Structural Racism in Canadian Universities: Moving Beyond Tokenism.

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Abstract

The concept of racism is often conceptualized or perceived as overt discriminatory actions against racialized minority groups. There is, however, a subtle and pervasive form of racism: Structural Racism. In this paper, structural racism and systemic racism will be used simultaneously to describe a form of racism that is profoundly entrenched in institutions' systems, written or unwritten policies, beliefs, and practices. Structural racism produces, reproduces, and normalizes unfair treatment and oppression of racialized minority groups. Despite the mass promotion of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives in Canadian universities, many researchers are of the view that these initiatives are shallow implementations that fail to address structural racism. It is on this premise that this scholarly literature review seeks to provide a lens through which structural racism can be identified and explore practical measures that can be taken to address this issue. The conceptual foundations were informed by Critical Race Theory (CRT). I begin by providing a historical background of colonialism to aid in the understanding of structural racism, then highlight areas in practice that reflect the existence of this issue. Following this I explore the attitudes of university administrators towards structural racism and evaluate strategies that can be employed to move beyond a tokenized approach to addressing this form of racism. The findings will serve to heighten the awareness of the existence of structural racism, expose discrepancies between policies and practice, and provide possible pathways that can be adopted by administrators for genuine institutional change.

Key words: Structural Racism, Tokenism, Racialized minority

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Universities Canada- an organization formerly known as the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada- National Survey Report (2019) indicates 77% of universities currently reference EDI in their institutions' strategic plans. This report is reiterated by MacKenzie et al., (2023), who claim it is difficult to find one university that does not profess a commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI&I), in mission statements and strategic plans. However, these initiatives have been met with much scrutiny by researchers who conclude that the implementation of these initiatives are superficially enacted and have no bearing on the issue of structural racism.

Whilst the aim of this paper is not to highlight EDI initiatives as a failure, I am much obliged, as a Black International Student who studies at a prominent Canadian university, to propel administrators to examine their attitudes towards the issue of structural racism and move beyond mere tokenism. Tokenism is generally described as the practice of making only a superficial effort to be inclusive of members of racialized minority groups, to create the impression that people are being treated fairly in order to avoid criticism.

Through this paper, I represent the voice of racialized groups (non-White) advocating for a transformation in institutional structure and norms. Action is needed now to address structural and systemic barriers deeply embedded Canadian higher education institutions. Unless those administrators leading EDI initiatives consider the multiple forms and impacts of racism, especially structural racism, their efforts will continue to fail racialized students and faculty members.

Purpose of the Paper

Racism is not always conscious, explicit, or readily visible but is often systemic and structural (Braveman et. al., 2022). However, when conceptualizing issues of racial inequity and white supremacy in education institutions, the issue is situated in the thoughts and actions

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of individuals. While individual racism exists, it is often symptomatic of larger institutional-level sources of marginalization and oppression. According to Ahmed (2012) universities proclaim a commitment to equity and social justice; yet they provide limited oversight and transparency in terms of how they intend to materialize such commitments. Therefore, while universities are deemed equitable, inclusive, and racially diverse, the illusion that racism is no longer a prominent issue is created. The purpose of this paper is to provide a lens through which structural racism can be identified and explore strategies that can lead to more robust and effective EDI initiatives. To this end, the study is guided by the question:

1. How can administrators address structural racism within higher education institutions in Canada?

The findings would be useful in creating a deeper awareness of structural racism and inform administrators on "the way forward" in creating a more equitable and inclusive campus environment.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a concept that postulates race as a social construct and probes us to consider racism not merely on the level of an individual's biases or prejudice, but at a systemic or structural level where inequalities are embedded in legal systems and policies. The foundations of CRT were established by Dr. Derrick Bell and Dr. Alan Freeman in the mid-1970s. CRT was later introduced to the field of education by (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and lends itself naturally to breaking down how structural racism functions at the university level. This paper highlights the five tenets of CRT as Hiraldo (2010) outlines:

The Permanence of Racism

The permanence of racism suggests that issues of race are deeply embedded in the political, social, and economic realms of society. CRT implores us to examine the structural

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aspect of racism, drawing attention to the view that racism can exist without individual racists. Therefore, while university administrators may support EDI initiatives whole-heartedly, if they are unaware of or ignore the existence of systematic racism, action plans become ineffective. Instead, these initiatives work to propel and reinforce structural racism (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

Whiteness as Property

White racial identity is tied to privilege and parts of culture. Hence, being White is deliberately protected by laws and institutions that have arisen from that history. CRT projects the view that professors in higher education are predominantly white and are seen as owners of the curriculum, having the autonomy of designing courses according to their own understanding of their philosophy of knowledge, which can work against racialized groups. This systemic reality impedes a diverse and inclusive higher education environment because it supports the embedded hierarchical racist paradigms that currently exist in our society.

A Critique of Liberalism

CRT challenges education's claims of objectivity, meritocracy, color and gender blindness, race and gender neutrality, and equal opportunity. The Theory seeks to expose what might be deemed as "normal" or common challenges in educational institutions, to be the result of inherent racism. CRT emphasizes that success is dependent upon a number of factors primarily linked to race/ethnicity which include the prioritizing of dominant forms of knowledge. CRT maintains that with the lack of awareness of the underlying racialized factors, administrators are likely to reproduce structures that are imbued with institutional racism in their courses and pedagogical practices.

Counter-Storytelling

The hegemonic dominant narrative acts as a meta-code that shapes the mindset from which the dominant group observes, interprets, and understands the world (Williams 1991;

Ewick and Silbey 1995). These codes eliminate other possible interpretations and justify the preservation of existing social hierarchies that are based on socially constructed categories of racial differences. Counter-storytelling challenges White hegemony by presenting both a critique and challenge to the assumptions, beliefs, myths, and misconceptions embedded in the dominant narrative. The telling of documented stories can also serve as primary data in academic research, as well as a powerful educating and organizing tool.

Interest convergence

Interest convergence stipulates that racialized groups achieve civil rights only when Whites and Racialized groups interests are the same. This tenet highlights White individuals as being the primary beneficiaries of civil rights legislation. Hence, legal advances (or setbacks) for racialized groups tend to serve the interests of dominant white groups. Thus, the racial hierarchy that characterizes society may be unaffected or even reinforced by professed improvements in the legal status of oppressed or exploited people.

Developing an Understanding of Structural Racism

Historical Background of Structural Racism

Canada's existence is deeply embedded in the colonization of Indigenous peoples, who were positioned by Europeans as being racially inferior to them. Policies and practices were developed to justify and validate such oppression, and this resulted in Indigenous lands and resources ultimately taken over by European powers. Colonialism refers to the policy or process of one nation or people exerting control over another nation or people. Colonialism involves forcefully imposing the dominant language, religion, worldviews, institutions, and other cultural practices on subordinates. The aftermath of colonization reflects damage to or loss of their own languages, religions, worldviews, institutions, other cultural practices, and lives. European colonialism created a system of social hierarchy based on skin colour, which has led to racial discrimination against racialized groups with darker complexions (Young,

2015). Hence, the racialization of groups was created as a means through which White dominance prevail as superior, having societal, political, and economic power over other racialized groups. The impact of colonization on Canada can be seen in its culture, history, politics, laws, and legislatures. The agenda of colonization is reinforced and sustained through the process of assimilation as society is systematically arranged around beliefs about race, and that the distribution of power and resources.

Defining Structural Racism

Through this process of colonization and racialization structural racism was birthed and continue to exist within the fabric of society and institutions today. Structural racism is a form of racism that is pervasively and deeply embedded in systems, laws, and written or unwritten policies. This type of racism is entrenched in practices and beliefs that produce, condone, and perpetuate widespread unfair treatment and oppression of racialized groups. Rommelspacher () describes structural racism as the exclusion of a group by the social system and the associated legal concepts, which have a negative effect on the political and economic situation of the excluded group.

According to Henry and Tator (2009) systemic racism, refers to the laws, rules, and norms woven into the social system that result in an unequal distribution of economic, political, and social resources and rewards among various racial groups. Systemic racism is the denial of access, participation, and equity to racial minorities for services such as education, employment, and housing. Systemic racism is also reflected in what Essed (1990) describes as 'everyday racism' which incorporates the myriad ways in which racialized ideas are reinforced in ordinary everyday actions, language, and beliefs. This type of racism is part of the normative fabric that is often unnoticed and thus serves to reinforce racialized ideology that is usually expressed very subtly and spontaneously.

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Attitudes of University Administrators towards Structural Racism

Resistance

According to MacKenzie, et al. (2023) universities paradoxically both embrace Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Indigenization (EDI&I) discourse, on the one hand, while simultaneously deploying strategies that prevent dismantling systemic inequalities, on the other. MacKenzie et al., (2023) refer to this situation as "institutional Gaslighting'. These researchers (Mackenzie et al., 2023) who have committed scholarly and service work to advancing EDI&I efforts at the universities where the worked, have identified forms of resistance to initiatives that could result in meaningful progress: the slowdown ("we can't do that, yet."); the pushback ("you are doing it wrong."); the shutdown ("we can't do that, ever."); and the blowback ("you need to stop doing that and you need to shut up."). They assert that these common forms of resistance, while widespread, may not be immediately apparent because are endorsed in the standard operating procedures of institutional practices.

Defense

Since the majority of Canadian universities are led by white, we consider how challenging race-talk would be, as Diangelo (2018) puts it, 'White Fragility'. The term is meant to capture how little it takes to upset white people racially. DiAngelo (2018) calls on White leaders to step out of their comfort zones in order to have the uncomfortable conversations necessary to interrupt racism and white supremacy. Kennedy-Cuomo (2019), argues that institutions such as universities, use a range of tactics to respond to any evidence that undermines their image, which includes distracting, trivializing, and denying. This alludes to the need for university administrators to consider their mode of leadership and personal biases.

According to Henry et al (2017) Canadian universities believe that racism is a primarily an individual issue rather than an institutional base. Drawing from research on

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constellation critical social theories, Henry et al, (2017) conclude that 'race-lessness' and 'colour blindness' serve as alibis for the persistence of inequality and racialized social hierarchies. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2006, 2−3), color blind racism articulates elements from the free-market ideology and culturally based arguments to justify the contemporary racial order. Bonilla-Silva (2006) goes on to argue that although color blindness sounds progressive, its themes, style, and storylines are used to explain and justify racial inequality.

Denial

Henry and Tator (2009) assert that the discourse of denial is largely evident in universities where allegations of racism have become public knowledge. The 'it can't happen here' response is still very much the discursive approach, despite the huge body of evidence that diverse forms of marginalization, exclusion, and oppression are pervasive and systemic in the Canadian academy. One of the main problems at universities is that White university administrators fail to understand that discrimination is a matter of impact and not intent. Thus, one frequently hears the argument that it is not our intention to discriminate against anybody. What is not realized in this simplistic understanding of how discrimination operates is that traditional rules and practices have unintentional consequences in denying equity and equality to faculty of colour and Indigenous faculty and scholars. This commonly held view, that discrimination or racism was not intended, often plays a significant role in the anger and sense of betrayal experienced by institutional powerholders when those who experience discrimination in the universities speak out against racism.

A further aspect of the denial is the view that racism is either present or it is not, which leads to the discourse of 'blame the victim.' Dominant members of the faculty or administration often devalue claims that curriculum or pedagogy is racially insensitive or not inclusive of racialized peoples, Aboriginals, or women. Instead, these concerns are seen as

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personal attacks, which serve to threaten professors' careers (Prentice, 2000). This pattern

operates across individual, institutional, and systemic forms of racism.

Structural Racism in Canadian Universities: How Do We Identify It?

The Prioritization of 'White' Knowledge

Henry and Tator (2009) state that an example of systemic racism that is manifested in

academe is viewing epistemology as operating in a neutral space. In reality, however,

production of knowledge contributions, curricular decision making, and allocation of funds

within the academy are always related to power and who holds it. Also, the issue of the

Eurocentric Curricula is identified as another systemic barrier which represents a critical

manifestation of marginalization and exclusion. The Eurocentric curricula is an epitome of

White dominance that devalues other forms of knowledge. Eurocentric frameworks,

standards, and content are not only given more resources and curriculum space, but also

influences choice of curriculum materials, such as required course readings, organization of

workshops and seminars. Furthermore, it is argued that this ideological framework,

influences who should receive honorary degrees and/or promotions. According to Wagner

(2005) and Calliste (2000), many racialized and Aboriginal faculty have expressed

dissatisfaction in the deliberate exclusion of types of knowledge that deviates from

Eurocentric norm. Struggles to recentre Aboriginal history, philosophy, and culture, and the

incorporation of anti-racism models of knowledge, are often met with resistance and hostility

and minimal support from Whites.

Morgado et al., (2016) maintain that inclusion implies that all students feel that they

belong and are respected and do not experience marginalization through stigma, bias, and

discrimination. Therefore, this alludes to the need for university administrators to incorporate

other forms of knowledge and use multiple teaching pedagogies that support and

accommodate students' distinct needs and competencies (Mag et al., 2017). Gandara and

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Maxwell-Jolly (1999) argue that although Higher Education institutions have become more racially diverse, not much has changed in the overall approach to teaching students. Daigle (2019) argues that efforts made to acknowledge indigenous peoples are superficial and does not work in their favor. Daigle (2019) projects these efforts as hollow practices of reconciliation and remorse which produces a false consciousness.

The Underrepresentation of Minoritized Groups on Staff

According to Henry and Tator (2009), although many universities now have a very diverse student body, diversity is poorly reflected at the level of faculty. This leads to many significant problems, not the least of which is that it limits their influence and impact on the curriculum since too few faculty are available to teach courses that deal with the issues and concerns of racialized peoples. Unity and collaboration are necessary from administrators of all racial groups in the fight against structural racism and in cultivating a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment. I this scenario of unrepresented faculty as ironic, that Canadian universities advocate against racism, invest in EDI projects, plaster EDI in strategic plans, and yet mirror inequity and exclusion. Henry et al., (2017) emphasize the ways in which Canada's own university system fails to adequately include and is actively structured to undermine and exclude racialized and Indigenous faculty.

I must highlight, in this regard, a serious problem in Canadian academia, because if we ignore the fact that racialized groups are underrepresented in administration then we have failed to understand racism as a structural issue and less of an individual issue. It is hypocritical and misleading to portray concern for racialized students by advocating policies of inclusiveness, equity, and diversity, and still consistently fail when it comes to hiring, promoting, and supporting racialized and Indigenous faculty. How can university administrators be adequately prepared if segregated by race? How can progress be derived

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from a racialized system? A diverse administrative body, at the helm of where the decisions of EDI initiatives are made is most likely to yield better results.

Although I strongly advocate for a diverse administrative body in Canadian Higher Education, Price (2023) makes a salient point that forces me to consider the nuances of this situation. Of particular focus is the role of the Black administrator, who, Price argues, is a picture-perfect scenario which fuels the illusion of EDI and strategically stifles voice for meaningful change. As a Black university administrator, Price (2023) sought to examine some of the ways in which EDI and Black academic administrators are drawn into the oppressive work of academic institutions and how such actions assist the ongoing neoliberal maintenance of racial capitalism. Based on experience, Price (2023) makes three (3) general points:

1. Black administrative leadership mostly functions to project the illusion of change while keeping the status quo firmly intact.

2. Black administrative leadership is strategically deployed within the institution in ways that are uniquely destructive and demoralizing for Black people who collectively struggle to unmake the university or college.

3. There is a need to urgently seek alternatives to the narratives of individual achievement and leadership if we are to seriously pursue the goal of imagining another academy.

Policies, Rules, and Regulations

Structural racism is manifested in the policies, practices, and procedures of various institutions that may, directly or indirectly, consciously, or inadvertently, uphold White privilege (Henry and Tator, 2009). The tenure process is seen as one of the most powerful examples of structural racism, where-by individuals are punished or rewarded based on their adherence to obsolete rules and standards designed to ensure conformity to Whiteness.

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Commonly, racialized academics have found that their own personal experiences are not valued in the tenure review process. According to Henry and Tator (2009), one of the most significant issues that face racialized faculty is the traditional ways in which tenure and promotion decisions are made. Most racialized faculty who are hired into tenure stream positions must face mandatory promotion and eventual tenure decisions. These decisions are initially made by a departmental committee, whose membership is predominantly White. Henry et. Al (2017) argue that the goal of achieving social justice by creating equitable institutions has been consistently promised but persistently denied for racialized and Indigenous scholars. For many racialized and Indigenous faculty, the policies and diversity initiatives are only a foil to deflect criticism of a system that is doing little to change itself.

Inferiority and Exclusion

EDI initiatives in higher education institutions must construct policies and practices that intentionally and deliberately create an atmosphere where racialized minority groups feel valued, validated, and visible. In a qualitative study consisting of seventeen (17) students at McMaster University, Bailey (2016) investigated self-reported experiences of everyday racism by Indigenous university students. The data show that despite increasing levels of successful degree completion and the creation of strong support systems, Indigenous students are constantly faced with barriers, including interpersonal discrimination, frustration with the university system and feelings of isolation. Bailey (2016) beseeches scholars and policy makers to take such findings into account.

Systemic exclusion and discrimination take place through the pedagogical and methodological paradigms of most disciplines, which tend to marginalize certain knowledges, epistemologies, and scholars (Smith 2010). Another way in which systemic exclusions occur is in the availability of courses, or in finding faculty who are available to teach with authority about the issues and concerns that are fundamental to racialized and Indigenous peoples. The

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question of representation is therefore loosely tied to the importance of transforming

academic knowledge and structures (James 2009). Many scholars have also pointed to the

ways in which racialization and marginality are constituted through institutional cultures that

are resistant to change.

How Can University Administrators Address Structural Racism

Attitudes to Effect Change

Although university administrators are best positioned to lead efforts to support an

inclusive learning environment, one cannot change an issue which is perceived not to exist.

Demonstrating competency in equity and inclusion-related principles, is hinged on

administrators' perception of the issue of racism. Smith (2017), co-author of 'The Equity

Myth: Racialization and Indigeneity at Canadian Universities', and University of Aberta

alumni, asserts that the initial stage of moving beyond rhetoric requires a clear understanding

of what systematic racism is, how it works, and how to identify it.

Shifting Attention: Individual Racism to Structural Racism

Individual Racism is "an individual's racist assumptions, beliefs, or behaviors and is a

form of racial discrimination that stems from conscious and unconscious, personal prejudice"

(Henry & Tator, 2006, p. 329). Individual Racism is connected to/learned from broader

socio-economic histories and processes and is supported and reinforced by systemic racism.

According to Campbell (2021) Institutional EDI strategies typically integrate two strands:

prevention and responding to incidents of discrimination. Educational programmes are

central to the first of these strands, as they seek to raise participants 'awareness of behaviors

that might have discriminatory effects, even when those effects are not intended. EDI

education aimed at prevention usually begins with and focuses on the core concept of

unconscious bias. Unconscious bias holds as a central proposition that everyone possesses

bias and through training and deliberative practice one can acquire 'bias literacy' (Carnes et

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al.2012), that is, capacity to identify and overcome one's own biases. Identifying unconscious bias and learning how to mitigate it is a precondition to tackling persistent discrimination and social exclusion (Choudhury, 2015).

This individualistic approach of unconscious bias training is considered insufficient to grapple with the historical and social forces that give rise to, and permit the persistence of, inequities (Williamson and Foley, 2018). This critique maintains that, by pointing to training efforts, organizations endeavor to relay a narrative about EDI commitment to its external stakeholders, in order to gain a positive corporate image in the minds of the public (Adediran, 2018). A focus on an institution's quest to avoid criticism may come at the expense of efforts that could enhance the organization's internal climate of inclusion (Adediran, 2018). Applebaum (2019) echoes identical views on Implicit Bias training, describing it as a common remedial response to a culture of racism, and other forms of oppression on college campuses. A critical component of such training is the identification of unconscious prejudices in the minds of individuals that impact behavior. However, Applebaum (2019) created a stir when he argued that when universities count on implicit bias training to improve campus climate, the results are not only limited but also counterproductive, reproducing the very injustice the university claims to want to eradicate. To substantiate his critique of implicit bias training, Applebaum (2019) asserts that although the training can propel individuals to become aware of biases, systemic ignorance can be protected as well-intentioned individuals can unwittingly contribute to the persistence of systemic oppression. A second concern with implicit bias training is that it draws attention predominantly to the individual, overshadowing the ways in which institutional and systemic conditions enable bias. Therefore, a shift in focus is needed from individual acts of racism to the deep rooted aspects of racism embedded in the institutions policies, rules, and regulations.

Transforming Institutional Norms

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Ahmed (2017) describes diversity work as "hitting a brick wall" in attempting to transform the norms of an institution and resisting the norms of the institution. This position is reinforced by Applebaum (2019), who opines that institutional ED&I initiatives often serve to sustain rather than challenge problematic structures, as a result of an over-reliance on individuals as opposed to institutional transformation (Applebaum, 2019). The notion of the "brick wall" as mentioned by Amed (2017), is embellished by Raymond et al. (2014), who explicates the deeply rooted and impactful nature of norms. Raymond et al. (2014) describes norms as accepted guidelines for behavior and practices that can block efforts to address difficult problems through policy action and institutional reform. Conversely, norms can also facilitate such efforts through social solidarity. Based on this analysis of the impactful nature of norms, these researchers sort to explore the research questions:

1. How can norms be used to help solve intractable problems and reform ineffective institutions?

2. How can we alter the influence or content of prevailing norms so that they help solve problems rather than frustrating our efforts?

Raymond et al. (2017) outline two new strategies of institutional reform via intentional norm change: normative reframing and normative innovation. In the first strategy, normative reframing, advocates promote new institutional rules as being supported by an alternative existing social norm. In the second strategy, normative innovation, agents of change create and promote an entirely new norm to promote alternative institutional arrangements, both formal and informal. It is projected that these strategies have potential to create long-term institutional change and to solve problems that appear irreversible. Regarding changing institutional norms, Daigle (2019) warns against superficial efforts. Daigle (2019) specifically focused on Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission taking place in Canadian postsecondary institutions. One of the primary arguments is that efforts

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made to acknowledge indigenous peoples are superficial and do not work in their favor. Daigle (2019) projects these efforts as 'hollow practices of reconciliation and remorse' that are routine-like territorial acknowledgements that are quickly forgotten and produce a false consciousness.

Added to this, many researchers (Bjarnegård & Kenny, 2015; Calarco, 2020; Margolis & Romero, 1998) conclude that the "hidden curriculum" impedes institutional change (as cited by MacKenzie et. Al, 2023). Calarco's (2020) primary argument is that academia is entrenched by inequalities that are exacerbated by the hidden curriculum. Calarco (2020) made suggestions that alludes to the roles of university administrators in advocating for change, which includes building the course syllabus with readings from marginalized scholars instead of regurgitating traditional work from white men and openly address the hidden curriculum and how it is designed to make the privileged more privileged and to keep the marginalized out. Also, a resounding call is made for university administrators to make changes so that the hidden curriculum becomes part of the formal curriculum.

Studies of normative change suggest several elements are required for success. First, problematic norms must be identified, analyzed, and subjected to discursive scrutiny, so that they are no longer invisible. The second element is created on the premise that merely exposing a norm as harmful or problematic will not produce change. Thus, the second element is that an alternative practice must be available to replace the problematic practice, and there must be a constituency or political agent pushing for and demanding change (Legro, 2000; Raymond et al., 2014).

Collection of Race-Based Data

The Ontario Human Rights Commission (2005) determined that "appropriate data collection is necessary for effectively monitoring discrimination, identifying and removing systemic barriers, ameliorating historical disadvantage and promoting substantive equality"

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within workplaces (p. 42). In September 2020, Edmonton Public Schools became the first

school jurisdiction in Alberta to commit to collecting race-based data. Trustees voted

unanimously to collect the data with the intention to identify and address gaps that exist in

education for racialized communities. Although necessary for meaningful EDI&I work, there

is little consistency among organizations in terms of such data collection, analysis, and

dissemination (Henry et al., 2017). For example, Henry et al. (2017) noted with respect to the

Canadian post-secondary context, that there is no comprehensive source of data and a lack of

institutional efforts to generate knowledge about the everyday lived experiences of racialized

and Indigenous scholars in the academy.

 According to MacKenzie et al. (2023), the collection and analysis of robust

intersectional and longitudinal data is critical to help reveal systematic patterns. Mackenzie et

al explain that addressing how institutional norms harm marginalized groups requires

evidence about how these harms constitute patterns over time. Educational policies especially

must consider how outcomes ranging from achievement, discipline, or attendance data are

impacted by racism. The ability to quantify the impacts of racial injustice, beyond anecdotal

evidence, provides clear patterns and trends to support the need to create change and address

the existing inequities through appropriate interventions. Race-based data is crucial to

develop effective anti-racism frameworks, and to understand the diverse, intersectional, needs

of racialized communities in Canada. Further, a lack of such data can enable and legitimize

shorter-term initiatives focused on personal education and training to the exclusion of

structural change.

Partnership: Connecting with the Local Community

 Undoubtedly, equity and inclusion create a fundamental base for a healthy, vibrant,

and effective teaching and learning environment. Likewise, they are fundamental to the

development, solidarity, and health of communities. If institutions of higher education are to

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fulfill their mission of successfully implementing and sustaining equity and inclusion, then community partnerships are critical to the success of those endeavors. Community-campus partnerships guide institutions of higher education to understand how they can most effectively collaborate to address pressing social and environmental challenges by contributing their expertise and resources. This joint process of knowledge and resource exchange is referred to as community engagement (Dostilio, 2017). Jacob et al. (2015) define community engagement in higher education as 'sustainable networks, partnerships, communication media, and activities between higher education institutions and communities at local, national, regional, and international levels.' Having analyzed the complexity and nature of racism in higher education institutions, we can garner that superficial implementation of EDI initiatives will continue to fail. Furthermore, we can deduce that higher education institutions cannot be effective on their own and this is where the need for community engagement comes in. Addressing issues of racism in colleges and universities is a public mission. To accomplish this mission effectively and efficiently, universities need to increase university- community collaborations to influence the public good (Pasque et al., 2005). Patton et al. (2007) recommends university administrators incorporate critical race perspectives in daily practices within education. Incorporating racial perspectives brings awareness about the role of race in producing racial inequities, thus being in a better position to tackle structural racism. According to Commission (1999) Higher education administrators should shift towards an "engaged university'. This shift involves redesigning their teaching, research, and extension and service functions to become even more sympathetically and productively involved with their communities.

Conclusion

Most Canadian universities have invested resources and effort on cultivating EDI on campuses. However, this investment and efforts are futile if administrators underestimate or

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"turn a blin eye" the pervasive negative impacts of structural racism. The historical

background of structural racism presents a clear picture of the deep-rooted nature of the issue

and superficial implementation of EDI initiatives will continue to fail racialized students and

faculty. There is a salient call for university administrators to examine their attitudes on the

issue of structural racism, be proactive in identifying norms, policies and practices that

sustains structural racism, and be intentional in taking feasible steps to create positive

transformational impacts. While they pride themselves in promoting and advertising EDI

initiatives, they need to assume a more explicit and interventionist role in that domain in

order to transform educational systems.

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