1985 and were willing to share their experiences of racism.

Participants

I relied upon my network of colleagues and the adoptees contacted through the recruitment methods of the Pe-kīwēwin project to be able to purposefully seek a sample of three individuals. One other participant was an adoptee whom I had met during the time of the recruitment for this project who agreed to participate. For the participant recruited outside of Pe-kīwēwin, the Participant Recruitment Poster, as outlined in Appendix A, was emailed. Two adoptees chose to have their identity unknown to readers by using pseudonyms, and two chose to share their identities, Becky and Bev. One

impact on the findings may be that not all participants were able to fully externally authenticate their voices for fear of impact their identity if known to the readers of the research. However, another impact may have been that participants may have been better able to internally authenticate their voices, and voice their truths because there wasn't a possibility of being known to the readers. Racism is a difficult subject to talk about openly in society, so this may be a sign of the external pressure to not acknowledge personal experiences of racism.

Keeping in mind that a homogenous sample for this phenomenological study was purposive but flexible for a sufficient range of depth of experiences within the four participants' perspectives of racism. I have chosen a small sample size $n = 4$ due to the proposed timeline of the project. Creswell (2013) recommends variability in sample size: "…In phenomenology I have seen the number of participants range from 1 (Dukes, 1984) up to 325 (Polkinghorne, 1989)" (p. 157). Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) suggest for an interpretive phenomenological study in their practice to treat $n = 3$ as the default size for an undergraduate or Master's level (p. 52). Smith, Flowers and Larkin also recommend a size 3 to 6 participants as this range should provide sufficient cases for the development of meaningful points of similarity and difference between participants (2009, p. 51). Due to the low number of participants, the experiences of racism cannot be extrapolated beyond this study. The findings are exclusive of the four adoptees who engaged in the study. Data collected for this project contained Indigenous adoptee's stories of their experiences of racism.

Data Collection

I conducted semi-structured interviews with each participant. The interviews took place in private locations: at Bev's home, at Becky's workplace, via teleconference from my office and at the University of Regina library. Cultural protocols were selected by relevance for this project and adhered to. I began this research by participating in a traditional drum ceremony, prayer and feast. With an offering of tobacco and in the spirit of reciprocity taught by our tribal ancestors in order to honour the stories and knowledge shared at the interview, participants were asked to be part of the interview with a sense of mutual respect. Indigenous research is created with guidelines of natural law. Sinclair (2003) articulated that the premise of natural law as underpinning research, indeed all knowledge, highlights concomitant values, beliefs, practices, protocols, behavior, and responsibilities to self, family, and community (p. 128). Using an interview guide, as outlined in Appendix B, I asked participants questions related to their experiences of the process of transracial adoption and specifically how they experienced racism. I audio-recorded and transcribed the interviews into a line-numbered transcript.

Research Ethics Board certification was received on August 28, 2017. Consent for participation was voluntary for participants. I reviewed the consent form with each participant. By reading and signing the University of Regina Research Ethics Board approved Consent Form, as shown in Appendix C, participants consented and partook in the project. Each participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I found the transcription and subsequent data analysis of the 1 – hour audio-recorded interviews emotionally demanding due to the sensitivity of the topic. The interviews commenced on September 29, 2017, and all four were completed by October 24, 2017.

The reflective processes are not limited to the participants of the study. A reflective journal, for researchers, often assists them with understanding their pre-conceived notions, theories, and experiences.

Reflective Journal

As the researcher, I kept a journal to record possible ethical dilemmas, biases, and interpretations as they arose. For researchers conducting interpretive phenomenology and Indigenous research, logging personal reflections and participating in the data analysis are valuable. My journal offered clarity of my preconceptions shaped by my experiences. In the following excerpt, I explore my process of understanding racism, and the internal turmoil felt in the face of racism.

> In my own experience of racism, I felt shame, I had no voice [felt as though I could not say anything.] I did not acknowledge it for years. I did not understand as a child why there was a racial division. Watching people blame others on the basis of race, I was embarrassed. I could not talk and had no power to do anything. I stuffed it down. ... I shed tears for the internal struggles adoptees experienced. Racism made them question who they were and that being Indigenous meant nothing. (McCloy, reflective journal, 2018)

Reflective practices, including journaling, have been integral for me to make sense of the experiences of the participants in an interpretive way. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009) state that the researcher will not necessarily be aware of all one's preconceptions in advance to the reading, and so reflective practices and a cyclical approach to bracketing is required. The authors would position this view of the dynamics of preconceptions within a model of the hermeneutic circle of the research process (p.35). Data analysis in

this project involved analyzing the data of the four participants, locating significant themes, and finally drawing on all of the data to a single essence of experience. The value in transcribing exact words and expressions, and reducing the data to a single essence gives insight into an experience that is not widely understood. For this project, experiences of racism in Saskatchewan by Indigenous adoptees has been examined by a description of lived experience. There is also value in this work by offering a clearer, personal, understanding of the experiences of racism in Saskatchewan by Indigenous adoptees of this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected and transcribed to text underwent a holistic analysis and an analysis of themes to determine an essence of experience. As outlined by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), the process of analysis involves reading and re-reading, initial noting and commenting, developing emergent themes, searching for connections across emergent themes, moving to the next case, looking for patterns across cases, and interpretation (pp. 82-104).

Data analysis for this project began with discovery and classification of experiences of racism. The analysis involved a circular review of the data revealing strategies, processes, coping and resilience that adoptees demonstrated throughout their experiences of racism. The experiences of racism were identified and categorized into themes. The themes were then corroborated and consolidated revealing an essence of experience, which encompasses all of the experiences of racism. The described analytic process followed for this project is illustrated in Figure 2, shown below. The large arrow representing the identified experiences of racism and the circular arrows representing the

process of categorization into themes. The process of abridging themes into an essence of experience is represented by the funnel shape.

Figure 2. Process for data analysis: Perceptive Abridgement

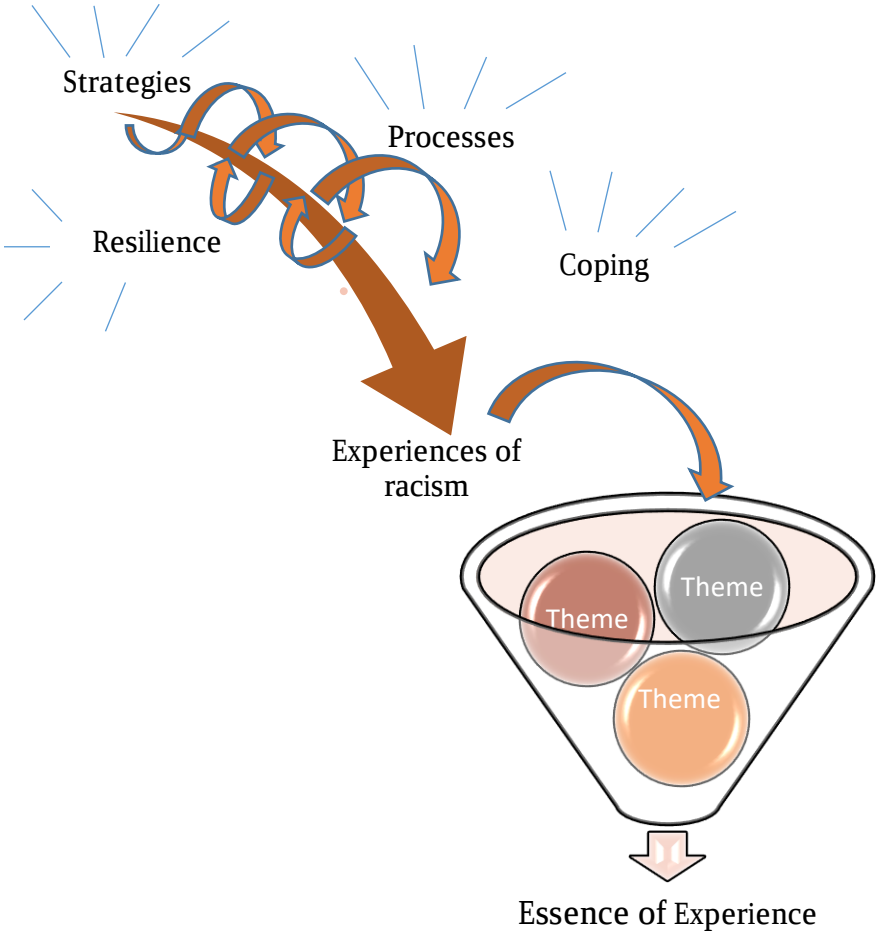


Figure 2. Model of data analysis of this research project. Experiences of racism were clarified and illuminated in a circular analysis (example strategies, processes,etc.), and themes were verified, combined and abridged into the essence of experience. Copyright 2019 by C.J. McCloy.

Presentation of the data includes text analysis, examination of essential aspects of the phenomenon, description of the essence common to all participants and presentation of varying examples of how the essence manifested (Creswell, 2013, p. 227). For this project, data analysis was circular and began with a reading of the data, note-taking and development of emergent themes. Connections among themes were sought looking for

patterns across cases for interpretation of the data. The essence of the participants' experience, present with all participants, was derived through an analytic circling process of the text. Organized by theme, the data was reorganized and examined, and the essence of experience was identified. A detailed analytic coding system helped to establish meaningful descriptors for data collection, analysis, and writing. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were taken into account.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are essential to conducting qualitative research to protect the participants from harm. This research project followed the ethical guidelines outlined in the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) Code of Ethics (2005) with particular attention to engaging in research in a way that minimized the risks to participants, ensured informed consent, maintained confidentiality and accurately reported the results of the study. The risk to participants was assessed and minimized, informed consent was discussed, and the right to withdraw from the study was explained. Participants knew that confidentiality had been maintained, and that accurate reporting of results was respected. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) point out that how we know is tied up with what we know and our relationships with our research participants. Understanding others lends itself to the importance of reciprocity, self-reflexivity, sacredness, voice, positionality, and standpoint. These contribute to human flourishing as well as sharing the privilege that accrues to our positions (p. 209).

From an Indigenous researchers' perspective, the importance of ethical considerations should not be taken lightly. As Kovach (2009) affirms, Indigenous research, flowing from tribal paradigms, shows general agreement on the following broad

ethical considerations: that the research methodology be in line with Indigenous values, that there is some form of community accountability, and that the research gives back to and benefits the community (p. 48).

Taking into account the critical nature of this exploratory qualitative research on Indigenous people, the methodology of this project is in line with Indigenous values. Wilson also emphasizes the meaning of having a good heart and mind as a researcher by ensuring that there are no negative or selfish motives for doing the research because that could bring suffering upon everyone in the community and having a 'good heart' guarantees a good motive, and good motives benefit everyone involved (2008, p. 60). With a good heart, I have approached this research project with extensive self-reflection and connecting heart and mind. These internal processes have been possible through Indigenous ceremony integrated into this research process from the onset of the project.

This qualitative project received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Regina (U of R) as shown in Appendix D, University of Regina Research Ethics Board Certificate of Approval. This project was evaluated for any risk to the participants, and appropriate measures have been taken in order to maintain the safety of participants. This project has examined past experiences, current responses to racism and is deemed sensitive. I offered participants of this study a Participant Therapeutic Resource List, (Appendix E). Elder support has been made available to the participants as needed. Each participant was informed of the purpose of the project, and an overview of the types of questions was given before each interview.

Ethical considerations were at the forefront of this research project. Throughout the research process, steps to ensure validity and credibility were followed in order to achieve quality research for this project.

Validity and Credibility

Validity and credibility were imperative for the quality of research in all aspects of this project. As outlined by Yardley (2000), the following table depicts the four broad principles for assessing the quality of the research (pp. 180-182).

Table 2. Principles for Assessing the Quality of Qualitative Research

Sensitivity to context	- Interactional nature of data collection within the interview situation - Empathy - Putting the participant at ease
Commitment and Rigor	- Awareness of literature - Systemic analysis - Moving beyond description to interpretation of data
Transparency and Cohesiveness	- Stages of the research process presented in the write up of the study - Careful writing, drafting, and redrafting
Impact and Importance	- Tells the reader something interesting, important and useful

Note. Adapted from "Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis," by J. Smith, P. Flowers, and M. Larkin. Copyright 2012 by Sage Publications.

By conducting an in-depth review of relevant literature of the topic at hand, commitment and rigor were demonstrated in this project. I conducted interviews with attentiveness and commitment. I elicited rich descriptions of experiences of racism from participants through their adoptive experience and into adulthood. Throughout the research process, I kept a journal of biases and interpretations to actively initiate an awareness of my personal feelings, interpretations, and values in order to separate my preconceived notions compared to the participants' experiences. As Wilson (2008) expresses that

Indigenous researchers be accountable to ourselves, the community, our environment, our cosmos as a whole and also to the idea or topics that we are researching (p.106). Transparency and coherence are demonstrated within this research project. The final report was written by describing and outlining the stages of the research process and careful drafting and redrafting of the final copy. This topic is current and contributes valuable findings to research available on transracial adoption and racism, such as contributions to the ideology of racism, adoptee's reactions to the experiences of racism and demonstrating how racialization has affected them.

Summary

This chapter has illustrated the overall research design for this project. The framework for this project is built from critical race theory and an Indigenous paradigm as they were both suitable and appropriate for this project. In discussing the importance of the decolonizing element of research for Indigenous communities, Kovach (2009) emphasizes that knowing our history, the politics of our oppression, and the desire for reclamation, makes it difficult to imagine a current Indigenous methodology without a decolonizing motivation. The methodology for this project, critical race theory, embraces the importance of racial and class subordination, the history of colonization and marginalization as well as power and identity struggles.

My research methods followed a dialogic and interpretive phenomenological approach. Kovach (2009) states that phenomenology and narrative inquiry are useful methodologies for Indigenous researchers who wish to make meaning from the story of people. Four participants were recruited, and all agreed to participate in the project. Data for this project was extracted and analyzed through dialogic and phenomenological

methods. Smith (2013) acknowledges the importance of stories of Indigenous peoples to acknowledge the devastation and find opportunities for transformation.

> A large part of the research stories that need to be told is small stories from local communities across time and space, in other words, the stories that map devastation across generations and across landscapes, or the stories of transformation and hope that can also be tracked in this way. (p. 355)

When Indigenous stories are shared across the country from local communities, there is the possibility of enormous transformations of Indigenous people. The sharing of each story, experiences of racism, and the impact on individuals may begin to change societal views on racism.

This chapter provided an overview of research design for this project. Explanation for the decisions made on methodology, methods and procedures were clarified. This chapter concluded with a discussion of ethical considerations for this project. The next chapter explores this project's findings regarding the experiences of racism described by four adoptees who were transracially adopted in Saskatchewan. Themes and subthemes organize the findings, including five themes and one essence of experience. Each theme is discussed and supported briefly by existing literature. Further discussions and a more significant application of existing literature follows in chapter five.

CHAPTER FOUR: Findings

Introduction

This study took place over eight months from September 2017 to April 2018. Ethics approval was received on August 28, 2017. Data for the project consists of four

transcriptions each based on a one-hour interview. From the data analysis, 67 codes and emerging themes were identified. With further reorganization, the data was condensed to five themes and 24 subthemes, and an essence of experience. As the process of searching for a connection between emergent themes ensued, contextualizing the themes began. I identified significant statements and grouped them into major themes. I looked for experiences, processes, coping strategies, resilience and other possible themes that I reviewed in the literature. My interpretation of the interviews was guided by my connection to the adoptees who I interviewed, my Indigeneity and my own struggles with race, racism and cultural identity. The major themes were identified once the data was integrated in a circular process into a medicine wheel following the adoptees' experiences from childhood, adolescence, adulthood and into elderly phases of life. I considered their experiences of racism for each phase in their life and named them: *Survival, Nowhere to Belong, Making Sense of Experiences and Healing and Reconciliation.* I also took into consideration what society on the prairies during the era under examination was like, *Racism in Canada*. By connecting these five themes, and reviewing descriptions and meanings from the transcripts, I have found the essence of the collective experiences to be *Discovering Truth and Being Authentic.* A visual representation of the emerging thematic analysis is shown in Appendix F. The findings for this project are presented thematically and include a short discussion following each theme description.

Findings

As noted above, the five themes discovered through this research project are: *Racism in Canada, Survival, Nowhere to Belong, Making Sense of Experiences and Healing / Reconciliation.* Each theme is presented with subthemes, which support the

major themes. The themes are summarized and presented with direct quotations from participants. Each theme discussion includes analysis using existing literature. An in-depth and detailed review of existing, supportive literature will be explored in chapter five. The first discovered theme is the situation of racism in Canada.

Theme One: Racism in Canada

The pressures of experiencing racism as Indigenous adoptees throughout their adoptive experience and withstanding racism in adulthood warrants investigation of racism in Canada. The first theme acknowledges the structures that are perpetuating racism and examines the influences of racism. The subthemes relating to racism in Canada include the following: normalization of racism, lack of knowledge, superiority and supremacy, and transracial adoption: demonstrating a racial divide. In society, structural or systemic racism may be normalized, so it is an undetectable part of the norm.

Normalization of racism. Racism manifests itself differently in different political and social contexts as well as during various history periods (Maiter, in *Walking this path together*, 2009, p.71). Colonial privilege, like other forms of privilege operates on a taken-for-granted level in which the injustice is largely concealed in day-to-day operations (Kennedy-Kish, Sinclair, Carniol & Baines, 2017, p.30). For adoptees in this study, racism is seen as normalized allowing structural racism to be uneasily detected. “Ok well, for my father-in-law and my mother, my adopted mother: I think it was just their age, their level of education, their community, [and] that racism is just part of their norm” (Bev). Racism in Canada has been ongoing since the first contact and colonization

of Indigenous peoples. As Robert states, racism is structural and is so normalized that people unconsciously project racism.

> Because [racism] is structural, it has been so normalized; because it's so prevalent. ... At a certain point, [racism] had to function at a conscious level in order for the subconscious to actually take over and operate. (Robert)

For all four participants, racism was normalized for them in their experiences. In their adoptive experiences, their race was not spoken about positively. The intra-familial racism that they experienced, as well as the overt racism they witnessed from family members to other Indigenous people, consequently led to adoptees devaluing their own cultural identity. All adoptees involved in this project spoke of systemic racism with police, in schools, in their community, and their workplaces.

Lack of understanding. All adoptees in this project discussed frustration with others' lack of understanding why racism occurs. When one adoptee was learning the history of colonization in Canada, she experienced a denial of historical effects on Indigenous peoples.

> When I went to university, I think I was over at their house [mother and father-in-law's], and one of my books was *Colonialism in Canada*, and I remember him [father-in-law] making a big stink. "*Colonialism in Canada*. That's a bunch of shit." He just went off. Because he went to WW2... [He said] "All those Indians, they had the same opportunity." (Bev)

When Gwennie now confronts others who are exhibiting racist behaviors, the response from the person confronted is often silence. "And when I ask people, is that a racist comment? Then they [hesitate to respond]. Then I say, 'well, that must be what racism is

because you can't even answer the question" (Gwennie). Adoptees have an intimate understanding of racism and often others do not have the same understanding.

Racism begins with the racialization of peoples in Canada, which forces individuals to become part of the oppressive system whether they are in the category of a race who benefit from it or the category who does not. Robert reflected on his experience of racialization.

> So I started to really understand actually how racialized we were without really realizing that we were being racialized and degraded because of the terms used and how to operate in society. So [I said] to the Dean in Medicine, "Why are you introducing [Doctors] as Aboriginal?" And he would say "It is out of a sign of respect." Well, it's actually not. (Robert)

Robert was questioning racial categorization and how Indigenous people are being treated differently due to race in institutions. The process of ascribing a racial identity to groups of people, allows racism to exist and be perpetuated in society. Racial classes and racial division would not have the same influence in society without one race socially accepted as more significant than the other. Superiority and supremacy are the ideologies that one race is superior to others, in authority, power or social status.

Superiority and supremacy. The notions of superiority and supremacy are inherent in the instances and justification of racism. As June Ying Yee (2015) explains that in the Western world, the white race has garnered power through acts of colonialism that are ultimately rooted in notions of superiority and used to justify the economic exploitation of those who are non-white (p.570). All adoptees participating in this research acknowledged superiority and supremacy as an explanation for the racism they

experienced themselves or for other Indigenous people. The notion that non-Indigenous people were superior to Indigenous people is apparent in each of the adoptees' experiences of racism of this study.

> So that level of ignorance was everywhere you went, then. My experience of racism with my brother-in-law, ... we have always ... said it was about power for him, and he probably held deep-seated hate for the people he had power over. (Bev)

Two adoptees in this project have expressed their understanding of the concept of superiority, and how it has affected them.

> This idea of whiteness as being superior to people of colour, and definitely Indigenous people because Canada was a colonized country, is the context of my experience. So, the fact that I was raised by white people, that my entire existence has been shaped around having to measure up to white people and always having to work within existing white organizations. Because every organization, every structure is a colonized organization, and even though we don't necessarily say it, but it's the idea of white superiority, or white supremacy, without actually looking at it, what does that mean? (Becky)

White superiority and white supremacy are beliefs that white people are superior to any other race and should dominate society. Robert offered an awareness that he is steeped and encultured in a society with issues of power and superiority.

> We live and have to survive in a white world. I just had a conversation with my neighbor the other day because he didn't understand. They associate white supremacy with Nazis or something like that… I said to them, 'no, white

> supremacy is just taking a western ideology … [and allowing it] to be superior to everything.'(Robert)

Racial inferiority due to superiority and supremacy within organizations, structures, norms, political systems and beliefs in Canada led to hierarchical power relationships exhibited in families, relationships, and institutions. The groups of people without political or economic power are the most vulnerable in society. Suppression of the power of minority groups keeps an equilibrium in the system. The child welfare is a system holding great power. Transracial adoption demonstrated racial categorization and racial divisions in Canadian society.

Transracial adoption: demonstrating a racial divide. For adoptees in this study, at the time of the adoptions, transracial adoption in Canada was a reaction to the high numbers of Indigenous children in care. It has demonstrated a divide of peoples due to the racial categorization of those in need of adoption as well as those able to help others in need. A minimal number of Indigenous parents were able to adopt during the era of the sixties scoop in Saskatchewan. Stevenson (2015) describes the reality of the child welfare system in the provinces of Canada, including Saskatchewan.

> Child welfare for Aboriginal children primarily operated as child removals in extreme cases of neglect with the occasional adoption of Native children. Federal and provincial law came into conflict over women's reproductive choices, with women often losing their children to the provincial welfare department. Gendered and racialized laws intersected, severing familial and tribal ties for involuntarily disenfranchised women and children as social workers became responsible for enforcing the logic of elimination on behalf of the Federal government. (p.241)

Adoptees involved in this project were profoundly influenced by the first racial segregation and division that they experienced in their lives through their transracial adoption experience.

> So the day the social worker showed up, she had a car, which we had never been in a car before, in 1967, and she scooped us all up. It really was a scoop. We threw our stuff in one cardboard box and got in a car. (Bev)

The feeling of being scooped and the realization that transracial adoption was purposeful, left adoptees feeling targeted. Gwennie recollects, "I was in the 60's scoop, so I was taken from my mother by the government and purposely put in a white family .... I only know that because of one of my uncles." Many Indigenous adoptees' families were targeted for transracial adoption due to their economic, familial, and living situations. Robert describes the loss of his racial identity through the process of being taken from his birth family.

> The fact that [the child welfare authorities] already were trying to erase the racial identity that my mother had given me, I would say is the first instance of racism, actually, it may be the second. The first being at the time of birth, and that would have been the fact that my mother was targeted and put into a system to be monitored and for me to be taken away at birth.

Many women were disenfranchised because of the enactment of the Indian Act. Due to the number of Indigenous children in care, the Adopt an Indian Program (AIM) was instituted in Saskatchewan in 1967 in order to find homes for Indigenous children in care. Ward (1985) confirms that the program was initiated to advertise the availability of 150 Indian and Metis preschool children for adoption through multimedia advertising to place

Indian children (p.6). “Even programs aimed wholly or partially at possible Native applicants, such as AIM program, succeeded in recruiting mainly white applicants, leading to an increase in the number of interracial adoptions” (Ward, 1985, p.7). During this era, as children and youth are learning to understand their ontological and epistemological foundations, they cannot comprehend the extent of their experiences of racism until adulthood.

Similar to all adoptees involved in this project, Becky realized the significance of transracial adoption in Saskatchewan. “It was much later in my life that I realized that taking Indigenous children from their homes and placing them in non-Indigenous families was a very racist act” (Becky). The act of taking Indigenous children from their homes and placing them in non-Indigenous homes are examples of systemic racism and demonstrates the racial disparities in Canadian society. Racism in Canada exists due to normalization and lack of comprehension and awareness of embedded racial classifications and divisions and may be perpetuated by the concepts of superiority and supremacy.

Theme one discussion. *Racism in Canada* occurs due to the history of colonization and the perpetuation of racist values and beliefs. White cultural norms and social, political, economic and cultural values become normative and natural (Henry & Tator, 2010, p.37). Native history was originally taught in education to negate the accuracy of Canada’s history of assimilation and genocide of Indigenous people. As Bonita Lawrence states, in Cannon and Sunseri (2011),

> Writing from the perspectives of the Indigenous nations enables specific communities to give a full and honest account of their struggles with colonizers

> intent on their removal and elimination as peoples, and to name the racism, land theft, and policies of genocide that characterize so much of Canada's relationships with the Indigenous nations. (p. 77)

Indigenous people are in the process of rewriting their histories through the sharing of their stories. Indigenous adoptees in this project experienced racism due to the normalization of racism in society, supremacy, and superiority, lack of understanding of racialization and perpetuation. Transracial adoption demonstrates the racial divide of the time. An additional theme of this project is described as survival. Survival depicts the first reaction to experiences of racism in transracial adoption for adoptees in this project.

Theme Two: Survival

Adoptees interviewed for this project described varying degrees of difficulty dealing with the racism that they experienced. Although they were on the receiving end of intra-familial and overt experiences of racism as vulnerable children, they could survive. All adoptees of this project survived their experiences of racism. Robert discusses the lack of power but having the ability to survive as a child growing up with experiences of racism.

> You have no control, [and] if I were to try to relocate instead of saying that it is racism, because racism suggests power. ... I had no power [within the adoptive experience]. When I look at it [now] I was devoid of power, with the ability of survival. (Robert)

Survival through the experiences of racism in their adoptive experience will be described through the following subthemes: intra-familial racism, lack of understanding, blaming race, the value placed on color and race, trauma, and lack of collective identity. The first

subtheme considered is intra-familial racism, which is the racism all adoptees experienced personally within their adoptive situations.

Intra-familial racism. Racism experienced by individuals outside of the home and those who experience it within the home is different: children experiencing it within the home have less protective factors for counteracting racism. Sinclair discusses the social context where discrimination may be a regular occurrence, if a child is deemed deficient by virtue of their ethnicity, the chances are high they will be excluded and ostracized by peers (2007b, p.74).

> I would say a lot of the experiences in the adoption experience were inside the home, inside the control of our adoptive parents, is just how we experience it now, is that it is experientially different. The big difference there is that they supposedly loved us, but now, when we deal with that, we are trying to protect ourselves. But the reality in the adoptive experience, um, we actually had to protect ourselves from the people who supposedly loved us. (Robert)

Robert expected to gain love and have protection from his adoptive family. When it happens outside of the home, there is a chance that there will be experiences to negate the racism often orchestrated by the parents. However, in the case of the adoptees of transracial adoption, there is no one able to assist the adoptee cope with racism. Robert describes his experience of intra-familial racism:

> …my skin tone became further conversations of shame and at least on behalf of my father. .... I was very good at sports. If I didn't score a goal or didn't do something well, because he had to stand in the stands with his white male

> counterparts, he seemed to have taken it out on me by making remarks of why I didn't do this, ... with direct reference to being Indian. (Robert)

Robert felt shame because of his race and the expectation placed on him by his father regarding his sports abilities. Similarly, Becky shared a feeling of inferiority in her family situation. "My mother, for example, didn't explore careers with me the same way she did with my white sibling." Becky felt compared with and inferior to her brother. There were differences in the treatment of adoptees within the family. Gwennie remembers learning explicitly racist ideas from her adoptive family about Indigenous people. "I remember my brothers calling me really, really bad names, like the squaw. And I don't even know if they knew what it meant, but they must have learned it from somewhere" (Gwennie). All adoptees in this project did not gain skills from their family on how to deal with racism when they were experiencing it as children. When first encountering racism, the adoptees involved in this study did not understand it.

Lack of understanding as a child. Adoptees in this project all acknowledged a difference in how they see, experience and react to racism today compared to how they did as children. Gwennie spoke of the confusion that she had as a child experiencing racism and beginning to understand the difficulties.

> Ok, when I got called an Indian for the very first time, I had to think, Indian must be a girl. When I would go around saying 'I'm an Indian, I'm an Indian, ... then when people laughed at me, I would think, it doesn't mean girl, it's something else. And I would be too scared to ask my parents. (Gwennie).

Becky relates how she experienced racism as a child included her sense of not knowing how to question it.

> When I was hearing these things of Aboriginal people, at first, I didn't really know. Every situation, when you drive around 20th Street, you know there are Indigenous people who are drunk in public, or they have lots of children, or they have substance abuse problems, or they don't even own their own homes, or they don't drive nice cars. ... It would appear that those stereotypes might actually be true because the evidence before me would back up those opinions that I would hear about Indigenous people, and I didn't really know to question it at first. (Becky)

The understanding of racism is and how it manifests would have developed for adoptees at different rates, depending on their ability to move through the experiences of racism. Lack of understanding and experiences of blaming Indigeneity had an effect on adoptees involved in this project.

Blaming Indigeneity. Adoptees interviewed in this project learned to associate their race with negative encounters, sustain a superior sense of group position for white people and feel the need to place blame on Indigeneity for difficulties. Denis (2015) researched the reinforcing social process that contribute to reproduction of group prejudice, and found subtyping, whereby individuals who violate stereotypes are seen as exceptions that prove the rule; ideology-based homophily, whereby individuals befriend others who appear to share their racial ideologies, regardless of their race; and a political avoidance norm, whereby the interpersonal is separated from the systemic and public discussions of racism are taboo (p.236). These processes were displayed by the adoptees families and learned by participants of this study. For Gwennie, she remembers that her adoptive dad did not want her to see herself as an Indigenous person. "And I remember

my dad saying, 'You are not an Indian, you are white, Indians are very bad people and they are all alcoholics. I remember my dad telling me that story" (Gwennie). Gwennie's father may have thought that she could avoid stigmatism, discrimination, and prejudice by denying her Indigeneity. When watching interactions between her adopted family and her mother, Bev describes a memory in which she learned to associate her biological mother with being under the influence all of the time.

> … My mother, her name was Mabel, ... when she got the courage, when she was intoxicated, she came looking for me. ... She came to the front door, and she just knocked on the front door. And there were lots of times, my mom and dad were, "You get out of here. You are drunk, you drunk Indian. Get out of here." ... Karen and I would be peeking around the corner listening to all this, and I was ... terrified of her, because I associated her with those people who lived on the streets. (Bev)

Bev, from an early age, associated her mother with intoxicated people on the streets and learned to blame Indigeneity for difficulties. Becky struggled with the assumption that Indigenous people were to be blamed for their issues.

> You know that high crime rates, or that Native people don't know how to self-regulate, you know those kinds of things. There were lots of micro-aggressions that I heard growing up. You know, at the time, I didn't know them as micro-aggressions, when I was experiencing them." (Becky)

Adoptees associated their own racial identity with negativity because of the racist and condescending remarks they endured. "I knew I was Indian. But I didn't know what that was... I just knew I was Indian. That means nothing, except a very negative context"

(Robert). Adoptees in this project experienced being locked in a category of race that is considered to be inferior in society. In Canadian society, the value placed on colour and race contribute to this problem of categorization and inferiority.

The value placed on colour and race. Racism may exist because of ideologies in which different values are placed on different colours or races in society. The mainstream belief is that people of lighter skin colour have more value than people with darker skin tones. Ying Yee (2015) explains that even though the definition of white, as a racial identity, is socially constructed, past and present-day political, social, and economic arrangements reaffirm the power of the white race (p.570). Adoptees of this project offer clarity on the value placed on colour and race through their experiences. In this quote, Becky shares her sense of feeling undervalued in the curriculum taught in public school.

> And in school, just the courses that we learned, and the small remnants of Indigenous content that was there, ... there wasn't this idea that Indigenous people today are these vibrant, contributing, current, relevant, valid members of society. ... We were these inert remnants of the past that really didn't have any significance on today's cultural, social, and political landscape, really. (Becky)

All adoptees in this study struggled with how their Indigeneity is undervalued. Bev described the difficulty she had with the colour of her skin.

> Because of this family that I was living in, that I was always separated from. And I thought it was the colour of my skin was the reason why I was treated differently or I was looked at twice or I was just ... ignored. ... And in the summer, I pretty much turn pretty dark, so I hated that. (Bev)

Robert spoke of how being in a racial category and of the skin colour of the disadvantaged, there is a consequence of having no privilege. “When you actually are an adoptee and you have a skin tone of disadvantaged, you actually have no privilege at all, there is no privilege at all.” (Robert). Adoptees involved in this project have individually addressed the difficulties related to the lack of value placed on their skin colour and race in their experiences of racism. The participant and I have found the experiences of racism had a lack of collective identity.

Lack of collective identity. Adoptees’ experiences varied in terms of their ability to visit their biological families or have connections to Indigenous culture and ceremonies throughout their childhood. Talaga (2017) asserts that in Indigenous cultures, family units go beyond the traditional nuclear family living together in one house and are extensive networks of strong, connective kinship; they are often entire communities (p.93). An ongoing connection to culture can enhance collective identity.

One adoptee was given the opportunity to experience a powwow. She describes her adoptive mother taking her to her reserve. “She took me back to the reserve because my older sister Linda was getting married, and she took me to a powwow there. You know, like, who did that?” (Bev). Bev was able to meet her family on a few occasions throughout her childhood. However, the encounters were not enough for her to feel as though she was a real member of her biological family nor did they leave her immune to struggles with identity.

The other three adoptees in this project did not have opportunities to see their family until they pursued the connection to their birth families in adulthood. Becky

shared her experiences of her parents' inability to understand the need to enhance cultural identity.

> My parents never felt the need or were told to expose me to any other Indigenous people or to make me aware of Indigenous culture and practice. Like, it was very clear to me that there was very little value placed on Indigenous existence, experience, contributions. And Indigenous people were really talked down about in my family. (Becky)

Indigenous culture and practice were not part of the majority of adoptees' experiences in this project. This left adoptees with a sense of longing for individuals similar to themselves, and those who came from the same cultural background. As Gwennie stated: "I hated my family, I fought a lot with my brothers and fought a lot with the kids at school. I craved looking for other Native people". All adoptees involved in this project appreciated meeting their birth families and other adoptees. They discussed the sense of connectedness they experienced with other adoptees. The lack of collective identity and the pressure put on Indigenous people to adhere to a racial category, as well as experiencing racism in their families and outside of it, created trauma for the Indigenous adoptees in this study.

Trauma. There were variations in the experiences of trauma that transracial adoptees experienced. As described by Bryant-Davis (2007), race-based trauma has psychological consequences of interpersonal or institutional traumas motivated by the devaluing of one's race (p.137). Adoptees who participated in this study experienced a range of feelings including isolation, embarrassment, shame, anxiety, loneliness, confusion, emotional crying, anger, frustration, disconnectedness, low self-esteem,

identity crisis, no love, hate, feeling sick and much more. Two adoptees acknowledged their sense of loneliness.

> Loneliness was a favorite word for me. But I hated it. I liked being alone so I could deal with stuff, but it was kind of like, now what do I do? That's when you get to think about all kinds of stuff, right? I should have been an alcoholic, should have been in a mental institute. (Gwennie)

Robert felt that loneliness had a significant impact on his ability to socialize with others, even into adulthood.

> I think the biggest thought that has been with me the longest has been loneliness. You know, I have never been alone, but this overwhelming sense of loneliness and it only goes away when I am around other adoptees. (Robert)

The feelings of loneliness left adoptees with an inability to identify with others of the same race or situation.

The trauma that Gwennie experienced left her feeling sick much of her childhood. "And I was sick, I could make myself sick. I spent a lot of my life in the hospital being sick, and I knew it was because I was so confused" (Gwennie). With her visits to the hospital, Gwennie's physical effects of stress and trauma would be ongoing throughout her childhood. Bev and Becky experienced stress and anxiety throughout their childhoods and into adulthood.

> I have never been diagnosed with depression, ... but you know, I worry. Just the worry and self-hate. ... I never felt comfortable going back to the reserve because my own mother rejected me. Because she was sick, and everything else. And my

> siblings all had their own concerns going on, so it was a state of internal confusion and disappointment. So many times, I just felt like giving up, but I have never felt suicidal. But, I didn't have anything in my reality to what I wanted or what I expected in my life, or I thought I could achieve. ... I often felt like I was fake. (Bev)

Stress and anxiety had effects on adoptees bequeathing them with internal confusion and disappointment. Becky shared that if she had been diagnosed as a child, she would have been diagnosed with anxiety. She did not receive any help for her anxiety until she grew into adulthood, where it continued to cause problems in her life:

> You know, racing heart, elevated temperature, and sweaty palms and headaches, and that was just dealing with anxiety, and I have had that since the time that I was a kid. ... I wasn't aware of it at the time. I was aware that it was happening, but I couldn't have said, "I am having anxiety," as a kid. But looking back, I would say, "yes, that is what it was." It was like experiencing anxiety. When you have headaches because of stress or anxiety, ongoing. (Becky)

It is imperative for counselors to be cognizant of the potential for additional race-based traumas facing racially marginalized survivors of other severe stressors such as war, domestic violence and assault (Bryant-Davis, 2007, p.138). Trauma consisted of a variety of feelings for adoptees of this project. Each adoptee experienced trauma differently, but did acknowledge it.

Resilience. Adoptees involved in this project showed characteristics of resilience because they are moving forward in their lives. Resilience is the ability to resist and

endure hardships, which can be part of the identity of a person or something external that can be relied on. Resilience is described by Brown, Leveille, and Gough (2006):

> *Part of personal identity.* Resilience is part of the personal identity that children have within themselves. ...*A personal resource.* Resilience is something that may "consistently flow" or be "tapped into" at certain points in a person's life. ... *An exceptionally helpful personal quality.* It is the magic that can occur within children that allows them to endure and excel under amazingly difficult circumstances. It is keeping faith. (In Flynn, Dudding & Barber, 2006, p. 95)

Adoptees in this project survived their experiences of racism in transracial adoption possibly because of their resilience. There are variations in the factors that assisted adoptees in being resilient in their experiences of racism. Resilience for Becky was shown in her grades in school, having a feeling of stability and feeling the love in her family, as well as a profound sense of pride in who she was.

> I was extremely proud of being First Nations, or Indigenous. Extremely proud of my own existence and my own heritage. I don't know how, because I was never raised by Indigenous people, but I was very proud. (Becky)

Bev also had many positive attributes, had stability and felt the love in her family. "I was smart and I was athletic. So I excelled at school. In fact, when I went to high school and I was a delinquent, and somehow I passed without hardly being there" (Bev). Bev exhibited resilience in her academic qualities, athletic skills, as well as the strengths of her adopted family. Robert excelled at sports. "Playing sports was one of the things that kind of kept me going" (Robert). Gwennie showed inner strength by finding ways to console herself throughout her difficult experiences. "I guess I was alone, but I liked it. I

would rather be alone than around anybody. So I kind of liked that being alone business" (Gwennie). Every one of the adoptees in this project found strength and resilience in different ways.

Resilience is the ability to overcome impediments and complications. Adoptees involved in this project were resilient through accomplishments in school and sports, the pride of Indigeneity, stability and love, and inner strength. The experiences of resilience were unique from each other but allowed them to mature and develop into the adults they have become. Through adversity, Indigenous people find the gifts that were bestowed upon them for their journey through life. Adoptees involved in this study were challenged, through the adversity of living within differing worldviews, to reconcile these differences within themselves.

Adoptees struggled with many emotions throughout their upbringing and into adulthood due to the painful experiences of racism. Adoptees in this project experienced difficulties due to a lack of collective identity as well as the difference of value placed on colour and race for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada. For adoptees, unattended feelings under challenging situations led to trauma and extensive harm. Adoptees were able to survive with the resilience they had throughout their lives. Survival is a reaction for Indigenous adoptees experiencing racism in this study.

Theme two discussion. Adoptees involved in this project were placed in non-Indigenous homes and left to ***survive***. Bev describes their adoptive experience leaving them in a state of having to survive:

> We were hungry, and dirty and had nothing, and were just kind of left in this back porch. My mom was nice, came in and had food, all of that. That was kind of the incident at the beginning. And then you just start to live. (Bev)

Within the sense of survival, an experience of loss is present, as Carrière (2005) and Sinclair (2007a) have both observed and experienced. These individual experiences of loss and survival struggles exist in the context of the "devastating collective, intergenerational massive group trauma and compounded discrimination, racism and oppression experienced by Indigenous peoples in America (Braveheart et. al., 2011, p. 288). A reaction to their situation can lead to a sense of struggling to survive for adoptees who have experienced racism. The long-lasting, generational and brutal effects of racism are concealed in Indigenous people's reactions. Henry and Tator (2010) further explain this phenomenon:

> What can be concluded from this brief overview is that the legacy of centuries of dispossession, oppression, and exploitation directed at the Indigenous peoples of Canada is reflected today in Indigenous peoples' high rates of physical and mental illness, suicide, homicide, incarceration, unemployment, and poverty – the direct result of pervasive and intractable racism. (p. 116)

Indigenous peoples of Canada have been bearing the effects of colonization and perpetuation of stereotypes and racism for generations, leaving them susceptible to social problems. The sense of loss felt due to collective trauma, compounded by racism has intergenerational and long-standing effects for Indigenous people. All adoptees revealed characteristics of resilience to survive racism experienced. Adoptees in this project, in their adoptive experience, had feelings of nowhere to belong.

Theme Three: Nowhere to Belong

Transracially adopted participants of this study felt they had *Nowhere to Belong,* and did not feel accepted by either their adoptive families or their communities of origin. In comparison to others, all adoptees felt they did not have a sense of belonging. Bev discussed her relationship with her adopted siblings. "I always thought that the other kids… they went away and had their own lives. I think I wasn't really, like a cute little sister for them. I just felt like an outsider" (Bev). At times, when they pursue meeting other Indigenous people, because they weren't raised with language, culture and collective ways of being, they encounter adversity of not being accepted into their Indigenous communities.

> I don't know if you call this racism when you meet with a Native person, which I was terrified, and he came right up to me and started talking in Native tongue, in his language. And I said, "I can't talk like that because I don't understand it," and then he says, "well then, you are not an Indian. I don't know what you are, but you are not Indian; so you live with white people." So I found that really hurtful and confusing again. (Gwennie)

Adoptees in this study felt like they had *Nowhere to Belong* and that they had nowhere to find the comfort of being fully accepted for who they are, for how they looked and for their situation. The lack of belonging Bev felt from her childhood carried into adulthood and affected her sense of self as a professional.

> You know, that state of confusion and isolation, how it makes you feel so isolated and embarrassed, was a terrible thing. And like, I was a professional person,

> feeling like that at work. So that really stuck, and I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere. (Bev)

For adoptees interviewed for this project the feeling of not belonging extended from childhood into adulthood. Participants of this study felt an absence of acceptance by both non-Indigenous and Indigenous people. Contributing to this problem of feeling that there is nowhere to belong, subthemes are explored, including the feeling of being stuck in a category, internalized racism and identity crisis, anger, rebelling, and disconnection. The first subtheme reinforcing the feeling for adoptees of having nowhere to belong is the issue of feeling stuck in a category.

Stuck in a category. Racialization in society led to adoptees feeling as though they are locked within a racial category. "It is no accident that many examples exist of the differential and negative treatment is known as racialization; behind all racialization rests the ability of those who hold power through the white race to grant power or take away power from people" (Yee, 2015, p.570). Bev spoke of being compared to other Indigenous people who struggled in their lives.

> She [adoptive mother] would drive me down where she knew there were down-trodden Indians in the city, like down 20th Street or whatever, and she would say, "would you like to end up like that? Do you want to be like that? Is that who you want to be?" ... I was terrified. (Bev)

The feeling of being grouped with other Indigenous people, and sometimes not grouped with others of the same race, continued into adulthood through their experiences with racism.

> I don't fit their stereotype. They will say, "oh you are a good one" ... You know; I haven't even told them anything. It's like they will quickly place me in their box of understanding, and that's where I must fit" (Bev).

Whether others did not place them in a category or tried to force them into a category, racial classification became apparent for all adoptees in this project. "So once they [adoptive parents] decided that I was adopted, and I was Native, and I was pretty special to be in a white family, they kept saying I came from a white family; I wasn't to think that I was Native" (Gwennie). In Gwennie's family, it was not an option for her to recognize her Indigeneity. She was expected to see herself as fully immersed into the family, but not admit her Indigeneity. From the onset, for Gwennie, the confusion of cultural identity affected her.

Racial classification affected the participants' interactions with others but also their own racial identity. When racism is a function of classification or categorization, assumptions were made, and stereotypes are maintained. These assumptions became internalized by the adoptee. Becky displays her process of questioning the probability that she would do something based on her race. "I am a First Nations person and I do not have the propensity to commit a crime based on my ethnicity. That was just not going to be an answer for me. ... There have to be different answers to these questions" (Becky). All adoptees of this project felt stuck in a category. They experienced racialization and social pressure to conform to the stereotyped racial classifications, leading to internalized racism and identity crisis.

Internalized Racism and Identity Crisis. Internalized racism had an effect on the development of an identity crisis for all four adoptees in this study. As described by

McKenzie and Hudson (1985) when a child is native and placement means physically uprooting and either implicitly or explicitly expressed cultural devaluation, the struggle for an identity is compounded (p.133). Internalized racism is an internal process of understanding how one fits with racial classifications. Robert articulates how the ongoing effects of colonization and racism can lead to the internalization of racism for Indigenous people. “Because we were raised outside of our family, not our [birth] homes, and we were subject to a lot of racism, not just ourselves, but the fact that Indigenous people do not own their own identity; we actually internalize that.” Indigenous adoptees of this project were adopted into non-Indigenous homes and they were bombarded with awareness of racial differences, racism, and confusion about where they fit, which led to their feelings of inferiority and ambiguity.

> It was like I was from another planet. Or I would internalize that really rotten feeling and just try to abandon the space of that uncertainty. So, that was a whole identity crisis that I lived with through high school. (Bev)

Gwennie discussed the confusion she had due to the disconnection between her being Indigenous and ways that she was learning of her Indigeneity.

> It’s really no different than I look at it back then. Yeah. Like in my mind, I think Native people are horrible people, because that is what I was taught, and I hate that because I am Native and I don’t want to be a horrible person. Am I horrible because I am Native? Or am I horrible because I hate? [Or is it] that somebody told me that they are horrible. That is the confusion in my head. (Gwennie)

Gwennie was taught that her Indigeneity was very negative, to devalue her cultural background and this left her confused. Becky shared her thoughts on her Indigeneity.

> It was kind of weird to me to have this identity complex. I didn't know what it meant to be an Indigenous person. ... You know, I am Native, and I don't even know what that means. It was this big thing, you know, I was always embarrassed that I didn't have this innate sense of direction, or I couldn't tell time by the sun. (Becky)

Being raised outside of their home and birth communities, experiencing racism within and outside of their homes created issues of an identity crisis, which led to more difficulties for the adoptees.

The process of internalized racism was present for all of the adoptees involved in this project. Indigenous identity is unique in Canada as individuals struggle to possess, preserve and maintain their own identity. Intra-familial racism, overt racism and systemic racism all contribute to difficulties for Indigenous adoptees in this study to come to terms with their identity. In addition to internalized racism and identity crisis, all adoptees interviewed for this project responded to experiences of racism with anger.

Anger. The process of feeling angry came early in the lives of two of the adoptees experiencing racism. Anger, for all adoptees of this study, became a reaction to the unethical and ubiquitous experiences of racism adoptees faced and possibly a reaction to the ongoing losses that they experienced. Gwennie describes an intense sense of hatred that developed inside her:

> They [adoptive parents] kept saying I came from a white family. I wasn't to think I was Native. I was supposed to be. ... They ingrained this into me. ... And I was mad, I was only 10 but I remember going, this isn't right, I don't like it, and what

> the teacher told me. The names that I was being called; I don't like it. And all of a sudden, I did a 360 and I was a hateful person. (Gwennie)

For others, it was a combination of their racist experiences in their adoptive homes, as well as racism that they experienced in their communities, which resulted in an angry reaction for many years into their adulthood. Bev struggled with anger and offered her perspective.

> Anger is a big one, and I hate being angry. Anger is all part of that stress and anxiety and worry feeling of just being bottled up, and I am going to explode if I don't do what, I don't know. ... And then you carry it around. (Bev)

Another adoptee said, "I have had experiences of rage, from just being absolutely at my end of experiencing racism. And then having no power to do anything about it" (Becky). Another adoptee's reaction to racism was physical. He resorted to fighting with those who were being racist toward him.

> Like I said to you, I hold a lot of guilt and shame. I hold a lot of anger with the racism that has been focused in on me. I fought a lot. If you ever met me, like, I have no knuckles in my right hand because they are ground into a pulp. (Robert)

Becky's reaction of anger gained momentum as she became aware of the racism Indigenous people face and why it manifests the way that it does.

> Then I became really angry because it became more and more apparent of the racism toward Indigenous people. I was much more cognizant of it as I got older. And as an adult, it went from anger into frustration and sadness.

As the adoptees grew into adulthood, their awareness of racism became clearer. Their reaction to this growing awareness and frustration, often through adolescence, was to rebel and take control of what they could in their lives.

Rebelling. Rebelling was a natural reaction for all of the adoptees involved in this project. Two adoptees described their reactions as acting in spite to the racist experiences they were having.

> I got caught shoplifting when I was 15 years old. And that was a turning point for me to stay on this side of the law. Um. And in the back of my mind was my mother, who said: "you are going to turn into that anyway, then you are going to be a piece of crap." So I was so close to being what she had predicted for me. (Bev)

For Bev, the reality of rebelling was a turning point for her to change her ways of thinking and behavior. However, for Gwennie, rebelling was a way of dealing with the negative feelings that she had.

> So, my parents would always say, don't drink; that's what Natives do. Guess what I am doing tonight? I'm drinking because you said that and I am mad at you and I hate you. So I would go and drink. ... "Don't smoke, don't do drugs." Well, yeah, I am doing drugs, definitely having sex. And it was something that I never knew anything about. Out of spite. ... It all started at the age of 10. I was having sex at the age of 13, and I was pregnant when I was 15. (Gwennie)

Reactions can be different; two adoptees left home as soon as they could. "I left home, my adoptive home, when I was 15 or 16, and have been on my journey to find out who and what I was" (Robert).

Rebelling is a natural reaction to experiences of racism and not having a sense of connection with their adoptive family through their experiences. In addition to their difficulties in their adoptive experiences, adoptees described a feeling of disconnect from their familial roots.

Disconnect and loss. Adoptees felt a sense of being disconnected from their biological families, communities and nations, through their adoption. Carrière and Richardson (2009) contend that one could argue that the role of kinship connections for Indigenous children in state care is in providing balance in their lives by providing them with cultural and ancestral knowledge (p. 56). The authors further describe the phenomenon of connectedness to be described as a form of attachment that implies a broader grounding in a person's total environment than does an attachment to one or two central figures (p.56). Connectedness, for Indigenous children and families, spans over location and time and involves their total environment.

Becky acknowledges this sense of loss because her collective identity has been disrupted. "Lots of Indigenous people, especially urban Indigenous people, they don't know ceremony, they are not connected and that's because we were forcibly removed from our cultures through a number of different ways" (Becky). All adoptees in this project shared their complicated experiences of trying to reunite with their biological family. Gwennie felt foreign with her people.

> And when I got there, it was probably the first time that I had been around that many Native people in my life. I was scared, I was shaking, and I felt like I need to get out of this building right now. And I never lasted, again. ... I just had to leave. (Gwennie)

It took many attempts for Gwennie to reunite with family, and reunification was a difficult one. “If you go back to when I met with cousins and their families, there was a big disconnect there” (Robert). Bev did get to see her biological family, but many of the visits were traumatic. She identified her longing to be something different than what and who she was.

> I always wanted to be changing, I was never satisfied with who I was or that it is just okay to be Bev and I was adopted and I had two families. I felt like I was walking down a plank, and I always had to be something different. (Bev)

For Indigenous adoptees in this project, the disconnect from belonging with their people, compounded by their frustration of being stuck in a category led to negative feelings of themselves and an identity crisis. Anger and rebelling became a reaction for adoptees. The words of the adoptees who have been adopted into non-Indigenous homes suggests that disconnection to familial ties and loss lead to feelings of having nowhere to belong.

Theme three discussion. Adoptees in this project described a sense of having nowhere to belong. According to Henry and Tator (2010), the justification of the continued ill-treatment of Indigenous peoples in Canada as democratic racism manifests through the discourses of nationalism, paternalism, “blame the victim”, multiculturalism, and the monolithic “other” (pp.116-117). Transracial adoptees in this project felt they did not fit into white, mainstream society, or in their home communities. Robert discusses the problem for transracially adopted Indigenous people with not fitting into “white” society and their home communities.

> Whereas if you are not adopted and you are raised by your own family, the advantage of having dark skin is actually you can - you end up then being able to

> be welcomed in because you are raised inside your community. Whereas, for the adoptee, we don't fit in with, you know, white, main society, and the multicultural society. And when we go back, because we are not raised inside of our home families, and our own communities, we get labeled as different. It is not reverse racism, but there is a discrimination based upon perception or misconception that we have some sort of advantage of being raised in a white family or outside of that. (Robert)

Discrimination happened for adoptees in this project by both their adoptive communities as well as their birth communities. Baskin (2016) argues that we all need to belong, feel part of something and associate with other people (p. 149). She adds that Indigenous worldviews about holism take the connection between one's individual health and relationships to other people to a deeper level (p. 149). Indigenous identity was foreign to all adoptees in this study when they were children, but as they grew, they gained a new understanding for their Indigeneity offering them strength, more connection, and familial ties. Indigenous adoptees involved in this project felt they could not fit into society and this may be due to democratic racism. (Henry & Tator, 2010). Ongoing discrimination for adoptees created issues of identity, but they all began to make sense of their experiences of racism.

Theme Four: Making Sense of Experiences of Racism

As adoptees of this project work to make sense of their experiences of racism, they live, grow and gain an understanding of their world and knowledge of their ontological position in society. However, there are some variations of the adoptees' responses in this project on their processing of making sense of their experiences of

racism. Finding the ability to make sense of their experiences encompassed insights on racism including racism is everywhere, acute awareness, learning about racism, confronting racism, dealing with it, and lifelong difficulties.

Racism is everywhere. It is apparent that experiences of racism are everywhere for all participants of this project. Bryant-Davis and Ocampo (2005) offer definitions of racist incidents to be cognitive and effective assaults on one's ethnic self-identification. "The assaults can be sudden, or systemic, intentional, or unintentional, or overt or ambiguous and can be perpetuated by an individual (individual racism), institution (institutional racism) or by cultural hegemony (cultural racism)" (2005, p. 480). Adoptees described their experiences within their families, as well as with neighbors in their community, in policy and systemic organizations, and their work experiences. Bev feels that she deals with it in her community all of the time:

> You know, I hate to say that I am used to it, but I am used to it. It's what I do, it's who I am. If you are going to get pissed off every time, you know, you can't do that. (Bev)

Gwennie feels that she deals with racism daily. "I still go through racism. I still see racism, every day" (Gwennie). Becky acknowledges political and funding issues in Canada:

> Housing is underfunded on First Nations, and the school curriculum is giving young children in Grade 3 these exercises that have Indians in feathers and teepees, and Eskimos. In statistics where Black lives matter and people are taking offense to it and they are saying all lives matter. My job every day has to deal with racism so I see it constantly. (Becky)

Racism and race have a huge impact on the lives of Indigenous people. Robert states the influence of race on his work.

> With my experiences, race was all too much of it, it influences everything I do, all of my work right now. I can't, I do not do anything, even though I work with Indigenous groups. I actually will talk about race as a factor, the Indigenous race as a specific, and racism in general and racism of a minority. (Robert)

Racism and the impacts of it are everywhere for the participants of this project. The extent of the influences is dependent on how it is affecting individuals and groups suffering from it. Adoptees in this project feel the array and depth of racism, so they have heightened awareness.

Acute awareness. All four adoptees of this project have discussed their acute awareness of racism. This may be due to the wide range of experiences that have encompassed so many aspects of their lives.

> Because I am able to see it, understand it, many forms of racism, it is much more apparent to me. I would have thought, oh Canada, it is such a lovely place to be, but now that I am able to understand it on a much deeper level, I see it every single day in my entire life. (Becky)

Adoptees experiences of racism lead to a deep understanding of racism, which enables them to have acute awareness.

> Well I am acutely aware of it. I see it, and I know it everywhere I go. ... There have been cabin break-ins and rural crime around here that have touched our lake community and is on the minds of some of our neighbors. (Bev)

One adoptee is able to distinguish racism very quickly due to her sensitivity developed from her experiences of racism. “I still see racism, every day. I know exactly what person doesn’t like a Native person. .... If I am in a group of six women, I could tell you (which) of them hate me” (Gwennie). As adults, adoptees in this study have heightened awareness of any possible problematic situations that they may encounter due to their race.

> I don’t walk into any room without recognizing that I will most likely be the darkest person in that room, and if I am, I have to be very situationally aware. ... From an adoptees perspective, if they are my own people I still have to have my guard up. ... Being raised outside the community, I don’t necessarily have the appropriate cultural protocol, I don’t have my language. So, I still have to have my guard up. (Robert)

Due to the experiences of racism for adoptees, acute awareness became an ability for them. A sense of heightened awareness allows for learning opportunities and a drive to learn for many adoptees in this project.

Learning about racism. Similar to many responses to racism, learning about racism for adoptees is varied. Regan (2010) reflects on the writing of her ***Unsettling the Settler Within***, which is based on the premise that ***how*** people learn about historical injustices is as important as learning truths about ***what*** happened (p.11). Most adoptees learned through their experiences of racism. “Actually my response to racism now is: it is up to me to understand and learn about a lot of its dimensions, how it manifests, why it impacts, and so I am very much informed on that” (Robert). Another adoptee talked about the struggle that ensues when, due to lack of understanding, she experiences racism from others. This can be straining on relationships.

> If people are not inflicting any harm upon me, I think it is okay, as long as they continue to try and understand or try to be the best person they can be. I think for the most part that people understand that any form of racism, oppression or discrimination is not a good thing. (Becky)

Two adoptees discussed feeling the need to educate others about the current circumstances of Indigenous people in Canada.

> And I see an increase in hitchhikers, primarily men, down and out, and [down-] trodden. And it's a sad state of affairs and our neighbors. I feel that I need to educate people about poverty and these kinds of things, and sometimes I speak too passionately about that. (Bev)

All adoptees in this study learned about racism to varying degrees, and their responses were wide-ranging in their choices to continue to learn or to take responsibility for educating others about racism. Adoptees in this study have been confronting racism throughout their lives.

Confronting racism. Adoptees confronted racism when they were young differently than they do in adulthood. The authors Kennedy-Kish, Sinclair, Carniol & Baines (2017) assert that those who raise the subject of colonial privilege are accused of being disrupted, wrong, rude, and of overstating their cases (p.30). Some ways of confronting racism as children were to fight or to say nothing, depending on their abilities to accept the consequences. As they moved into adulthood, adoptees gained confidence and understanding to be able to confront racism in different ways. Confronting racism is not a comfortable action, as discussed by Bev:

> I can still be their friend, but I have to still work on ways of bringing it up in a kind and gentle way instead. ... So that is something that I have to keep working on. It isn't easy. No one wants to be called racist. (Bev)

Some adoptees in this project feel they confront racism daily as Gwennie's recount of an incident at an art show exemplifies. "I see it every day. It doesn't stop with me. And I don't think people are used to getting called out on it every day" (Gwennie). She is not afraid to confront racism. For adoptees in this project, there is a process of transformation for each of them who are able to confront racism intellectually. Robert's analysis of his response to racism shows evidence of taking power back and aligning himself with others who do not subordinate and discriminate.

> So my response to a lot of the racist experiences was to understand it and really combat it on a more intellectual level, a more cognitive level of where I could, ... to ... engage in processes and to align myself with individuals who are there to give power to and to emancipate the types of subordination and discrimination that we are subjected to. (Robert)

Confronting racism is not an easy task for many. It is much easier to allow racist behavior. Adoptees in this study recognize the importance of confronting racism, and all adoptees confront racism in their own ways. As well, adoptees in this project deal with their experiences and cope with racism in different ways.

Dealing with it, a spectrum. All adoptees in this project are continuing to deal with racist experiences throughout their lives. How they deal with their experiences

varies in the degree to which they can make sense of racism and in their capacity to respond.

> Then there are other adoptees when I look at it on a continuum, where they are fighting it, and their experience is so overwhelming for them, it's hard to get up in the morning and look at the glass as half full. Then other adoptees have their experiences, have had the ability… I wouldn't say overcome it, but are dealing with it. (Robert)

One adoptee felt that her experiences made her vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse.

> It made it so that I was extremely vulnerable to domestic violence and abuse. (Pause). But at the same time, on the bright side of things, it made me understand racism in a very, very profound level, in a very, very perceptual way that makes it possible to create spaces, whether or not they are conceptual, but physical spaces to be able to talk about racism in a way that we can all learn from. (Becky)

All adoptees in this project have been dealing with their situations and experiences by processing, understanding and responding to their unique experiences of racism. Indigenous adoptees in this project have endured lifelong difficulties due to their experiences of racism.

Lifelong difficulty. Adoptees who participated in this study have life-long difficulties. For Bev, the feeling of never being satisfied with who she was and having to change herself into something different was a struggle for her for a long time in her life. She felt the ongoing pressure of the devaluation of the color of her skin. She struggled

with it for a very long time in her life. For Becky, the life-long effect is that her opinion and identity did not matter.

> There were very many times that was the most painful part, is realizing that from a small child into adulthood, that because of my experience, ... it was more difficult ... for me to come to terms with identity and to overcome that, then it was for me to simply say okay, I am out of this violent situation. (Becky)

Sometimes adoptees find themselves unraveling the morality and ethics in their intimate relationships. Gwennie had difficulty and confusion throughout her childhood and adolescence "I was so mixed up in my head with stories and I had really bad trust issues anyway with just white people. Why was I marrying these white men? I did. I hated them, but I still married them". One of the biggest difficulties for her was a sense of wanting her own family. Within their relationships, adoptees were left with a vulnerability to overcome due to their identity conflict and crisis.

The life-long difficulties for each adoptee differ but have a permanent and enduring effect. Experiences in childhood profoundly influence people. Adoptees of this study had heightened awareness and learned to deal with their experiences by confronting racism and handling their experiences. Their experiences of racism have had an enduring impact on their lives. In summary, in order to make sense of their experiences of racism, Indigenous adoptees of this project were in a situation to learn of racism.

Theme four discussion. How adoptees involved in this study make sense of their experiences of racism enhanced their understanding and heightened their awareness of racism. St. Denis (2007) asserts that by acknowledging a shared experience of colonization and racism, educators can enact solidarity and join together to challenge

racism and racialization. “We need to join with our white and non-Aboriginal allies and work together to uncover and understand how racism and the normalizing and naturalizing of white superiority continue unabated in our schools and communities” (St. Denis, 2007. p. 1087). Responses to racialization and racism vary for individuals. The adoptees in this project have developed an ability to confront racism in better ways than they did as children. Through the process of gaining enhanced awareness of racism, adoptees are capable of working through their difficulties and begin a journey of healing.

Theme Five: Healing and Reconciliation

As the adoptees aged and moved through their life stages, opportunities presented themselves for healing and reconciliation. This theme will be explored through the subthemes: internal reconciliation, and inspiration.

Internal reconciliation. A process of internal reconciliation became apparent to me through the data analysis. The adoptees in this study, while struggling to discover their direction and finding contentment about who they are, began to unravel the opposing values stemming from differing worldviews. Internal reconciliation is a process of making amends for the effects of racism, stereotypes, and discrimination and allows for feelings and experiences to be grasped in such a way that the Indigenous adoptees can reposition themselves and find progress. For Gwennie, this was a process of developing an awareness of her true feelings.

> Then my daughter has a baby, my grandson, [on] July 24, just this past July and that baby lasted 12 hours, and then it died. She went full-term, he had complications and died. I had the exact same feelings with my kokum and my aunt. It was that same feeling. This is like a real feeling. Finally, so then in my

> mind, I was like “ok.” I feel good because that is a true feeling. I know that feeling has to do with my blood. (Gwennie)

Gwennie was able, through a close and painful loss, to learn what authentic and real feelings were. Robert’s reconciliation process involved taking advice from an Elder at his first workplace. His advice became invaluable to learn to confront racism, insults, and injustices.

> And the Elder kind of looked at me, we were in a talking circle. He goes ... there is always going to be someone that’s going to be ... in a line to fight with you. ... I didn’t tell him I was fighting, he just observed that, you know. I was all scarred up. But, then he says to me ... “if you sharpen your brain, ... you will find that not many people will want to line up next to you who want to fight you. And ... then you will actually live longer. (Robert)

Becky has been taking her knowledge of racism and is using her voice to educate and eliminate discrimination and racism in her community. She has found her voice, her strength and herself.

> Now I just have this sense of resolve that, you know, that we have to work authentically toward eliminated this type of discrimination based on race and just understand… the whole idea of the social construction of superiority. And actual history, realizing that now, that it has run a whole entire gamete, that things are changing, that we are starting to have hope out of it all. (Becky)

Bev was able to attend a ceremony with her biological mother and also to make amends to the disruptions and conflicts in her life. Through ceremony, she found the ability to forgive.

> And the OTC put on a big round dance once at Onion Lake First Nation. And so, I took my mother Mabel, my Indian mother there, and that was an incredible time. ... And it was one of those moments where I closed a chapter of pain and hate, and all those really horrid things. And like it wasn't that she had to say or do anything. We were there at the moment, we were dancing, and we were eating. There was a sense of forgiveness and, well, we were in a ceremony together, so it was really powerful. (Bev)

In their own ways, the participants who have experienced racism in their adoptive experience and surroundings were able to reconcile internally in order to come to terms with the hardships of experiencing racism. Although they are different from each other, they are exquisite processes of connecting their minds to their hearts. This connection also allows for inspiration to be found.

Inspiration. At one point in their lives, the adoptees who participated in this project became inspired. This turning point changed the disruptive pattern that could have transpired throughout their lives. By disrupting the construction and confusion of racial identity caused by the overt racism, micro-aggressions, and stereotypes, each adoptee aligned themselves with a new way of existing. Bev discussed the importance of recognition of Indigenous history.

> But, when I went to university, the big change that affected me was the fact that my husband knew some important history that I didn't know. And so that inspired him and me… I don't even know how he could be married to me. ... But, it inspired me to do more and get on some kind of path of forgiveness. (Bev)

Bev began a transformative change of inspiration and forgiveness through gaining her education. Each of the adoptees spoke of moving forward in different ways. “So now in years to come, I can start working and get out of this hateful stage, because I don’t like being mad” (Gwennie). By looking at the positive side of the outcomes of experiencing racism, new responses are being attempted by adoptees.

> So we are at a distinct advantage of now, if we so choose, to look at our children and then say, well how the hell was I when that occurred. And would respond 180 degrees differently. If it’s out of love, right. But that takes a conscious effort to raise it up. (Robert)

Understanding the reasons for racism and the disproportionate number of Indigenous people in Saskatchewan incarcerated inspired another adoptee to question the phenomenon.

> One of the things that I remember thinking was that when I was 18, it was like a turning point for me, because I realized, I heard a statistic about the incarceration rates of people in Saskatchewan for men, and this was in 1990, 72% in 1991, ... and 90% women, Indigenous people. That’s when I thought, there is only one way, really, to make sense of this is that there is something wrong with the system. (Becky)

Becky was able to contemplate and question the possible systemic racism Indigenous people face. Through her consideration of this problem, she found inspiration to take a rational assessment of the issues that Indigenous people face.

Adoptees involved in this project exhibited resilience and internally reconciled the conflict of being raised in a non-Indigenous home, as Indigenous children. For adoptees

in this study, inspiration was found through adversity, difficulties, and challenges as they internally reconciled their balance of living in two worlds through healing and reconciliation.

Theme five discussion. For adoptees experiencing racism in this study, opportunities for healing and reconciliation surfaced through challenging and demanding circumstances. Moving through the painful experiences of racism to look inward for understanding and finding completeness offered a sense of healing for adoptees. The process of internal reconciliation for Indigenous people is possible by turning inward for spirituality to find answers for themselves on their journey. Peat (2002) discusses the internal power gained for individuals who participate in a traditional ceremony:

> Each individual person who grows up in a traditional Native American society must pass through a coming-to-know, which, in turn, gives him or her access to a certain sort of power. This power is not necessarily in the personal sense, but in the way a person can come into relationship with the energies and animating spirits of the universe. (p.55)

Healing and reconciliation can happen through a ceremony and having a sense of Indigeneity and can allow for the recovery, advancement, and restoration of Indigenous people and their communities.

Each adoptee in this project underwent a process of internal reconciliation and was inspired to transform his or her pre-constructed patterns of familial and external relationships. All adoptees involved in this project were able to find inspiration in their lives and internally reconcile the impacts of their experiences of racism with impressive

resilience. I was able to ascertain a prevailing essence applicable to all of their experiences, descriptions, and understandings of racism found within this project.

Essence: Discovering Truth, Being Authentic

The essence of the participants' experience was revealed through the reflective abridgement process for data analysis of this project. All adoptees, through their experiences of racism, were discovering their truths and their authenticity. Adoptees in this study have each taken tough experiences and reformed themselves through articulating their truth. With the development of themselves, adoptees in this study became authentic in their epistemological and ontological foundations. Being grounded in whom they are, reclaiming their identity, unraveling their experiences of racism, each adoptee finds an ability to alter their view of themselves. I have found discovering truth and being authentic to be encompassed in every conceptualized theme for this project. Through this process of following their journey, each participant elevates their being and reclaims their identity.

Each adoptee experienced their development differently. Becky describes becoming capable of telling her story to others.

> So this is my story, this is my experience and this is me. ... Then I realized, you know what, there is power in sharing your own experience, your own truth with people. ... Because I was told that I didn't matter ... It doesn't matter how you feel; it doesn't matter what your opinion is, it doesn't matter about that. ... But it took a long time for it to be able to come to the surface, for me to feel safe enough, strong enough, proud enough…to share that. (Becky)

Becky worked through her experiences of being told that her opinions and feelings did not matter and can see herself with capability, strength, and pride. Robert confirms his discovery of truth and becoming authentic. “My response to racism now is it is up to me to understand and learn about a lot of its dimensions, how it manifests, why it impacts and so I am very much informed on that.” Robert works toward unsettling the norm and providing opportunities for change for all Indigenous people. “When we are subjected to this, it is all-encompassing. ... When you look from a minority perspective, it is about unsettling that norm” (Robert). He also looks for the opportunity from his racial situation in many aspects of his life. He responds to relationships differently than he was taught in his upbringing.

> Humans learn best from what they do wrong; we don’t learn very much from when we do everything right. So as adoptees, being raised in homes with a lot of things that we were subjected to were just plain wrong and that’s not how you treat a child. ... But that takes a conscious effort to raise it up. (Robert)

Robert discovered truth and became authentic by his conscious decision-making skills and acting with love. Bev shows discovering truth and being authentic through her developed sense of pride in who she is through her journey of educating communities while she was working for the Office of the Treaty Commissioner.

> I would be hired to go on the road, and travel to as many First Nations as we could with Elma and Simon (Elders) and with a to talk to teachers. And, I developed a sense of pride. I heard stories that matched mine, stories that were far more horrific. (Bev)

Along with pride, another experience of authenticity included learning to have real feelings. Gwennie can feel actual feelings and find love for her loved ones. From the impressions on Gwennie of the relationships with her kokum, aunt, and grandson, she began to feel. For all of the adoptees, the essence of their experiences of racism was that they are discovering their truth and becoming authentic.

Summary

This chapter outlines the findings for this research project. What emerges from the data is the ways that experiences of racism transpire and the similar predicament that the four adoptees were in when trying to cope with racism. The participants of the study do not have much control over the racist experiences that they encountered within their families as well as outside of the home. Adoptees involved in this project had unique experiences of understanding Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships, homes and realities. With this unique, distinctive insight and understanding, racism can be better understood.

This chapter described racism in Canada. Indigenous adoptees being raised in white homes in Canada at the time was a situation that exhibited racialization of people and a racial divide of Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Racism in Canada is normalized, often not understood, and is based on a belief in superiority.

Adoptees responses were conveyed in this chapter as well. The adoptees' childhood responses changed when they moved into adolescence and again as they progressed into adulthood. The adoptees who experienced racism in their transracial adoption situation and into adulthood, grew in their journeys by gaining an understanding

of racism, and learned to respond in ways that have benefitted them and others in their families and communities.

Adoptees were left to survive intra-familial racism with a lack of understanding of the complexity of racialization and the effects of racism. Indigenous adoptees who experienced stereotypes and discrimination in their family units blaming race for the injustices that happened for Indigenous people, responded with trauma and anger. As Indigenous adoptees entered adolescence, they experienced more understanding about racism but felt the pressure of being stuck in a racial category. They responded with internalized racism, identity crisis, anger, rebelling, and a feeling of disconnect from their home communities. In adulthood, adoptees began to master their capabilities of making sense of their experiences, deepening their understanding of racism, confronting and dealing with it. However, they continue to have life-long difficulties. Healing and reconciliation are possible for adoptees with resilience inherent in the capabilities and competencies that they possess. A process of internal reconciliation and inspiration ensued. Each adoptee worked toward being authentic and finding their truth.

The next chapter outlines significant contributions, discussion on the findings highlighting the ideology of racism in Canada and draws upon relevant literature of adoptees reactions to their experiences of racism. Chapter five concludes with suggestions for future research and implications for social work practice.

CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, interpretation and analysis of the findings as they relate to current research will be discussed. This study indicates the importance of collective identity, validates ethical disruptions of racism and provides an understanding of the effects of racism on transracially adopted Indigenous people in Saskatchewan.

Contributions of the Study

The four participants of this study were invited to speak and an opportunity to be heard was provided through this inquiry using interpretive phenomenology and an Indigenous paradigm. Mehl-Mandrona (2003) explains the importance of stories in healing journeys as they reveal our personal myths and the beliefs and values that guide our lives. Healing interactions change these beliefs and values. Therefore, stories change and the deeper personal myth and meaning is transformed (p. 212). Through expressions and interpretations of their story, healing may begin to transform participants as they discuss their feelings, reactions, and experiences of racism. The adoptees of this study have shown immense strength of character to share their story and vocally begin their healing journey. As well, there may be inspiration for others from the sharing of the stories of adoptees involved in this project. Through the sharing of Indigenous perspectives, racism in Canada may be identified and overcome. There are possibilities for transformations with sharing stories, education and a new understanding of racism.

Ideology of Racism in Canada

A redressing of the child welfare system is required or continual cultural genocide of Indigenous people will continue in Canada (Sinclair, 2016; McKenzie & Hudson,

1985; Ward, 1984; Smith, 2009). In Canada, Fournier and Crey (1997) emphasize that upon the induction of child protection, poverty was the only reason many children were apprehended from otherwise caring Aboriginal homes (p. 30). Ying Yee (2015) describes the concepts of whiteness and racialization that occur in the colonized countries; these concepts are part of the cultural context in which the apprehension of Indigenous children from their homes is normalized.

> The legacy of colonialism inflicted upon Aboriginal people of color continues into present day institutional systems and structures without people being aware of it happening. The way it manifests is not always readily apparent and detectable. This is because the enactment of racism itself has been routinized, and naturalized through the strategies and processes of whiteness. (p.570)

Unraveling the current effects of colonization leading to continued racism, discrimination, and oppression in society, and its effects on Indigenous people is a necessity in order to work toward an inclusive, diverse and supportive society.

Transracial adoption of Indigenous children may be seen as a demonstration of racial classifications and divisions. For Indigenous people in Canada, classism plays a role in the ongoing acts of racism. Foucault (1977) theorizes on the positioning of individuals in society:

> Certainly everyone doesn't occupy the same position; certain positions preponderate and permit an effect of supremacy to be produced. This is so much the case that class domination can be exercised just to the extent that power is dissociated from individual might. (p. 156)

Foucault understood the extent of the power of supremacy that leads to a lack of power for individuals who are in the class of subordination. The child welfare removal system leaves very little power for clients who have their children involved in the system. The removal of children from their homes through transracial adoption not only had destructive effects on the identity and well-being of adoptees but on the families from whom they were taken (Carrière, 2005; Sinclair, 2007). Spears (2003) contends that transracial adoption does not solve racial problems when one group in society maintains a position of political, economic, military and cultural dominance over the other groups (p. 82). The devaluation of Indigenous people has contributed to a culturally biased perception of native families and communities as impoverished, primitive, socially disorganized and unsuitable environments for children (McKenzie and Hudson, 1985; Spears, 2003). Due to racial classifications and divisions, Indigenous peoples have historically struggled.

A history of colonization, a neo-colonial construction of Aboriginal culture, and the disconnection to tribal identity have led to great difficulty for adoptees in transracial adoptive situations (Sinclair, 2007b; Carrière, 2007; Nuttgens, 2013). Disconnection from Indigenous identity can lead to identity problems and create severe life-long effects for the adoptee. For children who grew up in transracial homes, the issue of racial categorization is confusing. Sinclair (2007b) states that not only are Aboriginal adoptees' ethnic and cultural identities wrapped up in cultural stigmatization, but their identities are also most likely associated with poverty, alcoholism, and other negative stereotypes (pp. 72 - 73). The experiences of racism, accumulated with questioning their identity led to reactions to racism for Indigenous adoptees of this project.

Adoptees' Reactions to Racism

Survival. Adoptees in this study survived the experiences of racism. Like any children, those in adoptive situations do not question their socialization; they just live it (Sinclair, 2007b, p. 72). Children lack understanding when experiencing intra-familial racism. Children who are bombarded with racism and discrimination with minimal or no protective factors are at risk of trauma and life-long difficulties, and the adoptees in this research project have shown a variation of these effects.

Some adoptees within this inquiry are experiencing difficulties parenting, struggling with their identity, possibly mental health problems and other life-long effects. As explored by Bryant-Davis and Ocampo, (2005) survivors of racist incidents exhibit symptoms of traumatization when a violation of their existing way of making sense of self and the world creates intense fear and destabilization (p. 485). Adoptees feel a compounded sense of loss because they not only physically lost their families and communities through the process of adoption, but they also experienced recurring losses when faced with racist experiences and a scarcity of support and understanding for their Indigenous identity. Braveheart et al. (2011) write of how American Indians and Alaskan Natives had experienced collective, intergenerational massive group trauma and compounding discrimination, racism, and oppression (p. 288). Adoptees in this study struggled with their identity, trauma and a deep sense of loss in their experiences of racism. Adoptees did exhibit strength and resilience to endure the experiences of racism.

Nowhere to belong. When an Indigenous child is placed in a non-Indigenous home, which includes being physically uprooted and exposed to the implicit or explicit devaluation of their culture, the struggle for identity is compounded (Hudson and Mackenzie in *The Challenge of Child Welfare*, 1985; Sinclair, 2007b). The experiences

of cultural devaluation and racism develops another issue of internalized racism. By examining their internalized racial oppression, an adoptee may be able to understand why they blame themselves. As Pyke (2010) states, "by investigating internalized racial oppression and focusing an analytic lens on how it supports White privilege, the blame will shift from the victims to the structure of racial inequality and to those who are the beneficiaries" (p. 566).

An issue with an adoptive child's identity does not emerge until the child begins to become aware of the inherent conflict of being raised in a non-Indigenous home and he/she starts to experience racism, oppression, and discrimination. Each adoptee in this study spoke of experiencing anger, rebellion, and identity crisis. Racism has been a central constituent in identity development in transracial adoption (Nuttgens, 2013; Sinclair, 2007b). Kline (1992) asserts that the best interest standard does not take into consideration the importance of a child's First Nations identity and culture. "The liberal ideological form of the best interest standard has served to constrain judicial decision-making to minimize, and in some instances, negate the relevance and importance of maintaining a child's First Nations identity and culture" (p. 393). Judicial decisions are often made without consideration of the significance of Indigenous belonging to their community and people.

Disconnection from an Indigenous child's family, community, and people has impacted the children of transracial adoption in addition to the families they left behind. As Carrière (2007) affirms, there is a link between knowing who you are, where you come from and how you feel like a whole person; this connectedness has been explored and described through the voices of those who know (p. 62). The importance of collective

identity is vital for Indigenous people in the past as well as for future generations because there is strength in being grounded in Indigeneity. Another reaction for adoptees in this study was to attempt to make sense of their experiences of racism.

Making sense of their experiences. Adoptees who are experiencing racism have a deep understanding of racism and its effects. By comprehending the historical development of racism and the purpose of colonization in Canada, healing can begin. There is a need for understanding the evolutionary theory of Western colonial cultures in the assimilating and "civilizing" of Indigenous people. "The absence of economic sustainability and policies of apartheid justified the practices of the Indian Act through institutional racism and stigmatization, processes and politics of inherent genocide" (Bastien, Carrière & Strega in *Walking this Path Together*, 2009, p.225). Bastien, Carrière, and Strega express the impact of colonialism on the pain and suffering of Indigenous peoples as well as the perpetuation that assimilation will treat and manage the pain that they have historically endured in Canada. Adoptees learned about how they relate to others by understanding the intergenerational effects of colonialism as it relates to their experiences of racism.

Adoptees in this project make sense of their experiences and learn to confront racism rather than dealing with it in unhealthy ways. They also felt anger as a result of this racism and injustice for themselves and other Indigenous people whom they met. As Baskin (2016) points out: used constructively, anger is a powerful force that can greatly help to achieve positive change. She continues to state that we were born with the emotion of anger and ought not to push it down or be afraid to feel it (p. 48). The reaction of anger, for adoptees, helped them to understand the need to take action in the

experiences of racism. Anger also gave them the ability to confront the people who were racist towards them, which enabled them to attempt to shift the power in the relationship.

Adoptees in this study, due to their intimate experiences with racism, are all able to make ethical decisions in situations where racism is revealed; to confront it; and to model integrity, moral principles and conscience. Confronting racism allows for an understanding of ongoing racism and will disrupt the equilibrium, and effectively unsettle norms. Linklater (2014) asserts that in order to resolve trauma, it is necessary to confront it and come to peace with the troubling effects (p. 45). By working through their experiences intellectually, Indigenous adoptees involved in this project all progress toward healing and reconciliation for themselves.

Healing and reconciliation. Healing and reconciliation followed the difficult experiences the adoptees in this study endured. Carrière and Sinclair (2009) in *Walking this Path Together* stress that the resilience of the human spirit is evident because despite the losses and traumas experienced, most adoptees found and created their own cultural and identity niche (pp. 265-266).

A process of growing and developing in their lives allows for the adoptees in this study to discover their truth and become authentic. Leroy Little Bear (2000) articulates the concept of living as a whole being "Wholeness is like a flower with four petals. When it opens, one discovers strength, sharing, honesty and kindness" (p. 79). The analogy of an opening flower may be applied to each participant in this study, which can be viewed as a process of transformation. There are suggestions for future research as well as implications for social work practice that arise from this study.

Suggestions for Future Research

Future studies should explore the experiences of racism in transracial adoption and child welfare in historical and contemporary contexts. Further research is also needed to gain a greater understanding of racialization due to the effects of colonization. The immediate and lifelong effects of racism for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan and Canada, as well as the factors that can counteract racism need to be explored further on micro, mezzo and macro levels, from holistic, Indigenous approaches. Racism in transracial adoption in Saskatchewan requires further investigation for the impact of trauma and identity crisis for Indigenous adoptees. The relationship between connection to birth families and communities and experiences of racism should be examined as well in order to gain a greater understanding of coping strategies, resilience, identity preservation and cultural identity.

Implications for Social Work Practice

The results of this current study call for authentic actions in the child welfare field on behalf of the adoptees, families, social workers, and communities in addition to an exploration of truth for the children in care. This requires a change in attitudes and values of non-Indigenous and Indigenous people to become healthier and more connected. There is a need to review the child welfare system and to implement changes, using a child-centered approach, based on the authentic best interest of the child to provide assessments on families who have children who are in need of protection and those who are only effected by poverty and poor housing. This approach may look completely different than the current system. Indigenous children, families and communities would be respected and involved in decision-making processes that determine placements and outcomes in child welfare.

It is essential for social workers to examine and understand personal racial biases due to social location and benefits from the racial classifications and perpetuation of racism for changes to begin in child welfare. These changes may include placing racial biases aside and examining evidence, situations, and issues for Indigenous families through an unbiased lens. Weaver (1999) recommends that social workers understand and appreciate diversity among Native American populations, be aware of his or her own biases, be respectful, non-judgmental and open-minded as well as value social justice and decolonize his or her own thought process (p.223). Her recommendations would be valuably applied to adoption decisions made for Indigenous children in Saskatchewan.

A greater understanding of the historical development of racism in Canada, the continuation of racism today and the ongoing effects on Indigenous people is needed for social workers involved in the adoption process. Ward (1985) identified a need to attend to the racism in child welfare.

> The discussion has been on whether a child could develop a healthy sense of identity in a family of a different racial group, and has skirted issues relating to the value of racial and ethnic diversity in society. ... Many studies have focused on attitudes toward race in interracially adopted persons, but relatively little discussion has concerned racism inherent in the delivery system. (p.12)

Training in cultural competence has been improved. As the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers outlines: A social worker shall strive to obtain a working knowledge and understand the impact that their own heritage, values, beliefs and preferences can have on one's practice and on clients whose background and values may be different (2017, p.20). But the need for effecting practice through examining racial biases remains. Knowing

how a non-Indigenous social worker's own heritage can have on one's practice doesn't ensure change. Baskin (2016) discusses how social workers carry multiple identities that carry a combination of power and oppression and that awareness of one's privilege does not always lead to action. However, action is what is needed (p.106).

Preparations for transracial adoption are essential. Providing opportunities for foster and adoptive parents to examine racial biases, education on racialization, the effects of racism, the historical perspectives of Indigenous people as well as strategies to assist adoptees deal with racism will help individuals prepare for transracial adoption. Understanding the reasons that adoptive parents adopt transracially is key to be able to understand how to facilitate positive adoptions. We cannot take the importance of race out of the adoptive situation and ignore the effect on Indigenous adoptees who are left with no strategies and preparation for racialization and racism. Indigenous children deserve these opportunities in order to have positive identity and growth. Transracial adoption historically has demonstrated the racial divide in Saskatchewan, but there is hope that there are more opportunities to lessen prejudices, stereotypes, racial tensions and racism across the province. Until then, the role of race and racial hierarchies need to be examined, questioned and diminished.

The challenge of changing racist beliefs and attitudes is complicated. As Verna St. Denis (2007) asserts, although participating in cultural revitalization has helped many to withstand discrimination, it will not challenge or end the injustice (p. 1076). Maiter *in Walking this path together* (2009) describes an anti-racist framework focuses on power relations in society, notably on how white power and privilege maintain dominance, which then results in the subjugation of knowledge of people from diverse ethno-racial

backgrounds (p.71). She adds this may include challenging structural barriers to social change and the social, political and structural practices of addressing diversity instead of simply acknowledging the material conditions of inequality (2009, p.71).

By acknowledging the facets in the system, including institutional racism, lack of preparation for transracial adoptions and insufficiencies in perceptions of racialization and the effects of racism, the impact of loss on Indigenous families and communities can be lessened. This new reality may begin to disentangle the complexities of the continuance and profound impacts of racism.

The importance of placing and keeping children connected to their birth families and communities is immeasurable. Cultural continuity and preserving cultural identity fosters healthy families and well balanced individuals. By mitigating poverty, many structural risk factors will be lowered in order to address the number of children in the child welfare system. Neglect fueled by structural risk factors of poverty leads to over-representation of First Nation children and youth in foster care (Trocmé et. al., 2005). When we talk about the rate of child poverty, it is easy to forget that child poverty is family poverty (Martell, 2013). Building cultural norms in Indigenous communities for ceremony and living a traditional lifestyle as well as increasing educational and employment opportunities are just a few examples to effectively build health and well-being for the members.

Understanding the importance of connection to birth families and communities is essential for workers coordinating adoptions, adoptive families and courts. In transracial adoption, a shift to understand the fragmentation of identity that racism, discrimination, and perpetuation of stereotypes created for Indigenous children placed in homes with

different cultural values is needed. There were little to no efforts to preserve their birth cultural identity for the adoptees in this study. Appreciating a holistic view of the children allows for minimizing trauma, and building strong children which will begin to have a positive effect on future generations.

The final chapter summarizes and highlights the overview of this research project. Chapter six covers the importance of Indigenous voice in understanding racism, and that we are all capable of being authentic and discovering our truth. It provides discussion on the importance of collective identity for Indigenous peoples and the effect it will have into the future. Chapter six concludes with an overview of my transformations, as a Métis researcher, throughout this research project.

CHAPTER 6: Conclusion

This research project addresses the gap in research exploring experiences of racism of Indigenous who were transracial adopted between 1960 and 1985. The reality is that there is a connection between experiences of racism in transracial adoption in Saskatchewan and the colonization, marginalization, and oppression of Indigenous people. Indigenous people involved in the process of growth are well-situated to understand and educate others, share their stories, find the ability to feel, unsettle norms and confront racism. The essence of experiences of racism for adoptees of this study is that they are discovering their truth and being authentic in who they are.

The Child Welfare Act has had many changes since 1965, which has influenced the child welfare system, but the importance of remembering and understanding how racism affected adoptees is very relevant today. In honouring their stories, Canada will begin to understand the past as well as how to create a better future. All of the adoptees of this study did not have opportunity to think, be and act as their authentic selves. They worked to fit into the family and community they were raised in. Baskin (2016) asserts:

> History needs to inform how child welfare legislation, policies, and practices are created and implemented. It is of critical importance that bureaucracy not be to harm communities, families and children any longer. Instead, the cultures and identities of these communities need to direct policies and practices on how children are raised and cared for. (p.279)

If everyone were to work toward finding their truth and being authentic in who they are, encompassing the identity and gifts the Creator bestowed upon them for their journey here on Earth, a dynamic and innovative way of seeing the world would emerge and decisions would be made differently.

Everyone has a role to play in becoming authentic and discovering their truth, because exhibiting racism is an individual choice. Challenging the Western worldviews with the Indigenous worldviews would shake up and diminish the power authority in relationships, organizations, and society. However, it would have a long-standing effect on both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

We are unable to create a new past, but new ways of co-existing and understanding for each other are needed for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Saskatchewan. As Baskin (2016) discusses the story of the Wampum belt:

> The general idea of the Two Row Wampum is that the two groups made an agreement that they would both live on Turtle Island, but they would be separate from one another. Each would retain their own worldviews, languages, and processes of government and not interfere with each other. Needless to say, the settler society did not live up to its part of the agreement. But what if they had? (p. 411)

The findings of this project call upon everyone to find their truth and be authentic in their choices to discover ways to thrive together. By acknowledging a colonized history of Canada, opportunities present themselves to stop racism and mitigate its effects.

Transracial adoption in an era from the sixties to the mid-eighties has allowed for an unfamiliar crossing of racial boundaries and left adoptees with a void in their sense of belonging. Many Indigenous people are now rebuilding their identities and finding themselves through connection with each other, the Creator and all things. The time has come for the reclaiming of Indigeneity, advancing collective identity and disrupting societal norms to revolutionize change for Indigenous people in Saskatchewan. The

connection to one another and all things has been a long-standing trait that has been lost for Indigenous people. Through connection to one another, there is a strength that will carry us into the future with resilience, innovation, consciousness, and transcendence, as Indigenous people. As Deloria Jr. (1970) stated:

> Even though minority groups have suffered in the past by ridiculous characterizations of themselves by white society, they must not fall into the same trap by simply reversing the process that has stereotyped them. Minority groups must thrust through the rhetorical blockade by creating within themselves a sense of "peoplehood." (p.44)

Indigenous people have shown resilience through their thriving existence, been innovative in their ways of knowing and being, have an internal awareness of the potential of knowing beyond imagination and their perspectives offer a holistic view of issues, their communities, people and the country.

Afterword: Transformations

This learning journey has had a tremendous influence on me. I have engaged in a ceremony before beginning this research project and shed tears for the stories of the participants. I have prayed throughout the project asking for guidance from the Creator when having difficulty with the process. My own understanding, a connection between heart and mind, has been activated. The teachings that I have received stretch beyond what any books can teach. The way knowledge is gained is distinctive for Indigenous people. "The way knowledge is learned is inseparable from the land and from the people who live on it. In this sense, Indigenous knowledge is never directly transferrable as knowledge is in the west" (Peat, p. 63). Throughout this learning journey, I have come to

recognize the importance of relationships, reciprocity, connection, and spirit. I have gone through the same processes as the participants of this study who have experienced racism, including educating myself and others, finding genuine feelings, gaining confidence and voice, and attempting to unsettle norms. Through this process of growth, understanding and internal reconciliation, I am discovering my truth and my own authentic voice and identity.

References

Adams, M. (2002). *Our son a stranger: Adoption breakdown and its effects on parents*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Adoption Act, Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan (1998, c. A-5.2). Retrieved from the Government of Saskatchewan website: http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/english/statutes/statutes/a5-2.pdf

Balcom, K.A. (2011). *The traffic in babies: Cross border adoption and the baby-selling between the United States and Canada 1930-1972.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Baskin, C. (2016). *Strong helpers' teachings. The value of Indigenous knowledges in helping professions.* Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Battiste, M. (2013). *Decolonizing education: nourishing the learning spirit.* Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Purich Publishing Limited.

Blackstock, C., & Trocmé, N. (2004). Community-based child welfare for Aboriginal children: supporting resilience through structural change. In M. Ungar (Ed.), *Pathways to resilience: a handbook of theory, methods and intervention (pp.1-28).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Blackstock, C., Trocmé, N., & Bennett, M. (2004). Child maltreatment investigations among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families in Canada. *Violence against Women.* 10(8), 901-916. doi: 10.1177/1077801204266312

Bill 28-16: An Act to amend the Adoption Act. (2016). Explanatory notes. Retrieved from Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan website:

http://docs.legassembly.sk.ca/legdocs/Explantory%20Notes/28L1S/Bill28-16EN.pdf

Brown, I., Chase, F., Fuchs, D. Lafrance, J., McKay, S., & Thomas Prokop, S. (Eds.) (2007). *Putting a human face on child welfare: voices from the prairies.* Prairie Child Welfare Consortium www.uregina.ca/spr/prairechild/index.html / Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare www.cecw-cepb.ca

Bryant-Davis, T. (2007). Healing requires recognition: the case for race-based traumatic stress. *The Counselling Psychologist.* 35(1), 135-143.

Bryant-Davis, T. & Ocampo, C. (2005). Racist incident-based trauma. *The Counselling Psychologist.* 10(4), 479-500. Doi: 101177/0011000005276465

Cannon, M. & Sunseri, L. (Eds.) (2011). *Racism, Colonialism and Indigeneity in Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Carey, M. (2012). *Qualitative research skills for social work: theory and practice*. Surrey, England: Ashgate.

Carrière, J. (2005). *Connectedness and health for first nation adoptees.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta, Edmonton.

Carrière, J. (2007). Promising practice for maintaining identities in first nation adoption. *First Peoples Child and Family Review.* 3(1). 46-64.

Carrière, J., & Richardson, C. (2009). From longing to belonging: Attachment theory, connectedness, and Indigenous children in Canada. In S. McKay, D. Fuchs & I.

Brown Eds.), Passion for action in child and family services: voices from the prairies (pp. 49-67). Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center.

Carrière, J. & Strega, S. (Eds.) (2009). *Walking this path together: anti-racist and anti-oppressive child welfare practice.* Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

Carrière, J. & Strega, S. (Eds.) (2015). *Walking this path together: anti-racist and anti-oppressive child welfare practice*. Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

CASW Code of Ethics. Canadian Association of Social Workers. (2005). Retrieved from http://www.casw-acts.ca/en/what-social-work/casw-code-ethics

Chandler, M.J. & Lalonde, C.E. (2008). Cultural continuity as protective factor against suicide in First Nations youth. *Horizons.* 10(1), 68-72.

Child and Family Services Act, Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan (2016, c.C-7.2). Retrieved from the Government of Saskatchewan website: http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/english/statutes/statutes/c7-2.pdf

Child Welfare Act, Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan (1930, c.C-231). Retrieved from the Government of Saskatchewan website: http://qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/english/statutes/historical/1930-CH-231.pdf

Child Welfare Act, Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan (1965, c. C-268). Retrieved from the Government of Saskatchewan website: http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/english/statutes/historical/1965-CH-268.pdf

Child Welfare Act, Revised Statutes of Saskatchewan (1989-90, c. C 7-2). Retrieved from the Government of Saskatchewan website: http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/english/statutes/statutues/c7-2.pdf

Children's Protective Act, The Statutes of Saskatchewan, (1908, C 31). Retrieved from the Government of Saskatchewan website: http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/documents/english/statutes/historical/1908-CH-31.pdf

Chrétien, J. & Canada. Dept. of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. (1969). *Statement of the government of Canada on Indian Policy.* 1969. Ottawa.

Council of the Federation of Canada, Aboriginal in Care Working Group. (2015). *Aboriginal children in care: a report to Canada's premiers.* 2015. Ottawa.

Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Daschuk, J.W. (2013). *Clearing the plains: disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Aboriginal life.* Regina: University of Regina Press.

Deloria, Jr. V. (1970). *We talk, you listen.* United States: Bison Books.

Deloria, Jr. V. (2006). *The world we used to live in: remembering the powers of the medicine men.* Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing.

Denis, J. (2015) Contact theory in a small-town settler-colonial context: The reproduction of laissez-faire racism in Indigenous-white Canadian relations. *American Psychological Review* (80(1)218-242 doi: 10.1177/0003122414564998

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage Publications.

Dunbar, C. (2014). Critical race theory and Indigenous methodologies. In Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y.S., & Smith, L. T. (Eds.), *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies* (pp.1-21). doi:https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781483385686

Ermine, W. (2000). Aboriginal Epistemology. In M. Battiste & J. Barman (Eds.). *First Nation education in Canada: the circle unfolds* (pp101-111). Vancouver BC: UBC Press.

Ermine, W. (2007). The ethical space of engagement. *Indigenous Law Journal.* 6(1) 194-203.

Ermine, W. (2018, March). *Reconciliation through tough conversation.* Session presented at the Wichihitowin Speaker Series, Saskatoon, SK.

Evans-Campbell, T. (2008). Historical trauma in American Indian / Native Alaska Communities. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23(3), 316-338.

Fast, E., Simpson, M. & Trocmé, N. (2014). *Saskatchewan's Child Welfare System.* Retrieved from Canadian Child Welfare Research Website: http://cwrp.ca/sites/default/files/publications/en/SK_final_infosheet.pdf

Flynn, R., Dudding, P. & Barber, J. (Eds.) (2006). *Promoting resilience in child welfare.* Ottawa: University Ottawa Press.

Fogg-Davis, H. (2002). *The ethics of transracial adoption.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Fouchault, M. (1977). *Power / knowledge.* New York: Vintage Books.

Fournier, S. & Crey, E. (1997). *Stolen from our embrace: the abduction of First nations children and the restoration of Aboriginal communities.* Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre.

Frideres, J. & Gadacz, R. (2012). *Aboriginal peoples in Canada.* Toronto: Pearson.

Gone, J.P. (2013). Redressing First Nations historical trauma: theorizing mechanisms for indigenous culture as mental health treatment. *Transcultural Psychiatry* 50(5), 683-706.

Henry, F. & Tator, C. (2010). *Racism in Canadian Society.* Toronto: Nelson Education, Ltd.

Hepworth, H.P. (1980). Child welfare services in longitudinal perspective. *Canadian Journal of Social Work Education,* 6(1), 72-84.

Indian Chiefs of Alberta. (2011). Citizens plus. *Aboriginal policy studies,* 1(2), 188-281. doi: 10.5663/aps.v1i2.11690

Kennedy-Kish, B., Sinclair, R., Carniol, B., & Baines, D. (2017) *Case critical: social services and social justice in Canada.* Toronto: Between the Lines.

Kimmelman, Justice E.C. (1985) *No quiet place: review committee on Indian and Metis adoption and placements.* Manitoba Community Services.

Kline, M. (1992). Child welfare law, “best interests of child” ideology, and First Nations. *Osgoode Hall Law Journal*, 30(2), 375-425.

Kovach, M. (2009). *Indigenous methodologies: characteristics, conversations and contexts.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ladson-Billings G., & Donnor J. (2005). The moral activist role of critical race theory scholarship. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln. (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp 279-301). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Lefitt, K.L. & Wharf, B. (Eds.) (1985) *Challenge of child welfare, (*125-141). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Leyland, A., Smylie, J., Cole, M., Kitty, D., Crowshoe, L., McKinney, V., Green, M., Funnell, S., Brascoupé, S., Dallaire, J., Safarov, A. (2016). *Health and health care implications of systemic racism on Indigenous peoples in Canada.* Indigenous Health Working Group of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and Indigenous Physicians Association of Canada.

Linklater, R. (2014). *Decolonizing trauma work.* Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

Little Bear, L. (2000). Jagged worldviews colliding. In M. Battiste (Ed.), *Reclaiming Indigenous voice and vision* (pp 77-85). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Loppie, S., Reading, C., & de Leeuw, S. (2014). *Social determinants of health: Aboriginal experiences with racism and its impacts.* National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health: UNBC.

MacDonald, D.B., & Hudson, G. (2012). The genocide question and Indian residential schools in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Political Science,* 45(2), 427-449.

Martell, B. & First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada (2013). *Information sheet: structural interventions in child welfare.* Ottawa.

Maurice, J. M. (2003) De-spiriting aboriginal children: aboriginal children during the 1960s and 1970s child welfare era. Doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto: Toronto.

McKenzie, B. & Hudson, P. (1985). Native children, child welfare, and the colonization of Native people. In K. Levitt & B. Wharf (Eds.), *Challenge of child welfare, (*125-141). Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press.

Mehl-Madrona, L. (2003). *Coyote Healing: Miracles in Native Medicine.* Rochester, Vermont: Bear & Company.

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Moran, B. (1992). *A little rebellion.* Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

Neckoway, R., Brownlee, K., & Castellan, B. (2007). Is attachment theory consistent with Aboriginal parenting? *First Peoples Child & Family Review,* 3(2), 65-74.

Nuttgens, S. (2010). Biracial identity theory and research juxtaposed with narrative accounts of biracial individual. *Child Adolescence Social Work Journal*, 27:355-364.

Nuttgens, S. (2013). Stories of Aboriginal transracial adoption. *The Qualitative Report*, 18(3) 1-17.

Palmer, S. & Cook, W. (1996). Understanding and countering racism with First Nations children in out-of-home care. *Child Welfare,* 75(6), 709-725.

Park, T.M. (2003). In the best interests of the Aboriginal child. *Windsor Review of Legal and Social Issues,* (16) 43.

Peat, D. (1983). *Blackfoot physics: a journey into the Native American worldview.* Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press.

Pyke, K. D. (2010). What is internalized racial oppression and why don't we study it? Acknowledging racism's hidden injuries. *Sociological Perspectives.* 53(4), 551-572. doi: 10.1525/sop.2010.53.4.551

Regan, P. (2010). *Unsettling the settler within.* Vancouver: UBC Press.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996) *People to people, nation to nation: Highlights of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Ottawa: Canada Communication Group. Retrieved from https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637

Saskatchewan Child Welfare Review Panel Report. (2016). *For the Good of our children and Youth.* Retrieved from: http://www.adoption.ca/uploads/File/CWR-panel-report.pdf

SASW Standards of Practice for Registered Social Workers. Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers. (2017).

Sinclair, R. (2003). Indigenous research in social work: the challenge of operationalizing worldview. *Native Social Work Journal.* 5(11), 117-139.

Sinclair, R. (2007a). *All my relations: native transracial adoption: A critical case study of cultural identity.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary: Calgary.

Sinclair, R. (2007b). Identity lost and found: lessons from the sixties scoop. *The First Peoples child & Family Review,* 3(1), 65-82.

Sinclair, R. (2016). The Indigenous child removal system in Canada: An examination of legal decision making and racial bias. *The First Peoples Child & Family Review,* 11(2), 8-18.

Sinha, V., Ellenbogen, S., & Trocmé, N. (2013). Substantiating neglect of first nations and non-aboriginal children. *Children and Youth Services Review,* 35, 2080-2090. Retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth@mcgill.ca

Sinha, V., & Kozlowski, A. (2013). The structure of child welfare in Canada. *The International Indigenous Policy Journal,* 4(2). Retrieved from: http//ir.lib.uwo.ca/iipj/vol4/iss2/2

Sinha, V., Trocmé, N., Fallon, B., MacLaurin, B., Fast, E., Prokop, S.T., …Richard, K. (2011). *Kiskisk awasisak: remember the children. Understanding the overrepresentation of First Nations children in the child welfare system.* Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations.

Smith, A. (2009). Aboriginal adoptions in Saskatchewan and British Columbia: an evolution to save or lose our children? *Canadian Journal of Family Law,* 25(2), 297-367.

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretive phenomenological analysis.* Thousand Oakes: Sage Publications.

Smith, L. T. (2013). *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples.* Zed Books.

Spears (2003). Strong spirit, fractured identity: An Ojibway adoptees journey. In K. Anderson & B. Lawrence. *Strong women stories: native vision and community survival*. (pp.81-94). Toronto: Sumach Press

St. Denis, V. (2007). Aboriginal education and anti-racist education: building alliances across cultural and racial identity. *Canadian Journal of Education,* 30(4), 1068-1092.

Stevenson, A. (2015). *A study of transracial adoption in Saskatchewan 1944-1984*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation, University of Saskatchewan: Saskatoon.

Statistics Canada. (2016). Retrieved from https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/as-sa/98-200-x/2016020/98-200-x2016020-eng.cfm

Strega, S. & Carrière, J. (Eds.). (2009). *Walking this path together: anti-racist and anti-oppressive child welfare practice.* Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing.

Swindrovich, C. (2004). *Positive experiences of first nations children in non-aboriginal foster or adoptive care: deconstructing the "sixties scoop"*. Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

Talaga, T.(2017). *Seven fallen feathers: racism, death & hard truths in a northern city.* Toronto: Anansi.

Trocmé, N., Knoke, D. & Blackstock, C. (2004). Pathways to overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in Canada's child welfare system. *Social Service Review,* 78(4), 577-600.

Trocmé, N., MacLaurin, B., Fallon, B., Knoke, D., Pitman, L., & McCormack, M. (2005). *Mesnmimk Wasatek: understanding the overrepresentation of first nations children in Canada's child welfare system: an analysis of the CIS-2003.* Toronto: Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare.

Walmsley, C. (2005). *Protecting Aboriginal children.* Toronto: UBC Press.

Ward, M. (1984). *The adoption of native Canadian children.* Cobalt, Ontario: Highway Book Shop.

Ward, M. (1995). A place for advocacy in child welfare systems: the case for adoption. *Child Welfare League of America* LXXIV (3), 619-632.

Weaver, H. (2000). Activism and American Indian Issues: Opportunities and roles for social workers. *Journal of Progressive Human Services,* 11 (1). Doi: 10.1300/J059V11n01_02

Wilson, S. (2001). What is Indigenous research methodology? *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 25(2), 175-179.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods.* Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing.

Yellowhorse Braveheart, M. (1998). The return to the sacred path: Healing the historical trauma and historical unresolved grief response among the Lakota through a

psychoeducational group intervention. *Smith College Studies in Social Work.* 68(3), 287-305. Doi: 10.1080/00377319809517532

Yellowhorse Braveheart, M., Chase, J, Elkins, J., & D.B. Altschul. (2011). Historical trauma among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: concepts, research, and clinical considerations. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs,* 43(4), 282 - 290. Doi: 10.1080/02791072.2011.628913

Yee, J.Y. (2015). Whiteness and white supremacy. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences 25* (2nd ed.). doi: 10.2016/B978-0-08-097086-8.28099-9

Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Recruitment Poster

University of Regina

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Department of Social Work
University of Regina

PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR RESEARCH
IN TRANSRACIAL ADOPTION
IN SASKATCHEWAN 1960-1985

I am looking for volunteers to take part in a study of experiences of racism by Indigenous adoptees, who were adopted in Saskatchewan between the years of 1960 and 1985. I am looking for four individuals willing to share their experiences and perceptions of racism.
This research will answer:
What are the experiences of racism for you?
And what did you do with the experience?
(How has the experience of racism affected you)?

As a participant in this study, you will be asked to be part of an interview, approximately 60 minutes in length.
In appreciation for your time, you will receive a $20 gift card. Interviews can take place in Saskatoon, Prince Albert or other locations in Saskatchewan.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer for this study,
Please contact:
Carrie McCloy
University of Regina, Master of Social Work Student
at 306-960-7610 or
Email: mitchel1c@uregina.ca

This study has been reviewed and received approval

through the Research Ethics Board, University of Regina

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Pre-interview screening questions:

I would like to confirm with you the following information:

1. Are you Indigenous and adopted by non-Indigenous parents?
2. Were you adopted between 1960 and 1985?
3. Have you experienced racism in your life?
4. Are you willing to speak of your experiences?

Interview Guide

1. What have you experienced in terms of racism in your adoptive experience?

2. What dimensions, incidents and people intimately connected with your experiences of racism stand out for you?

3. a. How did the experiences of racism affect you?

   b. What changes do you associate with the experience?

4. What are the contexts or situations that have influenced or affected your experiences of racism?

5. What feelings were generated by the experiences?

6. What thoughts stood out for you?

7. What bodily changes or states were you aware of at the time?

8. How do you experience racism now?

9. Have you shared all that is significant with reference to the experiences of racism?

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your responses will provide me with a better understanding of the experiences of racism. This is a crucial topic in transracial adoption.

Appendix C University of Regina Ethics Board approved Consent Form

University of Regina

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Transracial adoption in Saskatchewan: Indigenous adoptees' experiences of racism

Researcher: Carrie McCloy, Graduate Student, Department of Social Work, University of Regina, 306-960-7610, mitche1c@uregina.ca

Supervisor: Dr. Raven Sinclair, Department of Social Work, 306-664-7372

Purpose and Objectives of the Research

The purpose of this project is to gain understanding of experience of racism among Indigenous Adoptees, and to discover how Adoptees coped with those experiences. This project is dove-tailing on the Pekiwewin project – a five-year study that is looking at the Indigenous child welfare system from multiple perspectives.

This research will add to understanding of how racism affects and is dealt with by Indigenous adoptees, and will give a voice for you and other adoptees as well as offer implications for adoptions in Saskatchewan.

The data produced in this project will contribute to a thesis and potentially to Adoptee reconciliation processes. There are possibilities for the qualitative data to be published in journal articles and used in conference presentations. This data may be published in chapters in edited books and other works including newsletters and media contributions. Findings may be made to stakeholders through presentations at venues such as the Indigenous Adoptee gatherings, or other training workshops and gatherings. Communication of research may include different communities (e.g. social workers, Indigenous organization coordinators, and education providers) via webcasts, public presentations and posters describing the project and research outcomes.

At your request, an Executive Summary of the results of this research project will be provided to you.

Procedures:

The project will consist of one interview with you, about an hour in length, either dovetailing on your Pekiwewin Interview or separately. Your interview will be taped and

transcribed. I will send the transcript to you so that you can make any corrections or changes. I may follow up by phone, email or in person in order to capture your meaning of statements.

The interview with you will take place in a mutually agreed upon place, that offers privacy and confidentiality. The interview guide questions will be provided in advance to all participants. If you live a distance, the consent form will be sent to you by email or mail, and interviews will commence upon receipt of your signed consent from. Interviews will be taped, and notes highlighting your significant comments throughout the interview will be kept. Telephone interviews will be taped using a telephone-recording device.

Potential Risks:

There are minimal risks to your participation. You may experience the discomfort of difficult or painful emotional memories if your experiences of your transracial adoption have been difficult. I will check in with you at regular intervals during the interviews to get your feedback on your level of emotional and psychological comfort. At all times, you will be encouraged and supported to take breaks and debrief about memories. As well, please be aware that you may answer those questions that you are comfortable with.

You will be given the names and phone numbers for a therapist and two Elders (one male and one female), who will be available at all times to discuss your concerns with someone other than the interviewer. A resource list will be provided to you that has the contact numbers for individuals experienced in the native adoption process. These individuals will be available to you beyond the research project. There will be no risk to your professional or social position through participation in this project.

Potential Benefits

The possible benefits of this research project will allow you to voice your experiences of racism who were transracially adopted in Saskatchewan. This project will contribute to the knowledge and understanding of transracial adoption, possible processes and may identify suggestions to assist with transracial adoption recovery and healing processes. This project will contribute to Indigenous research available in the area of transracial adoption and will allow for valuable understandings of the experience of racism and "best practices" coping strategies in adoption. In addition, the information may assist with practice and policy changes to better support Indigenous transracial adoptees.

Remuneration

There will be no remuneration associated with this research project. Adhering to Nehiyaw teachings, you will be presented with a small gift of appreciation and a $20 gift card for your participation in the project upon completion of the interviews.

Confidentiality

All material and information gathered will be maintained in confidence. I will supply you with copies of your interview transcripts and notes at your request. An initial summary of the thematic findings will be provided to participants for your review and suggestions. Confidentiality will be strived for throughout the process. The transcripts, notes and written material will be maintained for present and future reference, for five (5) years following the project, and will be kept on a secure University server by the supervisor.

As a participant whose words and wisdom are being shared for the benefit of others, and according to Indigenous teachings of honouring the individual who is sharing the knowledge, your consent to be identified in the research and/or scholarly publications is request via this consent form.

There are options for you to consider if you decide to take part in this research on whether you would like your identity to remain confidential. Please put a check mark on the corresponding line(s) that grants me your permission to:

I wish for my identity to remain confidential, and you may refer to me by a pseudonym:

Yes: _____ No: _____

The pseudonym I choose for myself is: _____

You may quote me and use my name throughout the study: Yes: _____ No: _____

Your identification will be restricted to scholarly and academic media and reference of your words will, at all times, respect and honour your personal, psychological and professional well-being.

Right to withdraw

Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You have the right to withdraw from the project at any time, up until February 28, 2018, at which time, data has been pooled and it is possible that some results have been analyzed, written up and/or presented. Up to that date, you may withdraw for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort. Whether you choose to participate or not will have no effect on your relationships or how you will be treated.

Follow up:

I will be pleased to provide you with a copy of the Executive summary of the results of this project, at your request.

Questions or Concerns

Contact the researchers using the information at the top of page 1. This research project has been approved on ethical grounds by the U of R Research Ethics Board on June 28, 2017. Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to the committee at through the Research Ethics Office 306-585-4986 (Toll free 866-585-4775) or research.ethics@uregina.ca.

Consent

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant	Signature	Date
_____	_____	_____
Name of Investigator	Signature	Date

Appendix D: University of Regina Research Ethics Certificate of Approval

University of Regina

Research Ethics Board
Certificate of Approval

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:	DEPARTMENT:	REB#
Carrie McCloy	Social Work	2017-097

SUPERVISOR:

TITLE: Transracial adoption in Saskatchewan: Indigenous adoptees' experiences of racism

APPROVED ON: August 28, 2017 RENEWAL DATE: August 28, 2018

APPROVAL OF: Application for Behavioral Research Ethics Review, Recruitment Poster, Letter of initial contact, Adoptee Consent form, interview Guide, Pre-interview Screening Questions,

Full Board Meeting ☐ Delegated Review ☒

The University of Regina Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process or documents.

Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures should be reported to the Chair for Research Ethics Board consideration in advance of its implementation.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month of the current expiry date each year the study remains open, and upon study completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: https://www.uregina.ca/research/for-faculty-staff/ethicscompliance/human/ethics-forms.html

Dr. Laurie Clune

Chair, Research Ethics Board

Please send all correspondence to: Research Office University of Regina Research and Innovation Centre
109 Regina, SK S4S 0A2 Telephone: (306) 585-4775 Fax: (306) 585-4893 research.ethics@uregina.ca

Appendix E: Participant Therapeutic Resource List

Contacts for Therapeutic and Support Resources

Ontario

Kenn Richard
E-mail: krichard@nativechild.org
Phone number: (416) 969 – 8510

Native Child and Family Services
30 College Street
Toronto, ON

Suzanne Stewart
E-mail: suzanne.stewart@utoronto.ca
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
University of Toronto
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, ON
M5S IV6

Manitoba

Michael Hart
E-mail: MichaeLHart@umanitoba.ca
Faculty of Social Work - University of Manitoba
604 Tier Building
Winnipeg, MB
R3T2N2

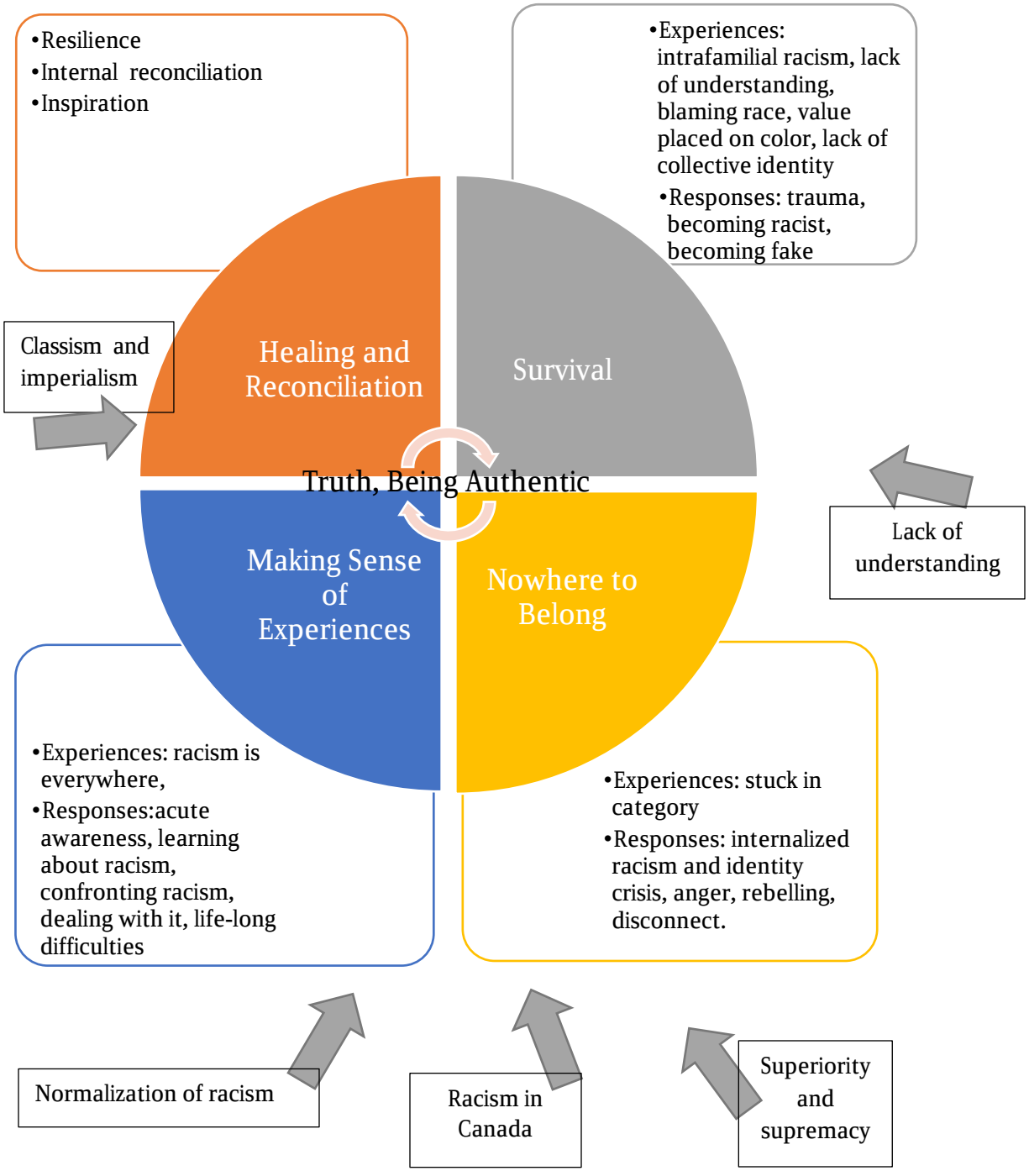
Saskatchewan

Raven Sinclair
E-mail: ravsin@sasktel.net
Faculty of Social Work - University of Regina (Saskatoon Campus)
111 - 116 Research Drive
The Concourse
Innovation Place
Saskatoon, SK
S7N 3R3

Quebec

Nico Trocmé
E-mail: nico.Trocmé@mcgill.ca
Phone number: (514) 398-7068
School of Social Work — McGill University
3506 University Street, Suite 300
Montreal, Quebec
H3A 2A7

British Columbia

Sarah Wright-Cardinal
E-mail: sarahwc@uvic.ca
Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Victoria, MacLaurin Building A541

Appendix F: Emerging Thematic Analysis Visual Representation