A qualitative study into how 'mainstream', undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada prepares social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples

by

Ashley Goyette
BA, St. Thomas University, 2007
BSW, University of Victoria, 2011

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Supervisor

Sohki, Aski Esquao, Dr. Jeannine Carriere, School of Social Work

Departmental Member

Kundoqk, Dr. Jacquie Green, School of Social Work

Abstract

This study focused on how mainstream, social work education in the Maritime provinces prepares social workers to work with Indigenous peoples. This study adhered to principles of decolonization and Indigenous ways of researching. Five undergraduate, social work educators were interviewed using open-ended questions and a conversational interviewing style. An interview guide was used, and the broader research questions looked at what is being taught about Indigenous histories, politics, policies, research, cultures and worldviews, how it is being taught and who is teaching it?

This study used thematic analysis to identify common themes in the data and themes which were interesting to the overall research questions. Themes identified were history, research as change, eurocentrism & deconstruction, allies, classroom as community and Indigenizing and decolonizing. This study implicated important roles for the schools of social work, social work educators, provincial associations and the Canadian Association for Social work education in addressing the multi-generational trauma caused by colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples. It was concluded that for this to be successful, there is need for more support in the schools of social work for both Indigenous educators and non-Indigenous allies.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

As a profession, social work has a history of contributing to the colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples (Clarke, Aiello, Chau, Atcha, Rashidi & Amaral, 2012; Sinclair, 2004). Although efforts have been made in the past few decades to address colonization and oppression, "...Eurocentric knowledge continues to dominate social work education" (Clarke et al., 2012, p. 82). As such, it is the job and ethical responsibility of social work educators to expand space to be more inclusive of Indigenous knowledge (IK) and for decolonization to occur.

Although some schools of social work have created an Indigenous specific social work program, most social work students enrolled in the mainstream program, will not receive Indigenous content in their studies and will encounter Indigenous peoples throughout their career (Tamburro, 2013). As Harris (2006) points out, "...although students often have such minimal awareness or knowledge of First Nations issues, they will work with a disproportionate number of Aboriginal peoples" (p. 233). It is evident that the effects of colonization still affect Indigenous peoples today and the unfortunate outcome is a higher representation of Indigenous recipients of social services (Tamburro, 2013).

The research suggests that many social work students in mainstream social work programs will work with Indigenous peoples and that mainstream, Eurocentric social work programs continue to add to the oppression and colonization of Indigenous peoples (Clarke et al., 2012; Harris, 2006; Tamburro, 2013). This qualitative study is focused on mainstream social work education in Canada's Maritime Provinces. More specifically the purpose of this study is to

discover how mainstream, undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada, prepares social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples.

1.2 Profile of the Maritime Provinces

The Maritime Provinces reside on the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy peoples. The Maritime Provinces which are commonly referred to as 'the Maritimes' is made up by the three smallest provinces in Canada; New Brunswick (N.B.), Nova Scotia (N.S.), and Prince Edward Island (P.E.I). The Maritimes are located on the Eastern Coast of Canada. This study will focus on N.B. and N.S., as P.E.I does not have an undergraduate social work program.

The three Universities that are part of this study are St. Thomas University (STU) in Fredericton, N.B., University of Moncton (U de M) in Moncton, N.B., and Dalhousie University (DAL) in Halifax, N.S. STU offers a 15-month, post degree program in-person, which includes a practicum and group social justice field placement. DAL offers both an in-person and online BSW program consisting of 15 credits or approximately 2-3 years depending on full-time or part-time status. The on-line program requires a 2-week on-site component and both programs require a field placement. U de M offers the only French language BSW program in Atlantic Canada. This is an in-person BSW consisting of 62 credit hours and a practicum.

Both Fredericton and Halifax are the capital cities of their respective province and U de M is the Maritimes only French speaking university. New Brunswick has a population of 751,171 people with an Indigenous population of approximately 17,655 (Statistics Canada, 2011). Although the smallest land base in Canada, Nova Scotia's population is 942,926, with an Indigenous population of 24,175. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia make up 5% of Canada's

total Indigenous population; 2% and 3% respectively (Statistics Canada, 2011). New Brunswick consists of 15 different First Nations communities (Aboriginal Affairs, 2016), while Nova Scotia has 13 (Office of Aboriginal Affairs, 2016).

1.3 First Nations History in the Maritimes

The Mi'kmaq, Maliseet and Passamaquoddy peoples have been on the land called the Maritimes since the beginning of time, or what is referred to as "time immemorial" (AFN, 2018). They are part of a larger political alliance consisting of five separate Nations called the Wabanaki Confederacy often referred to as the Abenaki Confederacy (LeBlanc Consentino, 2017; Tremblay, Johnson & Cogswell, 2017). This group is not homogenous, and each have their own unique linguistic and cultural practices (Tremblay et al., 2017). The Indigenous Corporate Training Inc (2018) points out how each Nation is very culturally diverse and have their own customs, values, beliefs and worldviews. This is important in understanding the diversity of Indigenous peoples and communities.

Historically, the Maliseet peoples lived along the Saint John River in N.B., the Mi'kmaq along the east coast in N.S., P.E.I. and N.B. and the Passamaquoddy in the southwest parts near the St. Croix River (LeBlanc Consentino, 2017; Tremblay et al., 2017; Wicken, 2010). Tribal families and groups moved with the seasons and survived off fish from the River and Bay as well as wild game on the land (Canada's First Peoples, 2007; Wicken, 2010). Since these tribes depended on nature for survival, they "…stressed the importance of maintaining close spiritual relationships with all living organisms, and especially the fish and animal spirits" (Wicken, 2010, p. 4). This is one example of how Indigenous and British values clashed historically, whereas

settlers wanted to exploit the lands that Indigenous peoples wanted to protect and held sacred (Tremblay et al., 2017).

Contact between First Nations in the Maritimes and the French began in the 1534 with the first explorer Jacques Cartier (LeBlanc Constentino, 2017; Lockerby, 2004). The research also describes contact with fisherman from France in the 1500 and 1600's, although this contact was limited in the beginning (LeBlanc Constentino, 2017; Tremblay et al., 2017). Before contact with British settlers, the First Nations peoples in the Maritimes had good trading relationships with the French and helped teach them to survive on the land (Canada's First Peoples, 2007; Lockerby, 2004). Research also suggests that the First Nations peoples had good relationships with the Acadian farmers who later helped support the First Nations peoples in their war against the British by providing food (Patterson, 1993). Many First Nations tribes and the French remained allies throughout the wars between the First Nations and the British as well as the British and the French war (Canada's First Peoples, 2007; LeBlanc Constentino, 2017).

British fisherman began arriving to the East coast as well in the late 1500's and eventually began trading goods with the First Nations such as furs and skins for hunting tools, beads and pearls (Canada's First Peoples, 2007 ; LeBlanc Constentino, 2017; Wicken, 2010). British government became interested in the land and the trade opportunities, so they sought to destroy the relationship between the French and First Nations peoples, for their own interests (Wicken, 2010). This was the beginning of many wars and the first of several treaties between the British and the First Nations peoples. LeBlanc Constentino (2017) states that, "the first of the treaties was signed in 1726, formally bringing to an end a three year long war between New England and the Wabanaki" (p. 3). However, it appears the British government never intended to hold up their end of the treaty and eventually sought to colonize the land and the First peoples.

Despite the history of colonization, it is important to dispel the false belief that the First Nations peoples of the Maritimes and Indigenous peoples in general were only passive, victims of European settlers. The research suggests that despite treaties and British rule, that Indigenous peoples have always fought for their own beliefs, cultural practices, way of life and their own interests. When discussing signing additional treaties, Wicken (2010) points out how "other Mi'kmaq communities refused to do so, a position which they adopted in anger over the British decision to establish a new settlement…" (p. 5). Patterson (1993) also points out how despite what some authors believe, the First nations peoples "…fought for their own purposes, not as subordinates to the French in any strategic sense…" (p. 32). Canadian Confederation began in 1867 after the war between the British and French finally came to an end, and the British had control over the lands (Harris, n.d.; Wicken, 2010). At this time the British no longer honoured the treaties and their promise of protecting lands, fishing, hunting and the relationships with the First Nations peoples, but instead agreed to the creation of the reserve system (Wicken, 2010).

The reserve system consisted of a piece of land owned by the Crown, where Indigenous peoples were permitted to live after the wars and treaty agreements (Hanson, n.d.). The reserve system was another way for the British Crown to control and attempt to assimilate the Indigenous peoples (Harris, n.d.). Further attempts to assimilate and colonize Indigenous peoples included the establishment of residential schools. The Crown, believing they had good intentions toward the "savage" peoples, sent Indigenous children to schools where they were to be "civilized" and assimilated to Christianity (CASW, 2017; Germain, 2011). Instead children were subjected to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual abuse (CASW, 2017; Episkenew, 2009; Mitchell & McLeod, 2014, Thomas, 2003). In the Maritimes, the Shubenacadie residential school in Nova Scotia was created in 1928 and only closed in 1967 (Ransberry, 2000). In

Canada, the last residential school closed in 1996 (CASW, 2017). Further history of residential schools will be discussed during the literature review.

1.4 Terminologies

Before I introduce myself as the researcher and my research questions, it is important to briefly discuss a few of the terms which will be used throughout the paper. In this paper I use the term Indigenous to refer to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, who are the original inhabitants of what is now known as Canada. I will occasionally use the term First Nations or Native when speaking about the First Nations peoples I have worked with or when telling a story, as this is the term most often used in my daily experiences. I will use the term Aboriginal when using quotes or when the term is used by others and will sparingly use the term 'Indian' when speaking about my own personal experiences growing up. When I was younger the term Indian or Native was the only word I knew to describe Indigenous peoples and was mostly used with a negative connotation. This term is still very much used in todays society as a way to demean Indigenous peoples.

In addition, the terms mainstream and social work education or social work program will be used throughout this paper. Mainstream social work can be described as programs which continue to utilize a Eurocentric and Westernized way of knowing. Clarke et al. (2012) suggests that "...mainstream social work refers to perspectives, policies, procedures and practice approaches that maintain rather than challenge the status quo...mainstream social work is constructed on Eurocentric knowledge, and Aboriginal perspectives are not often present..." (p. 86). In contrast, "decolonization" methodologies in social work are described as "…exposing the injustices in colonial history and deconstructing the past by critically examining the social, political, economic, and historical reasons for silencing Aboriginal voices…" (Battiste, 2009, p.

14). For the purpose of this paper, a social work program or social work education is an accredited undergraduate program from an academic institution which leads to a professional qualification in Canada, such as a registered social worker in each respective province (Ives, Aitken, Loft & Phillips, 2007). The Canadian Association for social work education (CASWE) is responsible for accrediting schools of social work in Canada. Furthermore, each province has their own association of social workers which provides membership and regulating policies for the practice of social work.

This paper will also briefly discuss terms such as paradigm, axiology, ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and worldview. Wilson (2008) describes a "research paradigm" as a set of "...broad principles that provide a framework for research" and include our "...underlying beliefs or assumptions upon which research is based" (p. 33). Included in our paradigm is our axiology which includes our morals and ethics in guiding our research (Wilson, 2008). Wilson describes "ontology" as our ways of being, or our belief in the nature of reality or existence. "Epistemology" can be descried as our ways of knowing, or how we think about this reality. "Methodology" refers to how we use this way of thinking to gain more knowledge about reality, whereas methods refer to the tools we use to conduct our research (Wilson, 2008). Finally, our worldview refers to our ways of seeing and perceiving the world, based on our values, beliefs, ethics and experiences (Baskin, 2011). Before discussing the literature on my topic, I will discuss my own social location and worldview as this will provide the reader with a better understanding of where my interests and passion come from.

1.5 The Researcher

I am an able-bodied, married, middle-class, heterosexual woman with four children. I live on the East Coast of Canada in Fredericton, New Brunswick (NB) but am from a small village in

Northern NB called Jacquet River. I am French on my Father's side and Mi'kmaq and Métis on my Mother's side however, I was raised in a middle-class, Catholic, white family. It was not until I was a bit older that my Mother told me about our Indigenous roots. She made it seem like it was more of a secret and we didn't talk about it much. As I got older I started feeling drawn to or curious about Native people, which I now see was a way for me to obtain some sort of validation in who I was. Later in high school, through my best friend and her family I got to learn about the beauty and pride in Indigenous culture; although I still felt like an outsider. I have always felt somewhere caught in the middle between insider and outsider. I have always felt not white enough, but not Indian enough either. As an educated adult, I now know this is because of the colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples and the government-controlled idea of who is Indian and who is not.

Near the end of high school, I had a few of my own struggles and experienced a lot of loss, which clearly affected my academic experiences. I began to lose myself and my internal sense of motivation. Eventually my belief in my own self-worth and my own sense of value for education brought me back on the right path. I fought hard to make grades good enough for University. I was accepted into the Bachelor of Arts degree at St. Thomas University in Fredericton, New Brunswick. My intention was to go into social work but knowing next to nothing about social work I thought to myself, "I don't want to take kids away for a living". After my first year I decided I would focus on psychology instead, as I always wanted to help people. After a few minor setbacks, I eventually graduated in 2007 with a major in psychology and a minor in criminology.

Shortly after my Bachelor of Arts degree I began to question what was next. I received advice from a few people who thought that based on who I was that social work was for me.

They explained that there is much more to social work then removing children and they were right. I later applied for and was accepted to the Bachelor of Social Work degree at the University of Victoria (UVic). I am not sure what drew me to a school on the opposite side of the country, but my journey has always led me to places I didn't think I would go. It was during my time at UVic that I learned most about the oppression and colonization of Indigenous peoples. This was the first time that I was really learning about these important issues and couldn't believe they had been left out of mainstream academia. Right before graduation, I received a job offer in child welfare in a small First Nations community, although I had stated all through social work school that I would be unemployed before I worked in child protection. There I was again, on a very different path but I was so confident because I had learned about Indigenous peoples and culture during my social work degree. My confidence quickly turned to "I don't know what I am doing". It's one thing to read things out of a book, or to get a quick overview of the history of Indigenous peoples but it is quite another thing to experience the difference in worldview and way of being, as well as address the effects of the generational trauma created by colonization.

In hindsight, I was adding to this colonization as I had not begun the process of decolonizing myself. All the subtle Eurocentric teachings were clashing and colliding with what I was experiencing working in this community. I would often ask my supervisor questions like, "why aren't we removing these kids"? It was like the only thing I learned was that when parents aren't doing A,B, and C we remove the kids. I had no idea what prevention or protection in a First Nations community looked like. I learned quickly that when working in First Nations agencies, you must learn to be creative and clever in prevention strategies, as these agencies are severely under funded. I learned these practices from my supervisor and most importantly from

the First Nations colleagues I worked with, clients and community members. I only had to open my heart and mind to accept and embrace a worldview entirely different then my own.

After working for about a year and a half, I began working in another First Nations community closer to home. Here, my focus was on prevention; mainly working within the school systems and mental health. Although I still did some child protection, my work focused on providing support and resources for families and children struggling with mental health, academic and behavioural difficulties at school. I loved it. I loved being in a supportive role. I had begun to really dislike child protection. I just couldn't emotionally handle removing children. My views changed, and I felt like there must be a better way; that somewhere someone was doing a better job. This is why I supported and believed so strongly in prevention work.

Finally, I began my academic journey in the Indigenous Masters of Social Work graduate program through the UVic. Here, I would learn so much more about Indigenous worldview, practice and research. This journey has also given me the opportunity to begin decolonizing myself, by beginning to accept my own Indigenous identity and begin to search for my own ancestral history. In doing so, I can learn more about who we are and where we come from. I also do this in honour of my Mother who passed on to the spirit world, and who always wanted to know more but did not have the chance.

The most important thing I have learned throughout this journey and working in these communities was that the people I worked with didn't need me to tell them what they needed; they already knew. My job was not to judge how I think they should live their lives or how I think they should do things. My job was to help them access the resources they needed. In this, was the self-determination and experts of their own lives concepts that I had been reading about during my undergraduate degree.

After working in First Nations child welfare and after my final maternity leave my path switched directions again. I received a wonderful opportunity working in a private wellness clinic as a biofeedback counselor. My heart and soul has always been in mental wellness and here was my opportunity to change roles. To work as a biofeedback counselor, one has to have an open mind and an understanding of the mind, body, spirit connection. Biofeedback combines teaching people about how their bodies react to stress, creating awareness on how this is connected to our thoughts and feelings, and using counselling skills to help people decrease this response and ultimately their anxieties and fears.

Through this work I can continue to practice the Indigenous concepts of holism and balance. Also, although I had lost some of my connection to Indigenous communities as I am no longer working in that context, I gained a greater connection with myself. Helping in the way I do now sort of pushed me to practice more self-care, meditation and balance in my life. Learning about Indigenous concepts and ideas about wellness opened me up to a new understanding and adoption of wellness practices.

My point in telling my story in this way is to demonstrate that Indigenous peoples have much knowledge to offer and much to teach in terms of how to practice social work whether it's child protection, mental wellness, education or even one own's self-care. Furthermore, social work needs to be taught within a decolonizing approach and from an Indigenous perspective and worldview. For example, by creating more space in the classroom for Indigenous Elders and knowledge keepers to teach both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students about Indigenous histories, cultures and ways of knowing and being. It is these teachings that I received and my experiences which informed my research question.

Chapter 2: The Research Questions

As mentioned earlier, this is a qualitative study sought to answer the following:

How does 'mainstream', undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada prepare social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples?

A subset of questions will also be answered.

a) What is being taught about Indigenous history, politics, policy, research, culture and worldview?

b) How is it being taught? (Indigenous Perspective, delivery methods?)

c) Who is teaching it? (Indigenous scholars, helpers, Elders or knowledge keepers?)

d) What are your thoughts on how we may improve social work education in the Maritime Provinces, so social workers are more knowledgeable on Indigenous history, culture and worldview?

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The Past

Social work and education have a long history of contributing to the colonization of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples of Canada. Although Indigenous peoples share a common history, First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples have unique histories which contribute to the challenges faced currently by each Indigenous group. Colonization by European settlers sought to exploit all Indigenous peoples, steal their lands, and eradicate Indigenous knowledge, language and cultural practices (Clarke et al., 2012; Sinclair, 2004). European settlers also used education to eradicate Indigenous ways of knowing and being by creating the residential school system (Dumbrill & Green, 2016; Hill, 2012). During this time, social workers were responsible for taking children away from their families and communities and placing them in Residential schools (Sinclair, 2004); with the intention of them becoming "...civilized, educated and converted to Christianity" (Germain, 2011, p. 6). It is important to mention that although acknowledged less in the literature and in media, Metis children were also part of the residential school system (Carriere & Richardson, 2017). Richardson (2008) states that "…the federal government used Metis children as a 'filler' in the residential school travesty, as a way for school and church administration to gain more money from Indian Affairs (p. 113).

Indigenous children in residential schools were exposed to physical, emotional, mental, sexual and spiritual abuse (Episkenew, 2009; Mitchell & McLeod, 2014, Thomas, 2003). Furthermore, children were "...forbidden to practice their culture and language" (Faires, n.d., p. 1). Dumbrill & Green (2016) point out that "the residential school project was complete when White European ways of knowing had become the societal norm..." (p. 493). Thomas (2003)

asserts that the residential schools were used as a form of "cultural genocide" which led to a rejection of culture and language, and feelings of self-hatred for many Indigenous peoples.

After this period, social workers continued to align themselves with government to encourage assimilation, colonization and the annihilation of Indigenous peoples and culture (Sinclair, 2004). The 60's scoop occurred in which thousands of First Nations, Inuit and Metis children were removed from their families and communities and placed within non-Indigenous foster homes or adoptive homes (Sinclair, 2004; Tamburro, 2013). Tamburro (2013) suggests that it was the exclusion of Indigenous histories, knowledges and cultures which led social workers to continue to remove large numbers of Indigenous children and place them with non-Indigenous families. Because of this, "...social work has many negative connotations to many Aboriginal peoples and is often synonymous with the theft of children, the destruction of families and the deliberate oppression of Aboriginal communities" (Sinclair, 2004, pp. 49-50).

In addition to the residential school system and the 60's scoop, educational institutions like Universities, were also a part of the colonization process (Hill, 2012; Widdowson, 2016). Widdowson (2016) asserts that "...colonization occurred because indigenous knowledges were devalued, enabling Europeans to demobilize the native population and establish sovereignty over them" (p. 13). Widdowson also (2016) states that "... universities are believed to be colonial institutions because of the conflation of capitalist forms of exploitation with the development of knowledge. Because universities have emerged with a capitalist context that necessitated colonization, the knowledge developed at the same time is assumed to justify this mode of production" (p. 7). Specifically, the social sciences and social work are believed to be connected to a 'Eurocentric', oppressive and colonial past and worldview (Baskin, 2006; Widdowson,

2016). These examples highlight the role that European Settlers, social workers and educational institutions have played in the oppression and colonization of Indigenous children and families.

The Present

It should come as no surprise given the history that the colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples has had a major impact on the present. Currently, Indigenous children are far more likely than non-Indigenous children to come into care of social services (Tamburro, 2013). Rae (2001) states that based on a national survey from 2002-2002, "30 to 40 percent of children placed in out-of-home care during that time period were Inuit, First Nations or Metis (p. 4). Furthermore, Indigenous peoples have higher rates of incarceration, suicide, addictions and mental health issues, as well as a host of other significant barriers to well-being (Harris, 2006; Tamburro. 2013). Thomas (2003) points out that, "after residential schools, students often internalized their hatred they had experienced. They were taught how awful they were, their people were, their culture and tradition" (p. 2). Harris (2006) suggests that Aboriginal people are the poorest, most under-employed and under-educated: they have the highest rates of suicide, HIV/AIDS and deaths due to violence..." (p. 233). The loss of family, culture, community and identity, no doubt impacted and continues to impact Indigenous peoples today.

These social concerns can best be described as 'multi-generational trauma' caused by the colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples (Bourassa, Blind, Dietrich, & Oleson, 2015; Roy, 2014; Tamburro, 2013). The loss of land, language, culture and identity as well as the emotional, physical, sexual, and spiritual abuse has negatively impacted generations of Indigenous children and families (Bourassa et al., 2015; Ives et al., 2007; Roy, 2014; Tamburro, 2013). Roy (2014) states that "students left schools disassociated from their traditional culture yet still not accepted by mainstream society, lacking a sense of identity, lacking basic life skills,

and highly traumatized from the chronic mistreatment and abuse they had endured" (p. 9). It is evident that due to this history, many Indigenous peoples and families lost the ability to parent and to cope in society, without their cultural values, beliefs and languages.

It is paramount that social workers working with Indigenous peoples understand and know this history to understand the struggles Indigenous families face when working with child protection social workers. Thomas (2003) warns that, "…if social workers do not fully understand the implications of living the aftermath of a genocidal policy, they will fail to effectively work with First Nations people" (p.2). When discussing intergenerational trauma, Tamburro (2013) also points out that, "it is essential that social workers understand the source of what can appear as dysfunctional behaviour of Indigenous peoples and families" (p. 2). This is what makes the inclusion of Indigenous histories and knowledges so important to social work education in Canada. Our country is beginning to recognize the impacts that colonialism, residential schools and the 60's scoop had on Indigenous children which will ultimately affect social work education and curriculum.

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Committee of Canada (TRC) put forward 94 calls to action to help promote reconciliation between Canada and Indigenous peoples. Many of these calls to action included improvements to education, social work education and child welfare services specifically. These recommendations focused primarily on educating social workers on the history and impacts of the residential school systems, developing culturally appropriate curricula, sharing information on best practices and building student capacity to encourage more understanding and respect (TRC, 2015). Carriere & Richardson (2017) point out how the TRC also acknowledged how Metis peoples in Canada have often been left out of the literature on

Residential schools and the impact on Metis peoples and families. However, it appears Metis peoples continue to be left out of important discussions and decisions in our Country.

For instance, there has been a long, 8-year legal battle in Canada focused on the 60's scoop and the impacts on survivors and their families. Recently, a judge has ruled in favour of Indigenous survivors of the 60's scoop. Tasker (2017) from CBC news reports that the government of Canada was found "liable of harm" and will pay millions and maybe billions in damages to Indigenous survivors and families. This seems like an important step forward toward reconciliation, however, the government continues to control and define who is an Indigenous person in Canada. Kirkup (2017) from the Canadian Press notes that Metis peoples were left out of this settlement. Once again, Metis people were not included in historical discussions and reconciliation efforts from the 60's scoop, which affected all Indigenous children and families, including First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples. It is an easy assumption to make that Metis peoples are also being left out of the historical discussion in social work education as well.

In terms of social work education, the literature has identified several concerns. First, due to the lack of Indigenous content in mainstream social work education, frontline social workers are not prepared to work with Indigenous peoples (Clarke et al., 2012; Harris, 2006, Kovach, Carriere, Montgomery, Barrett & Gilles, 2015). Baskin (2006) suggests that this is partially because "social work education is intended to socialize students into the norms and values of the profession..." and "...since it is infused with dominant worldviews, it is seen as oppressive by many Aboriginal peoples" (p. 5). In addition, "there is much anecdotal evidence from Aboriginal helpers on how current social work education does not represent them, their worldview or the situations in their communities" (Baskin, 2006, p.2). Kovach et al. (2015) point out that Indigenous specific programs have been created to address the lack of Indigenous content

offered in mainstream social work education. However, this does not actually address the problem of Eurocentric knowledge in mainstream, social work programs.

Based on the research, it is evident that there remains a lack of Indigenous knowledges in the curriculum and that "...Eurocentric knowledge continues to dominate social work education" (Sinclair, 2004, p. 82). This domination and imbalance of Western, Eurocentric knowledge is a huge barrier for Indigenous and non-Indigenous social workers to work effectively with Indigenous peoples. As stated earlier many social workers who do not work in Indigenous communities will still work with Indigenous peoples (Harris, 2006; Tamburro, 2013). This is also supported by Rae (2011) who states that, "most First Nations, Inuit and Metis in Canada are served by mainstream services. This is particularly apparent off reserve, un urban environments and in the territories" (p. 30). It is evident that Indigenous knowledge in mainstream, social work programs is as important as the creation of Indigenous specific programs.

Secondly, because of the lack of Indigenous knowledge and teachings in social work education, Indigenous social work students are not only underrepresented, but it is difficult to retain Indigenous social work students in mainstream, social work programs (Clarke et al., 2012, Ives et al., 2007). Baskin (2006) states that, "the language of social services...does not stem from or operate within the consciousness of interconnected and interdependent planes of reality. The institutions isolate and treat the 'problem' that, in a tribal view, is only a symptom of a more significant imbalance" (p. 4). Because of the difference in worldviews, values and beliefs Indigenous students often do not feel comfortable in the mainstream programs. Kovach et al. (2015) suggest that many Indigenous students feel that mainstream universities and colleges have "unwelcoming environments". Kovach et al. (2015) remind us that Indigenous students are

looking for culturally inclusive learning to occur, which challenges this Eurocentric way of thinking about and practicing social work.

Kovach et al. (2015) also state that "Indigenous students may feel more welcome through the creation of space for Indigenous worldviews..." (p. 46). Furthermore, Clarke et al. (2012) suggest that "Aboriginal peoples have and continue to resist colonization and domination, often by refusing to participate in Euro-Canadian education system and in Westernized social services" (p. 92). The literature suggests that including Indigenous teachings and worldviews into mainstream curriculum will not only encourage the decolonization of social work education but retain Indigenous social work students as well. By doing this, social work education has an opportunity to work towards supporting Indigenous peoples in their pursuit of "...building capacity and knowledge within Indigenous communities" (Ives et al., 2012) and most importantly their right to self-determination (Clarke et al, 2012).

The Future

Despite the history of colonization and current barriers in educational institutions, social workers and social work education have the potential to empower Indigenous peoples and make positive changes in how child welfare is practiced. This can be accomplished by embracing and utilizing Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Although there has been some progress with the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge in social work education in the past few decades "...it remains clear that in 2014, those mechanisms that have been implemented to invite Indigenous presence continue to disappoint" (Kovach et al., 2015, p. 22). The literature suggests that moving forward social work education must become more inclusive of Indigenous histories, policies and cultures from Indigenous worldviews (Gair, Miles & Thompson, 2005; Ives et al., 2007). This will not only strengthen the resistance and empowerment of Indigenous peoples but promote

reconciliation between Indigenous peoples and social works colonial past (Clarke et al., 2012; Gair et al., 2005).

As stated previously, the truth and reconciliation commission of Canada (TRC) published a report in 2015 which included 94 recommendations, or "calls to action" (Macdonald, 2017, p.1) for addressing colonization; many which were specific to the education system (Antione, 2017; Macdonald, 2017; Widdowson, 2016). This report by the TRC has made education a priority for decolonization efforts and "...a number of universities across the country have instituted indigenization initiatives" (p.1). The literature reviewed also makes many suggestions on how to achieve this by calling for the "sensitization", "disruption" and "decolonization" of Eurocentric curriculum which dominates mainstream social work education (Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Hill, 2012; Hill & Wilkinson, 2014). It is suggested that by teaching, learning and acknowledging this colonial relationship social work education can move beyond its continued colonization of Indigenous peoples (Battiste, n.d; Dumbrill et al., 2008).

Furthermore, disruption and decolonization ask that social work education encourages non-Indigenous academics and students to acknowledge their own privilege and racism and begin to decolonize themselves (Battiste, 2005). This decolonization is paramount as "...the exclusive use of Eurocentric knowledge in education has failed First Nations children" (Battiste, 2005, p.5). Kovach et al. (2013) points out that "...sensitive and skilled front-line practitioners...can be a significant protective factor for promoting resilience among Indigenous children and youth..." (p. 12). While it is important to have more Indigenous social workers working in Indigenous communities, the decolonization of social work education can also help non-Indigenous social workers become better able to work with First Nations, Inuit and Metis children and families.

It seems clear that the profession of social work and social work educators can learn from the past and work towards decolonizing themselves, the classroom, and the social work academy. Baskin (2006) states that this decolonization can begin to happen once social work education begins to, "...focus on the history of the colonization of Aboriginal peoples and how it continues to oppress us today. It must also include Aboriginal worldviews, diversity and cultural strengths...", include the practice 'reflexivity' which supports the "...critical examination of how our own culture and biases impact the people they are trying to assist" and finally by ".... critiquing the profession of social work itself" (p. 7). With the past, present and future of social work education taken into consideration, it is important to understand what actions have been taken already in Canadian social work program, how we can continue to build upon this and best ways to move forward.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Theoretical Paradigms & Guiding Principles

My research methodology was ultimately informed by my experiences, principles, beliefs, assumptions, morals and ethics. In the research world this is understood as my worldview, paradigm, epistemology, axiology, and ontology (Wilson, 2008). As stated earlier, methodology refers to how we use our way of thinking, our worldview, to gain more knowledge about reality. Since there are several theories which guided my research, my methodology can be best described as an "emancipatory" methodology (Kovach, 2005). This study was guided by ideas from postmodern, anti-oppressive, and Indigenous paradigms as well as principles of critical theories, post-colonialism, decolonization and social justice. First, I connected with the postmodern paradigm because of its rejection of "positivists" belief in universal truths and belief in multiple truths (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). I have been taught throughout my education and my career how to look at reality in a different way, other than the one I had been taught for so many years. This has undoubtedly affected and changed my perspective and worldview. Too add, like Moosa-Mitha (2005), post modern theorists also suggests that the interpretation of research is influenced by our own experiences and locations. Furthermore, postmodern theorists believe that the researcher must be in a position as the learner and that the participant's voice is central to the research process (Moosa-Mitha, 2005).

Like postmodern theories, my attraction to anti-oppressive theories is due to their multi-disciplinary approach and the assertion that "knowledge is understood as situated by one's social location..." (Moosa-Mitha, 2005, p. 66). Here, we see an acceptance of different ways of knowing and research questions addressing people's individual experiences. Also, the idea of the research participants as "...active and owning agency" (Rutman, Hubberstey, Barlow & Brown,

2005, p.165), is of particular interest to me. This is because of my belief in Indigenous values, in which "relational accountability", is paramount to the research (Wilson, 2008).

The methodology in which I connected to the most and hoped to learn the most from would be an Indigenous paradigm. I connected to the values and beliefs in relationships, collaboration, participation, reciprocity, purpose, accountability, trust, transparency, and multiple worldviews (Kovach, 2005). These are all values and beliefs that I not only grew up with but that I learned throughout my educational journey and career. However, I cautioned myself in terms of this methodology because I felt I still had so much learning and unlearning to do in terms of researching in a truly Indigenous way and attending to my own internalized oppression. My continued resistance in claiming my own Indigenous identity and my lack of knowledge for cultural protocols made me nervous in conducting Indigenous research. As Anderson (2000) suggests, "ties to community are as significant as ties to family in terms of bolstering a positive identity" (p. 123). Since I did not know where our Ancestors are from I have no ties to community or land, and felt this was a large part of why I was apprehensive to claim an Indigenous identity. I have reflected a lot on this, and will discuss this further during my final discussion.

Finally, principles and values of critical theories, post-colonialism, decolonization and social justice heavily guided my research. The concept of 'conscientization' found in critical theories is an approach "...to liberatory education that incorporates helping the learner to move towards a new awareness of relations of power, myths and oppression (Sinclair, 2004, p. 53). This idea was of importance to me since one of my goals for this study was to have participants to reflect on their own contributions to colonization. By asking questions in a non-aggressive and

non-blaming way, my hope was that participants will reflect on their own privileges, racism and how they knowingly or unknowing contribute to colonization and oppression.

Tamburro (2013) describes how post-colonial theories encourage the colonizers and the colonized to work together as allies to achieve decolonization and promote resistance and healing of Indigenous peoples. Kovach et al. (2015) state that "decolonization is the process of interrogating settler society and reminding us all that parity for Aboriginal peoples has not yet been achieved" (p. 43). While my plan was not necessarily to interrogate participants, I hoped that participants would gain insight into how they contribute to colonization and therefore, begin the process of decolonizing their own minds and hearts.

Using principles of post-colonialism and decolonization in social work will undoubtedly lead to social justice for Indigenous peoples. Tamburro (2013) points out how a "post-colonial lens provides useful insights on how to create social justice" (p. 8). To add, Kovach et al. (2010) state that, "decolonizing work is bound with justice" (p. 43). The first step in decolonizing mainstream, social work education must begin with the instructors who have been taught by mainstream, social work education and who continue to colonize Indigenous peoples through excluding Indigenous history, knowledge and worldview into the curriculum. As Dumbrill and Green (2008) suggests, "...Eurocentric thinkers must learn how they dominate and un-learn oppression in order to modify their institutions so that they do not colonize" (p. 495). This was my ultimate goal.

4.2 Literature Review & Methodology

When to conduct a literature review, was a contentious debate regarding qualitative methods and thematic analysis. However, I decided that it was important for my research project to conduct a small literature review at the beginning of my research project, before beginning my

interviews and analysis. Some researchers believe that conducting a literature review before you begin data collection can "contaminate the data" by imposing one's own biases on the generation of theories (Dunne, 2011, p. 114). However, others believe that it is impossible to provide a rationale for your research and protect yourself against criticism if a literature review is not done prior to the data collection and analysis (Dunne, 2011). Also, it can be difficult to obtain funding for research and approval from the ethics board, without a proper literature review demonstrating the usefulness of your topic (Dunne, 2011).

Furthermore, as Dunne (2011) pointed out "the idea that they can somehow jettison all their prior knowledge of the field is unfeasible" (p. 117). In my educational experience, I had been part of both mainstream and Indigenous specific social work programs. I think it would have been impossible for me not to bring some sort of understanding about the differences of Indigenous content in the social work curricula, into my research. However, as Dunne (2011) pointed out, there is no reason that I cannot incorporate 'reflexivity', constant reflection and self awareness, as to not impose my own assumptions and beliefs onto the data. For these reasons, I chose to conduct a brief literature review before I began gathering data and a more thorough review after the analysis.

4.3 Methods

This qualitative study used semi-structured interviewing to gain more insight into participants individual experiences. I planned to balance the use of semi-structured interviews with the Indigenous method of storytelling, or what Kovach (2010) refers to as "conversational methods". Like conversational methods, the semi-structured interview uses open-ended questions, is flexible, and more informal then structured interviews (Kovach, 2010). Using semi-

structured interviews and storytelling as a research tool fit with my methodology as an anti-oppressive, postmodern, critical and Indigenous researcher (Esterberg, 2002).

Esterberg (2002), points out that we use semi-structured interviews to "...move beyond our own experiences and ideas to really understand the other person's point of view" and that these interviews give people "...the opportunity to tell their own stories" (p. 87). To add, Thomas (2005) points out that "storytelling in this sense is an act of resistance" (p.242), that "storytellers hold the power in this research methodology" (p. 245) and that "storytelling uncovers new ways of knowing" (p. 245). Finally, combining the values of storytelling with the semi-structured interviews supported a more Indigenous method to interviewing and will hopefully encourage "...richer insights into the research question" (Kovach, 2010, p. 46).

Interviews

I interviewed 5 participants, from the three Universities in the Maritime Provinces which offer a Bachelor of Social Work degree. I interviewed participants from St. Thomas University (STU) in Fredericton, NB, the University of Moncton (UdeM) in Moncton, NB and Dalhousie University (DAL) in Halifax, NS using a purposive sampling strategy (Esterberg, 2002). Out of respect for the schools of social work, I contacted the Director of the schools of social work at each University, describing my research study and what I am looking for in terms of participants. I had initially planned to ask the Director to forward my email with the research details and call for participants but using this method would have required me to apply to the research ethics at each University. After speaking with the Director at STU and someone from their ethics board, I decided that since I could obtain their email addresses from their respective University websites that I would email them personally. If I was not able to secure enough participant interviews I had initially also planned on using a snowball sampling technique. I planned on reaching out to

participants who agreed to participate and ask if they will help me recruit their fellow colleagues or reach out to friends and colleagues who know the teaching staff at the Universities. However, this was not required as I had a sufficient amount of participants

As Esterberg (2002) suggests I prepared a flexible interview guide, set up interviews well in advance and answered any further questions about the study. I also allowed participants to choose the time and location of the interview and provided a reminder call or email at least 2 days prior to the interview (Esterberg, 2002). I also advised participants that the interviews make take approximately 1-2 hours. When meeting for the interviews I explained again what the interviews are about and the purpose of the study (Esterberg, 2002). Before beginning the interview, I discussed confidentiality and anonymity with the participants. I explained that their interviews are completely confidential and that only I will have access to them, since I will be transcribing interviews myself.

I then explained that their names will not be used in any reports and that since there are a small number of participants I will be assigning a number (1 to 5) to each participant instead of using names. Also, I will not be asking too many personal or identifying questions which might risk their identity being known. To protect their anonymity further, I will not release which University specific participants are connected to, as there are only three and faculty may be small. I read the consent and confidentiality forms with the participant and had them sign. I also let them know that they can withdraw from the study at any time, with no penalty to them. Participants were also aware that there is no monetary reward offered for participating except the reward of contributing to social justice. However, I did provide a modest gift to participants to show my appreciation which was a thank you card and $20 gift card from Chapters.

I purchased a digital recorder and interviews were recorded with permission from the interviewee, so I could listen to interviews several times to ensure I had truly captured what they were saying. After the interview, I also wrote field notes and begin transcribing the interview as soon as possible (Esterberg, 2002). In the event the participant did not consent to being recorded, I would simply take notes and reflect to the participant what I was hearing and writing. However, this was not an issue as all participants agreed to being audio recorded. To ensure confidentiality, the recorded interviews and transcripts were locked in a safe which only I have the access to. I explained this to participants prior to the interview when we discussed confidentiality.

In the spirit of following an Indigenous way of researching, being transparent and ensuring 'relational accountability' (Wilson, 2008), I provided participants with a copy of the typed transcript, so they had the opportunity to make any corrections, additions or deletions and I kept participants updated on my progress throughout the transcribing, analysis and writing process (Esterberg, 2002). I also sent an email to each participant with possible quotations I would use from their transcripts during the analysis section and provided them the opportunity to review these quotes and give me their permission again, to use this information. I feel like this gives power back to the participant, strengthen our trust as researcher and participant and supports the anti-oppressive principle of participants being the owners of their knowledge and experience (Rutman, et al., 2005). I also believe that keeping in contact and updating participants on my progress will further promote relationship building, trust and ensure 'relational accountability', which is very important when working within an Indigenous framework (Kovach et al.; Wilson, 2008). Finally, once my oral defense is complete I will be emailing a copy of my completed thesis to each participant, thanking them again for their participation.

Thematic Analysis

Strega (2005) describes qualitative methodologies as an 'interpretive' approach to research where the researcher searches for "...understandings rather than facts about the social world and social beings" (p. 206). Qualitative methodologies can include a variety of different approaches to analysing data, including thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun & Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis (TA) as "...a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patters (themes) within data" (p 6). TA fit with my methodology and my overall research question as I wanted to understand and identify common themes about what is being taught in 'mainstream', social work education in the Maritime Provinces. Furthermore, similar studies have used the same or comparable data analysis techniques. Kovach et al. (2013) used thematic analysis and Ives et al. (2007) used content analysis to create re-occurring themes when researching the incorporation of Indigenous knowledges in social work education.

Furthermore, Braun and Clarke (2006) point out that "it is the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn, as it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis" (p. 4). Since this was my first major research project, I felt like this was a great place to start practicing and refining my research and analysis skills. Although TA is a first step in becoming a qualitative researcher, "...this does not mean that they necessarily produce simple and low quality findings" (Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 404). Vaismoradi et al. (2013), state that TA offers a ..."rich and detailed, yet complex account of the data" (p. 400). Braun and Clarke (2006) also support this statement and provide detailed information and guidelines on how to conduct a high quality TA of research findings.

Transcription and Analysis

Once my data was obtained and had been transcribed and given back to participants for their corrections and feedback, I began working on an in-depth thematic analysis (TA). Because TA is "flexible", (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013) I borrowed ideas for the analysis from Joanne Mitchell's (2011) thesis on Indigenous education. For her analysis, Mitchell (2011) followed a more Indigenous view of researching during the analysis. Like Mitchell, who sought to keep with the Indigenous value of "wholeness", I identified themes in larger chunks, rather than line by line coding, or sentence by sentence coding (Dunne, 2011; Mitchell, 2011). I had confidence that this would promote a more whole interpretation of thoughts and experiences, instead of fragmenting participant's views of their reality.

Finally, I committed to practicing reflexivity throughout the research process by using a journal to capture my thoughts and reflections during this research journey. As Ortlipp (2008) suggests, using a journal can help "...to make my experiences, opinions, thoughts and feelings visible..." and may ".... make the messiness of the research process visible to the researcher who can then make it visible for those who read the research..." (pp. 703-704). This was an important part of the research process as much of my work was done internally, in my own mind and heart, thinking and re-thinking, comparing transcripts, ideas and coming up with new ideas. This was a way for me to keep my thoughts and ideas more organized.

During analysis, I identified themes and categories from the transcripts and used the process of "memoing" to write down my thoughts and reflections as themes and sub-themes arise (Dunne, 2011). Furthermore, Dunne (2011) and Mitchell (2011) point out how it is important during analysis to constantly compare previous literature and data with the data you are analysing. I read and re-read transcripts many times, often reading several transcripts at one time to constantly compare and contrast themes and ideas. This was an important process for me, as I

wanted to follow an "inductive approach" to TA where, "...themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 12). I decided not to use pre-determined themes based on my research questions, more like a "theoretical approach" (Braun & Clarke, 2006), as I really wanted the themes, categories and research to be grounded in the data and come from participants ideas and experiences.

As themes emerged I created an initial list and began to fit those themes and sub-themes into fewer, more broad themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I was not always necessarily looking for words that repeated themselves over and over again, but words and stories which were interesting to the overall research question and added either new or enriched learning about Indigenous knowledge in social work education. As Braun and Clarke (2006) point out, it is important to give "...full and equal attention to each data item and identify interesting aspects in the data items that may form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set (p. 18). Once I read and re-read and highlighted words and themes I began to think about the broader themes which each sub-theme would fit into. I created a list of broader themes, reflected on the data and highlighted parts of the data that I wanted to use as quotations to enrich the analysis and reporting of data.

To stay true to the Indigenous methodology and my own personal values of transparency, trust, collaboration, and accountability I emailed participants for their permission to use their ideas, thoughts and words by providing them with all the quotations I was considering using. One participant in particular was concerned about their anonymity and requested that I identify the specific quotes I wanted to use. By bringing part of my analysis back to participants I trust that this helped to strengthen my "relational accountability" (Wilson, 2008) to the participants and to an Indigenous research methodology. I concluded that this helped ensure I was not using

their words out of context. Finally, once the analysis was complete I continued my literature review research to learn more about the themes which were emerging. For me, this was a really important step to ensure "reflexivity" (Dunne, 2011).

Chapter 5: Evaluation & Assessment

I had evaluated and assessed my research according to qualitative and Indigenous research criteria of rigor and reflexivity. Tracy (2010) explains that in qualitative research "rigor" is most important. The report must include rich descriptions and explanations of data and the entire research process must be transparent and reflexive (Tracy, 2010). Strega (2005) adds that "reflection and analysis of the researcher's own thoughts and feelings are considered not only an important part of research, but also an indication of interpretivisms ability to be as rigorous in its methods as positivism…" (p. 205). When discussing 'reflexivity' Strega (2005) also points out how it is important to be open about our own assumptions and how they may affect the research. Tracy (2010) adds that "...researchers can practice self-reflexivity even before stepping into the field by being introspective, assessing their own biases and motivations..." (p. 842). Furthermore, Braun & Clarke (2006) point out how important it is to be transparent about what you are doing, why you are doing it, what you hope to accomplish and to be accountable to this methodology.

I believed I had maintained the principles of rigor and reflexivity in my research project. I took my time to explain my location and experience and how I came to be interested in this research project. I did a lot of reflecting and writing during this process and through journaling and my field notes, I could understand my own initial judgements and beliefs. I feel that I was very open, honest and humble about my initial biases and judgements and practiced reflexivity throughout this process. As mentioned earlier, I probably spent more time thinking and analyzing in my head then I did writing. My field notes and journaling allowed me to reflect on my thoughts and feelings throughout this process, as well as constantly write down thoughts and

ideas which came to mind. Often this occurred while trying to fall asleep, in which I would write and then reflect on it the next day.

Furthermore, I provided common and interesting themes found in the data, following the guidelines outlined by Braun and Clark (2006) for a more rigorous analysis. I provided rich, detailed, verbatim descriptions of participants thoughts, ideas and practices. This is what Braun & Clarke (2006) refer to as validity. Validity was explained as providing, "…a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story and data…within and across themes (p. 93). I maintain that my analysis supported this principle.

In accordance within an Indigenous framework I also assessed and evaluated my research much like Mitchell (2011), using Indigenous research criteria of 'relationality' and 'relational accountability' (Mitchell, 2011; Wilson, 2008). My hope was that my research methodology not only strengthens my relationship and relationality with Indigenous peoples in the Maritimes, but also that it strengthens my relationship to my own Indigenous identity and my Indigenous ancestors by contributing to social justice and decolonization. I had hoped to accomplish this by practicing what Strega (2005) calls "social justice validity" by maintaining connections with participants throughout the research process and giving the research back to Indigenous peoples by helping to advocate for changes in mainstream social work education.

I felt I maintained this principle of relationality and relational accountability throughout this process. I was able to learn more about myself, my motivations, my own struggles with my identity and be comfortable being an outside-insider and an ally with Indigenous ancestry. This kept me connected to Indigenous social justice. Furthermore, I stayed accountable and relational to my participants. My decision to not name participants by their individual number when discussing identity to protect their anonymity was an important example of this. Furthermore, I

stayed connected with participants throughout this process, updating them on my progress and giving them an opportunity to look at specific quotes from their data, which I had planned to use. As Hill (2012) suggests, "Indigenous peoples must be in control of their intellectual property" (p. 3). I truly believed in this principle and adhered to it, to the best of my ability.

      Therefore, I conclude that I have maintained and practiced principles of rigor, reflexivity, validity, relationality, and relational accountability. Furthermore, I remained flexible throughout this process and went one step further to protect participants anonymity and supported the control of their intellectual property.

Chapter 6: Strengths, Limitations & Ethics

6.1 Strengths & Limitations

One of the strengths of using an Indigenous and decolonizing approach to semi-structured interviewing is with the in-depth and rich detail that the interviews provided (Berg, 2004). As mentioned, it was surprising to me that most participants identified as Indigenous, having or believing they had some Indigenous ancestry. This helped support the importance of promoting Indigenous voices in research (Esterberg, 2002). However, as Dumbrill and Green (2008) point out, it is equally important to have non-Indigenous peoples acknowledge and reflect on their own contributions to colonialism. Also, that it is important to "...focus on the instructor's responsibility for bringing knowledge marginalized within society into the classroom" (Dumbrill & Green, 2008, p. 499). I believed that in the end, this project allowed a balance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous voices. Based on my conversation with participants I believed that this research has given participants the opportunity to reflect on how they bring Indigenous knowledge into the classroom and that this has inspired action and advocacy to create space for Indigenous knowledge in mainstream social work programs.

Following guidelines and principles outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) help improved the strength of this study. Braun and Clarke (2006) suggest that a great way familiarize yourself with the data is by transcribing data yourself. Although it was very time consuming, I believe that transcribing interviews allowed me to really immerse myself in the data and begin to not only identify common themes, but interesting, relevant knowledge to the overall research questions (Vaismoradi, 2013). Furthermore, analyzing in chunks rather then line by line, allowed me to understand the data in a more holistically and not loose the context of our conversations (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

A major limitation to this study was that results were not generalizable as it only includes a small number of participants from three Universities, located only in the Maritime Provinces. I had considered focusing on the Atlantic Provinces which would have also included a University located in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL). However, this would have increased my time frame for completion as well as increased costs significantly, since travelling to NL is very expensive. I had to outweigh the costs and benefits but unfortunately, I could not incur this kind of debt. However, I do feel like I missed out on some invaluable information from potential participants from another Eastern province in Canada, one in which I am less familiar with.

To add, because the number of participants is so small, it is difficult to generalize the results to most social work educators in the Maritimes. As stated several times, most participants identified as Indigenous, having some Indigenous ancestry or as allies. It would have been interesting and valuable to hear from educators who do not identify in this way, and get an idea of their understanding and how it affects bringing Indigenous knowledge and decolonizing processes into the classroom. However, as Braun & Clarke (2006) point out, only having a small number of interviews to personally transcribe and analyze can help immerse the researcher in the data and allow for a more richer description of the data and themes.

6.2 Ethical Considerations

There were several ethical considerations with this research project. First, the issue of safety, confidentiality and anonymity must be discussed. Safety is not as much of a concern in this project as participants are not part of a 'high risk' or 'vulnerable' population of people (Kovach et al., 2013). In terms of confidentiality and anonymity, I had decided early on it would be best to remove names of participants and not include identifying information since the number of faculty are small at these particular universities, and other staff may recognize their stories and

could possibly identify participants. This was addressed and explained to participants during the discussion of confidentiality, in which participants were asked to sign a form stating they understand the limitations. However, as previously stated, to further protect their anonymity, I decided to not refer to any participant specifically or by numbers when discussing their identity. This was a very important issue for me as trust and relationships are a vital part of Indigenous research (Absolon & Willett, 2005).

Since my project worked with the Universities and not in a specific Indigenous community, I did not feel it was necessary to speak with Indigenous Leaders in the communities in the Fredericton, Moncton and Halifax areas. However, since this research project did aim to create social justice for Indigenous peoples I felt like it is important for me throughout this process to be transparent and locate myself so readers have a better understanding of who I am and why this research was important to me. As mentioned earlier, I am still on my own journey of decolonization. As Kovach et al. (2013) state, "Indigenous knowledges are being taken up by individuals who do not feel fully comfortable upon entering the Lodge and position themselves as an outsider looking in" (p. 79). Although I have worked in First Nations communities and am enrolled in an Indigenous specific graduate program, I still have a lot of learning and un-learning to do. Thankfully, I had the guidance of my supervisor and committee member who are Indigenous scholars, to help me throughout this process. This helped me feel connected and my own self-care practices have kept me grounded and on the right path.

Chapter 7: Findings

7.1 Introduction

In this section, the findings will be presented by identifying 6 major themes including sub-themes, which emerged during the thematic analysis process. As mentioned previously, themes reported in this section were found to be either repetitive (pattern) and of importance during the analysis or interesting to the overall research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The 6 major themes identified are history, research & policy, eurocentrism & deconstruction, allies, community as classroom and Indigenization & decolonization. Themes are also discussed in the context of current research and literature. Before introducing the 6 major themes, it is important to discuss the participants of this study.

7.2 The participants

As mentioned earlier, I was able to complete 5 interviews from the three Universities in the Maritime provinces, which offer an undergraduate degree in social work. After reflecting on my concerns of doing research with a small sample with smaller universities, I have decided on a few things to further protect the anonymity of the participants.

First, I asked the participants how they located, to get a better understanding of their worldview, beliefs and their experiences teaching 'mainstream' social work education. When I first began this research project my understanding and judgement was that most interviewees would be non-Indigenous. As Baskin (2006) points out, there are a small number of Indigenous educators teaching social work on North America. Kovach et al. (2015) also note that in their study, 2-3% of professors identified as Aboriginal. I wanted to get a better understanding of how non-Indigenous educators understood Indigenous histories, worldviews, cultures, research and

policy and how they brought this understanding into the classroom. However, my assumptions were incorrect. Interviewees who did not identify as an Indigenous person, either identified as an ally or wanting to be an ally. Furthermore, all participants but one thought or knew they had at least some Indigenous ancestry.

While I think it is important to discuss identity of participants, so readers have a better understanding of the worldview in which this knowledge comes from I am also concerned with protecting the interviewees anonymity. Because of this, the small sample size, and smaller faculty in the Universities I will only share how participants located themselves generally as a group. I will not use their participant number (i.e., participant 1 identified as Indigenous or non-Indigenous) to point out how each participant specifically identified. Additionally, when I feel a specific quote may impact participant anonymity, I will not site their participant number when sharing verbatim quotes, but will site it as a personal interview, 2017. My hope is to decrease the possibility of readers connecting participant identities to their stories, thoughts and experiences. Being accountable and relational to the participants of this study is of the utmost importance for me, as I believe that if you do not have trust and respect, then you are not using an Indigenous methodology, or practicing relational accountability.

7.3 Theme #1: History

Colonial History: post contact

It should come as no surprise to readers that history, specifically colonialism was a common theme among interviews. Most of this discussion was focused on what can be understood as the post contact period in colonial history. As the name suggests, post contact occurred after European settlers were already settled on Indigenous lands, learning from Indigenous peoples and later began instituting Federal Canadian law to further colonize,

dominate and assimilate Indigenous peoples (Oliver, 2010; University of Victoria: Cultural safety, 2017).

Discussion about colonialism, specifically residential schools, the 60's scoop and the Indian Act were identified as knowledge being taught in the classroom by all participants. Colonialism can be understood as "…the policies, laws, and systems associated with controlling people or geographical areas" (University of Victoria: Cultural Safety, 2017, p.1). In the Canadian context, colonialism refers to the political control of the British over the Indigenous peoples of Canada for the control of their land and resources (Taiaiake, 2009). The Colonial policies like the residential schools, 60's scoop and the Indian Act, were understood by participants as policies which sought to control, change and assimilate Indigenous peoples. Participant 4 pointed out that, "…there was always a subtext of wanting to make Indigenous peoples more like European people". Furthermore, participant 1 stated that "the fabric of Indigenous ways of being have been purposely interrupted". The common understanding among participants was that the history of colonialism was intentional, violent and based on assimilating and dominating an entire population of people, for the benefit of European settlers.

Another common understanding in terms of colonial history was that this history can and should be understood in the present context as well. There is a certain caution in the research that asserts that post-colonial "…does not mean that the colonial period is over" (University of Victoria: Cultural Safety, 2017, P.1). Furthermore, Taiaiake (2009) points out how past and current colonial polices have left Indigenous peoples in a situation where they are dependant on the Federal Government for their survival, making autonomy and self-sufficiency more difficult to attain.

There was also a common recognition among participants that this was not solely an issue of the past and affected much of the struggles in Indigenous communities today. Participant 1 made this clear by suggesting that, "…the situation that Indigenous peoples find themselves in, in Canada is not an accident, it's a direct result of colonial policies and practices and processes that continue to this day". To add, when discussing this history participant 3 explained that, "…I hesitate when saying the historical context because I think that it's also a present context…". Taiaiake (2009) points out how colonialism continues today by perpetuating "…a dualistic and dependant relationship between First Nations and the state" (p. 47). Furthermore, that the colonial, historical exploitation and stealing of lands is no different then the "enforced isolation and poverty on reserves" currently (p. 47).

The residential school system seems to be the colonial policy which was most understood and described specifically by participants when using examples to further explain their statements. Participant 5 was speaking about their understanding of the affects of residential schools and how children were taught that their language, culture and inherently they themselves were bad, or inferior to the settler people. This participant stated that, "…they had to change. They had to forget about who they were. So even now, the intergenerational effects of the residential schools, even finds its way through affecting the new generation through communities". To add, when discussing these colonial policies, Participant 1 stated that:

> *so I think that the situation that Aboriginal people are in in Canada is a result of colonial policies…. practices…. like residential schools… in terms of education, in terms of health, all the policies at the Federal level that the government…for Indigenous populations…are kind of responsible for what is happening right now. For the condition that Indigenous populations live...*

Of course, this is referring to the "impoverished conditions" seen in Indigenous communities, which are often understood and described as 'third world' conditions (Oliver, 2010).

Colonial History: pre & early contact

After reflecting on interviews, I believe there was a lack of understanding or discussions on pre-contact and early contact between settlers and Indigenous peoples. Furthermore, it was more difficult to find an abundance of literature on these topics. Research indicates that a possible cause was due to the common practice of passing on Indigenous knowledge through oral traditions and storytelling and how this tradition was almost completely eradicated during colonialism (Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Kovach et al., 2015; Thomas, 2005). Pastore (1998) suggests that "because there is a lack of archeological information about the late precontact period in the Maritimes it is difficult for us to adequately describe Mi'kmaq culture…" (p.1). However, there is some information on the early-contact period. Perhaps this lack of literature accounts for the lack of discussion, understanding or exposure to the pre-contact period.

The pre-contact era was a period in time which was most lacking in the interviews. Although I cannot say for certain that there is no understanding among participants about this period. Perhaps the negative view that surrounds discussions of colonialism, tends to overshadow the positive aspects of Indigenous culture. Either way, I take the position that this is an important period of time to discuss and teach about, as it highlights so many of the positive and wonderful values of the Indigenous culture. Research shows that Indigenous tribes and families worked together for the collective group and were productive, strong, harmonious and women and children were viewed as being important, valuable members of the community and tribe (Bourassa et al., 2016; University of Victoria: Cultural safety, 2017). However, in many ways this way of being was interrupted by the domination of European worldviews which were, "values consistent with patriarchy, or male-dominated power structures…" (University of Victoria: Cultural safety, 2017, p. 1). This demonstrates how European colonial practices

interrupted the healthy, strong, and harmonious ways Indigenous peoples functioned and thrived socially and economically.

This is of interest to the overall research question because this period in time helps to gain a better understanding of how to understand cultural practices to support and work with Indigenous peoples today. I think it is important to understand how Indigenous peoples, families and communities thrived as a group before contact with Europeans to understand how some Indigenous families may still view child rearing in a community setting today. Partridge (2010) points out how healing can occur by focusing on the positive aspects of Indigenous ways of life. Partridge (2010) also states that, "this means going back to a traditional, balanced way of life in all aspects, spiritual, emotional, physical and mental (p. 56). Participant 5 discussed how they use the 7 Grandfather teachings and the medicine wheel to "…make sense of how we can use that in intervening with First Nations and also sometimes with non-First Nations because there is so much wisdom in those teachings.

Furthermore, I believe many Indigenous families and communities value traditional ways of raising and teaching children which may be misunderstood by current social work values and education. For instance, Rae (2011) discussed how traditional ways of raising Inuit children were less disciplinary, children had more freedom and learned more by observing and modeling adults. Being more flexible and less disciplinary could be viewed by social workers as neglectful. To add, the CASW (2017) discusses how it is important to get to know the community norms in terms of child rearing practices like children staying for long periods of time with extended families or parents allowing children to stay home from school to learn from the land. This is just one example of how traditional values and beliefs can get misinterpreted by social workers, as neglectful or wrong.

Although there was some discussion concerning early contact, this was still an area which I propose was lacking from most of the interviews, when discussing history. My understanding is that this was an era where Indigenous peoples first encountered European settlers and that in the beginning, there was an alliance of sorts. However, the research suggests this was never really a true alliance on the part of the British settlers (Oliver, 2010). Participant 4 understood this relationship very well and explained that:

> *There was a period of time where the settler colonialist relied on Indigenous people to survive in what for them was a new land…then the Indigenous kind of became irrelevant in the planning of the settler colonialist…once the European's gained numerical supremacy…more people…all these sorts of fake attempts at these Nation to Nation or cooperative, building a future together…it just became apparent that that was never a sincere…I think that Indigenous peoples talk about having a long, long pre-contact history…they have always been on Turtle Island. I appreciate and respect that.*

Furthermore, Oliver (2010) points out how European settlers used the hospitality and kindness of the Indigenous peoples to teach them how to survive on the land, until they no longer needed their help (Oliver, 2010). This was also supported by Participant 5 who discussed their lack of knowledge about history and stated that, "…but in the case of First Nations history, what I retain a lot is the lack of recognition of their contribution to settler's survival here". For those participants who discussed early-contact, it was understood as an insincere and misleading relationship, which was only for the benefit of the European settlers. This is also an important piece of history for social workers to understand, as it highlights the first of many attempts of Europeans being non-trustful and using Indigenous peoples for their own benefit. It is no secret that many Indigenous peoples are mistrustful of social workers, and this can severely impact relationships within child welfare. The CASW (2017) points out that because of social workers role in the residential schools "many practitioners today are met with community members fears,

distrust, anger and hurt. This continues to influence the ability to form relationships of trust with families…" (p. 11).

Negative View of Indigenous history

As mentioned earlier, a possible explanation for the lack of discussion or understanding about pre and early contact may be attributed to the dark shadow that colonialism casts on Indigenous history. One example, is that what is missing from the interviews and most likely from societies overall perceptions, is the strong history of Indigenous resistance and resilience to European colonialism. Although the literature is lacking, there is research which indicates that Indigenous peoples resisted and continue to resist colonial dominance (Oliver, 2010). For instance, according to Oliver (2010), Indigenous peoples demonstrated resistance and resilience by continuing to practice cultural ceremonies which were banned, breaking laws which were forced upon them by settlers, and denying forced upon religion, just to name a few (Oliver, 2010). Some literature even suggests that Indigenous people continue to resist Eurocentrism today, by not participating in the public education system (Clarke et al., 2012). Anecdotally, this was certainly my experience, while working in prevention services in First Nations child welfare.

However, it is important to mention that one participant, was very concerned about the negative portrayals of Aboriginal history and Aboriginal peoples. Participant 4 stated that:

> *it's never the stuff about resilience, resistance, or holism. It is never those things…about what is going on in communities that are thriving and having cultural revival… so that's one thing that I've talked about and looked at and worked out in my classroom.*

It is evident, that despite this history of the intentional assimilation, destruction and genocide of Indigenous peoples, many Indigenous peoples and communities continue to thrive and prosper.

I believe that these empowering stories of resilience and resistance are equally important to teach as the devastating stories of colonization. An online source called media smarts (2017) points out how media and television often portray history from a European lens, and portrays Indigenous peoples as either primitive and savages, or passive and submissive. History needs to be told from the views and strengths of Indigenous peoples to contradict and correct stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, often seen in media and television.

7.4 Theme #2: Research & Policy

Negative History

The common understanding among several participants regarding research was that research has a very negative history and meaning for Indigenous peoples historically and currently. Antione (2017) argues that "…research is one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous vocabulary given the historic and continued link to colonization" (p. 114). From my own and the participants' understanding, research was historically used against Indigenous peoples to create policies which further supported European colonization. Furthermore, that this still occurs today. Participant 5 stated that, "…through research, First Nations peoples have been colonized again, and have been picked upon and researched upon. They were not with, always about".

Participant 3 also supported this idea by stating that their understanding, "…has been a colonial context in which the research has historically been about Indigenous people and done to Indigenous people". These examples demonstrate a common understanding consistently found in the research, which identifies research as a historical and current colonizing process (Antione, 2017; Graeme & Mandawe, 2017; Hill & Wilkinsin, 2014). For instance, Graeme and Mandawe (2017) state that research was and is, "often functioning as an extension of colonial control over

culture, lands, and resources, research has traditionally prioritized Western worldviews while positioning Indigenous Peoples as passive participants and or/ problems to be solved" (p. 2). It is evident that there is a need for a more Indigenous and decolonizing approach to research, especially when working with Indigenous peoples and communities.

Decolonizing & collaborative Research

What was especially wonderful to see during the interviews was that decolonizing and collaborative research was being discussed, supported and practiced by the participants in their own academic careers. This is no easy task given the inherent Eurocentric, colonial and Western worldview of academic institutions. Hill and Wilkinson (2014) state that, "research, as the hub of knowledge creation in the academy, is bound in Western assumptions and ways of knowing which are linear, positivist, and normative…" and "…even as the academy begins to open up to new ways of knowing and fashions an attempt at being more progressive and inclusive, Eurocentric patterns continue to erect barriers to Indigenous knowledge" (p. 178). Despite this, Participant 3 noted that, "we've seen a lot of movement in research being…movement towards research being Indigenous centered and decolonized research".

Another participant described how they teach about the importance of research in their classrooms and how it can be used as a tool for liberation and not colonization. Participant 2 stated that:

> *I have tried to have students understand as well, the value of conducting research that is appropriate for Indigenous populations. And also that, we have to use research for liberation of Indigenous populations…to make sure populations are marginalized.*

Graeme and Mandawe (2017) also discuss the growing popularity and support for decolonizing, collaborative and Indigenous methodologies within academic research.

As mentioned, participants are also beginning to incorporate more Indigenous, decolonizing and collaborative approaches in their own academic research. Caxaj (2015) supports this movement and states that, "a more crucial component of carrying out meaningful research with Indigenous communities however, involves following protocols and practices for mutually, power-sharing, and reciprocity" (p.3). Participant 5 described this passion and commitment when discussing their own decolonizing process of researching with Indigenous peoples. This participant discussed how research has historically been colonizing, done to First Nations people and not with, and strongly stated that "…I refuse to do that. So what I do now as far as research myself, if the occasion presents itself I do research with the communities. It's so precious to me because I get to work with them, but they are the owners of the project". This example goes beyond words and uses action to support Indigenous ownership of knowledge in academic research.

Activism & change

Another theme that emerged during the interviews was the idea that decolonizing and collaborative research can and should create activism and ultimately change for Indigenous peoples and communities. As Participant 4 pointed out, "I think good research that's done collaboratively with communities can be very powerful in affecting change". The importance of change in research was often communicated by participants and seemed to be important in terms of creating policy to improve the well-being of Indigenous peoples and communities. Participant 2 stated that, "so both research and policy are two ways that could be used to help Indigenous populations…have more healthier lives…have healthier communities...".

This concept of change was also supported by research focused on Indigenous and decolonizing research (Antione, 2017; Caxaj, 2015; Graeme & Mandawe, 2017). In a discussion around the purpose of a research project using Indigenous storytelling and participatory action research, Caxaj (2015), states that "…this research was intended to build a sense of reciprocity, local community benefit, and ultimately, to affects change" (p. 2). Like participatory action research, one of my future goals is that this research project will act as a beginning step in helping to promote change and advocacy on micro and macro levels. More specifically, by encouraging continued decolonization of interviewees and potential readers, as well as promote advocacy for decolonization within the schools of social work. I believe that this begins with the social work educators.

It was evident during the interviews that participants were reflecting on what they do now, what they can do in the future to further decolonize themselves and incorporate more Indigenous teachings and ways of researching into the classroom. Participant 1 stated that "we could be having Elders in our classes. That's what happening with the Indigenous MSW's across the country" and that we could be "building partnerships with Indigenous communities". Participant 4 suggested we "…flag issues and Indigenous scholars who can address those issues. Either bring them in in-person or through skype or through literature". One of the TRC's recommendations concerning education is to "provide the necessary funding to post-secondary institutions to educate teachers on how to integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms (Truth and reconciliation of Canada, 2015, p. 7). A big part of this change will require social work educators to advocate for this change within the academy and demand the support necessary to include Indigenous knowledge, values and practices in their teachings. I believe this research project can highlight many of the strengths and weaknesses currently in the

academy, so educators can receive the proper education to carry forth with recommendations from the TRC.

In terms of advocacy and policy change, what was discussed consistently across interviews was Cindy Blackstock's commitment to policy change concerning Indigenous child welfare. As participant 1 stated, "I make sure the students know about Cindy Blackstock's organization and Jordan's Principle". Blackstock is very well known in the social work profession for advocating for First Nations children's rights. Blackstock has fought and won against the Canadian governments racist policies towards First Nations children and their right to equal, basic human rights such as education, health and social services (First Nations Child & Family, 2017). This was a common understanding among participants.

In my opinion, Cindy Blackstock is a Canadian icon and hero and it is no wonder that her name came up throughout the entire interview process. Participant 4 stated that:

> *I think the work that Cindy Blackstock has done around looking at how the Canadian government's policies around child welfare have negatively affected and actually been racist toward Indigenous Peoples. That's been really important work and there's some potential for some tremendous policy change there.*

Blackstock has done an amazing job creating awareness around colonial policy and its affects on Indigenous peoples. This has encouraged a dialogue and new understanding among social work educators who are sharing this information with their students, to create a better understanding about the affects of current colonial policies. A great step towards the deconstruction of colonial worldviews.

Anecdotally, I can attest to how these racist policies and colonial worldviews have hurt the Indigenous children and families that I worked with. Indigenous children and families do not receive the same funding as non-Indigenous children for social services (First Nations Child &

Family Caring Society, 2017). This means that it is difficult to put in place strategies to support or prevent families from coming in contact with child protection services, as funding is primarily for children in care. Rae (2001) states that, "removal of children from their homes should be a last resort, after less intrusive, support services have been provided" (p. 14). However, social workers often must be very crafty and innovative to provide support services to families to 'prevent' the need for child protection services. Cindy Blackstock has done an amazing job bringing attention to and creating awareness for the public on these important inequalities for Indigenous children and families.

7.5 Theme #3: Eurocentrism & Deconstruction

Awareness & Eurocentrism

Creating awareness about Eurocentrism was an important theme in preparing students for the deconstruction of colonial worldviews. Battiste (2009) explains that Eurocentric knowledge, "has a long held belief that only European consciousness counts as progress and that Indigenous peoples' consciousness was frozen in time" (p. 6). Participant 3 also supported this view and stated that "society has taken for granted assumptions that the western perspective is the ultimate truth and reality". To add, Battiste (2009) and Clarke et al. (2012) explain that Eurocentric knowledge was used to marginalize and eliminate Aboriginal knowledge, perspectives and ways of knowing. Participant 3 also pointed out that, "…it's about the dominance of the Eurocentric worldview and the fact that it impedes the ability of other ways of knowing to have a presence and be respected". Discussing and creating awareness around Eurocentrism was a major theme during the interviews.

When discussing awareness Participant 5 said, "so my goals in teaching about First Nations peoples, is to make sure my students have greater awareness, a greater ability to understand and a willingness to work with…". One significant way in which to create awareness that was discussed, was the idea of preparing students to receive the information. Participant 3 explained that:

> *I find that often teaching and learning Indigenous issues will often miss a step by not preparing students to receive the information and preparing them to really grasp Indigenous issues and perspectives by not enabling…by not preparing students to actually deconstruct their own mindsets and their own dominated Eurocentric worldviews.*

Tamburro (2013) also supports the idea that social workers must be taught about Indigenous knowledge, history, colonialism and oppression in order to understand how to begin to locate themselves and decolonize their own minds. Participant 1 pointed out that, "…and I think it is our job to be aware…and always kind of working towards making ourselves more knowledgeable and more open, and critical of ourselves too". It will be difficult for social work educators and the academy to truly embrace Indigenous knowledge as equal to Eurocentric knowledge if individuals do not have the proper information to begin to decolonize and question their own privilege and how they contribute to colonization. Kovach et al. (2015) also discuss how it is necessary to explore "…colonial and racist normative assumptions before introducing Indigenous knowledges…" (p. 42). This supports the position of interviewees, that people must first be prepared to receive this knowledge before embracing it in a genuine way.

Deconstruction & critical thinking

Deconstruction and critical thinking were two very important themes throughout the interviews. More importantly, that this was a process that needed to be attended to by both the social work educator and the social work student. Sinclair (2004) asserts that "both the educator

and the student must involve themselves in the process of healing, learning and developing along a path of Aboriginal epistemology" (p. 55). Throughout the interviews, there was discussion around participants learning to decolonize their own minds as well as encouraging students to begin their own process by challenging their own locations, worldview, values and beliefs.

Participant 3 explained this challenge and stated that, "so if they haven't thought about the fact that they have a Eurocentric framework and they need to question the framework from which they are receiving this information…or how they're interpreting what they are receiving…then that is a big challenge". In order to overcome this challenge, Participant 3 also explained that they carefully teach 'critical reflective analysis', "so you are able to look within yourself to determine well if you are not agreeing, then why is it? What is your assumptions, values, beliefs that suggest to you that you are disagreeing? Where is that disagreement coming from"?

When discussing teaching reflection and deconstruction Participant 5 added that:

> *…whether it's the hospital context, school context, child protection context or whatever context…and those are all the contexts that I make sure they understand the over-representation and can question the reasons why, so they don't reproduce the prejudice that contributes to that in the first place".*

Furthermore, one participant discussed the importance of helping students deconstruct in a very careful, gentle way. Participant 1 explained that:

> *…if we get people to challenge their thinking and as painful as it can be and we kind of hold them carefully. We don't hurt them, we don't try to hurt them, but help people to be critical analyzers about everything. And it's not just about Indigenous issues. It's about everything…you know my perspective is that we prepare them to think critically, to assume that they may not know and so they need to ask people about what their experience is.*

To add, Participant 3 stated that, "…you don't have to agree but just be open to it I guess".

Another participant described how they use Indigenous examples to teach this idea of reflection and deconstruction in the classroom. Participant 4 explained that:

> *I was sort of trying to make the point of social construction of reality and different ways of looking at things and I brought in a text in which they were talking about a specific way that an Indigenous community handled social disruption in the community".*

A commonality among interviews was the practice of bringing in Indigenous authors and examples to highlight and open peoples minds up to the possibility of different ways of knowing and being. Examples of author, advocates and Indigenous resources identified in the interviews included Cindy Blackstock, Jennifer King, Jordan's Principle, Tantoo Cardinal and films such as "the real Indian" to name a few. In terms of bringing in Indigenous authors and resources, participant 1 stated that, "and I noticed that more and more of the students are hungry for information about Aboriginal issues…and they are interested in working in Aboriginal communities when they graduate…". Baskin (2007) suggests that social workers must be open to Indigenous knowledge and acknowledging Indigenous history, values and beliefs if they are to be able to assist Indigenous clients in an appropriate and culturally sensitive way.

As mentioned, the process of deconstruction is not only for social work students, but for social work educators as well. Baskin (2007) supports the idea that it is the responsibility of social workers and educators to examine "…their own values and biases while teaching students to do the same" (p. 7). Although there was some acknowledgement of needing to unlearn Eurocentrism, not all participants discussed their own process of decolonizing their own minds. However, one participant in specific was very open and honest about this process. I believe that this idea is very important to the research, as this seems to be a difficult process and one that I am sure many social work educators struggle with themselves. Participant 2 explained that:

I was socialized to believe that it was not positive to be Indigenous, but it had nothing to do with that. So it's part of racism, and we internalize it. So…I learned that A- to recognize that I am Indigenous too…and…B- recognize how I was contributing to racism and my knowledge that…I had to be part of the solution…and how to unlearn my own racism so I wouldn't be perpetuating it…I didn't realize how that was just one way of denying the responsibility…the mainstream society has to eliminate racism. Definitely I have to be aware of my own history actually…but definitely have to continue to decolonize my own mind…being very conscious of the areas where I may still have settler's attitude. Be conscious about it. So I have to do more work in that area.

Reading and writing this now, reminds me of how engrained Eurocentrism is in the very fabric of our society and how difficult and on-going the process of deconstruction is.

7.6 Theme #4: Allies

Challenges for Non-Indigenous Allies

The research as well as the interviews point to several challenges and barriers for non-Indigenous allies. One important theme which surfaced was the importance of identity. Much of the research I came across, points to the importance of allies knowing and understanding their own history and culture (Gair et al., 2005; Gehl, 2017; Red Rising Magazine, 2017; Wallace, 2011). Wallace (2011) described several important characteristics for allies identified by First Nations communities, including "their knowledge of their own roots" (p. 164). To add, Gehl (2017) stated that allies should be "…fully grounded in their own ancestral history and culture. Effective allies must sit in this knowledge with confidence and pride; otherwise the 'wannabe syndrome' could merely undermine the Indigenous people's efforts" (p.1). Coming from a position myself of cultural ambiguity, I understand not only how important but how difficult this can be.

Throughout the interviews, those who did not identify as Indigenous had acknowledged their personal struggle with completely knowing their history and culture. Hill (2012) describes how colonialism led to a loss of identity for many people, many who don't identify as Indigenous or are aware of their Indigenous roots. Although not always explicit, I got the sense that the interviewees who identified as non-Indigenous had a feeling or a sense that they had some Indigenous ancestry. Participant 5 explained that:

> *...for the longest time when I was growing up...I wanted to be First Nations in my heart and I didn't know why...I didn't ask myself why...I always thought that the image I had from First Nations was so beautiful. Growing up I wanted to be First Nations. I'll never know why. Well I don't know...I don't think I'll go through that type of process...but on my Father's side....my Dad certainly had features. I will leave it at that but I just know from the bottom of my heart that I always felt very close to First Nations.*

Since I identified with this participant, my understanding is that it is this connection to Indigenous peoples which creates an interest and passion in becoming an ally. Understanding this difficult process in researching and understanding my own history and culture, I can appreciate that some interviewees felt they may never know. However, several interviewees including those who identified as Indigenous, had discussed a desire to learn more about their own culture and history. Although I cannot speak for my participants, personally it is difficult to fully attend to your whiteness and privilege knowing or believing that you have some Indigenous ancestry as well as the guilt of being white, given the history of colonization.

Another theme which was identified during the interviews was the fear of being an outsider or an imposter; the fear of unknowing as a non-Indigenous person. Graeme and Mandawe (2017) speak of this challenge in their own research and explain that "she reflected that she was initially hyperaware of her non-Indigeneity, and that this sometimes made her afraid to ask questions or say the wrong thing out of fear of offending someone (p. 11). Several

participants identified this as being a challenge. One participant stated that the challenge was, "not being a Canadian Indigenous person. So being outside that tradition and then trying to talk about it. So I can be a Canadian Indigenous ally but not from within that culture myself. I think it creates a problem…but I can still be a strong ally" (Personal Interview, 2017).

In addition, another interviewee stated that, "I don't want to be an imposter…I don't want to use what I know to teach, I want to teach what I know to share…to create awareness from my own experience but…from example. In my way of…appreciating, admiring, recognizing, learning from First Nations" (Personal Interview, 2017). Non-Indigenous participants acknowledged their position of unknowing as well as their respect and appreciate for Indigenous knowledge and traditions. An article in the Red Rising Magazine (2017) suggested that to be a good ally, you must be "…grateful and humble (p.1). The CASW (2017) also make many suggestions about being an ally, including asking questions, asking permission to ask questions and being very open and honest about who you are personally and professionally. I believe that participants were also practicing being grateful for Indigenous knowledge and humble in terms of their own knowledge and understanding.

Needs & Challenges for Indigenous Educators

There were also several needs and challenges identified by Indigenous interviewees as well as Indigenous researchers during the literature review. One important theme was that there was a need for more allies. Although the research suggests that Indigenous peoples should be the leaders and hold the power, there is also a need for non-Indigenous support and decolonizing responsibility (Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Gair et al., 2005: Widdowson, 2016). This was also recognized by participants as well. Participant 2 stated:

but we need more people…There's always been a challenge not to…we have to have Indigenous colleagues doing it but we also need to have allies…doing it too…we have a responsibility…to equity and social justice for Indigenous populations. Also, I have to learn to not leave it all up to the Indigenous colleagues…it shouldn't be left to them to always be conscious of thinking about it…how to do it…but it can definitely improve.

This is especially important, as Dumbrill and Green (2008) point out that the responsibility lies with the non-Indigenous scholars to dismantle the Eurocentrism that dominates social work discourse.

The responsibility for non-Indigenous allies to educate themselves, their students and people in general was identified by participants as well. Wallace (2011) identifies self education as a very important characteristic of being a good ally. Furthermore, Dumbrill and Green (2008) also, point out that it is "…the instructor's responsibility for bringing knowledge marginalized within society into the classroom (p. 99). Participant 1 pointed out that:

…one gay person shouldn't have to educate all the other people who aren't. Nor should one Aboriginal person have to educate all the people who aren't. So I think that's where education is really important…for us to be humble about what we don't know…so it's asking all the non-Aboriginal professors, instructors to be open to including and asking and being humble and saying, can you help me. Not kind of 'othering' the Aboriginal instructors.

It was clear from interviews and from the literature that Indigenous educators felt an overwhelming sense of responsibility for teaching their non-Indigenous colleagues about Indigenous history, culture and ways of being. However, as the article in the Red Rising magazine (2017) suggested when working with Indigenous peoples, don't "make it an Indigenous person's job to direct all your behaviours". The onus is and should be on non-Indigenous allies and educators to become knowledgeable in Indigenous histories, cultures, ways of knowing, and to be humble and ask questions when appropriate to do so.

Finally, one interviewee identified a challenge in having non-Indigenous allies and advocates. Participant 3 discussed the caution and balance between sharing Indigenous knowledge and learning how to do so, so that non-Indigenous allies can teach others, "…without others speaking for…or appropriating…". The idea of misusing, appropriating Indigenous knowledge or speaking for Indigenous peoples has come up in the literature as well. In reflecting on their own process, Gair et al. (2005) stated that they "…would not speak on behalf of Indigenous people, speak of indigenous people as 'other' or ignore our gender or our 'whiteness'" (p. 185). The literature and interviews highlight an important concern that although there is a need for more allies, there is also a need to discover best practices, so that Indigenous scholars and educators aren't being exhausted and further colonized through this process by misappropriation. Although not brought up during the interviews, Kovach et al. (2015) identify the need for more Indigenous instructors as a best practice towards decolonization. Perhaps increasing the number of Indigenous instructors in the academy would create more support and help decrease the burn out and exhaustion among Indigenous educators.

7.7 Theme #5: Classroom as Community

Community and Connectedness

It is well known that the community is a very important value in Indigenous cultures. Carriere and Richardson (2009) discuss this idea of community, or connectedness as being important to individual and family wellness. Carriere and Richardson warn that when there is no feeling of community or connectedness, this can lead to feelings of loneliness, anxiety, depression and many other negative emotional states. They state that connectedness is "…one of the most powerful protective factors" (p. 53). Although this discussion is in the context of

children and families, I see this as a very important aspect for students during their social work

education, especially Indigenous students who may be leaving their community for the first time.

Having gone through the program myself, and supervising social work students during my

career, I completely appreciate the value of community and connectedness, which was created by

my instructors.

Kovach et al. (2015) also discuss how community and relational accountability are

important in social work education and it requires "…re-imagining formal academic policy and

practices…" (p. 85). The concept of community, relationships and connectedness was also a

theme during the interviews seeing the difficult learning and refection process in which social

work student engage. Participant 1 shared that:

> *Well there's the political part you're taking in, the theoretical part and the personal things are being touched upon, and you know you are being exposed to a lot of areas that touch on your life. So I think partly what I do with that information is, I might alter what I had planned to so if people are feeling particularly stressed. I will shift my activities and do something else to respond to the energy in that room. It's not a talking circle but it has those aspects. And I think that from my point of view, that is also modeling a way to deal with issues…like to be present with each other. And if people, which they always do, get stirred up and feel threatened by a particular theory they are exposed to, or reality in the world then it helps to create a little bit more community to deal with...*

This is a really great example of how social work educators are currently addressing social work

students' struggles with decolonization and critical self-reflection by modeling and encouraging

a sense of connectedness and community.

The 7 Grandfather teachings

The 7 Grandfather teachings are another example of how social work education can

create this feeling of community as well as begin the process of decolonization and privileging

Indigenous knowledge and experience. The 7 Grandfather teachings are practiced in many

Indigenous communities and cultures. Having been exposed to these teachings previously, I could not help but see commonalities with how the interviewees taught in their own classrooms. Although not always explicit, when interviewees explained how social work is being taught, descriptions included many values like the 7 Grandfather teachings. These teachings include love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, wisdom and truth (O'Brien, 2017).

Although discussed less then the other teachings during the interviews, it is important to mention that the idea of teaching love was present. I interpreted the category of love in the data when ideas of peace, harmony, kindness, community, heartfelt feelings and relationship building were discussed (O'Brien, 2017). The concept of love was also present in the literature. Hill and Wilkinson (2014) discuss the concept of love by describing Indigenous knowledge including "both the cerebral and the heartfelt" (p. 179). To add, when discussing how to evaluate students learning in an Indigenous way, Dumbrill and Green (2008) state that, "…we evaluate whether students are connecting the knowledge entering their heads to the feelings in their hearts" (p. 501).

In terms of relationship building and community, this was represented in the data when Participant 1 was discussing attending to student's emotional reactions to their own personal refection, decolonization, difficult topics and discussions which emerge in class. This participant described how they were flexible and gentle in attending to these emotions and stated that, "it helps to create a little bit more community to deal with…". When discussing the mind and heart connection, Participant 5 explained that:

> *You really have to have a good connection with your heart and mind. So to me, being a social worker means you have to be very rational, but in order to have a good rational plan and intervention, you have to have heard something and felt something that your brain alone can't figure out.*

This was such an important idea for me to hear, as I used to think I was too sensitive or not cut out for the hard work of child welfare. I felt very validated in that moment and hope that readers will also feel this too. I am grateful to my participants for sharing such personal and heart felt experiences with me.

When interpreting ideas of respect and bravery, what caught my attention was practices which respected other people's thoughts, feelings, and experiences, showed appreciation for Indigenous knowledge, protected and did not hurt others as well as the ability to communicate effectively and attend to challenging issues. (O'Brien, 2017). There were so many examples of this throughout the interviews like attending to people's emotions and struggles. When speaking about attending to decolonization, Participant 1 explained that, "…if we can get people to challenge their thinking and as painful as it can be and we kind of hold them carefully. We don't hurt them…". Other examples found in interviews of respect and bravery is when interviewees accepted that they do not know everything and that they are always learning. To me, this is a brave statement, as often professionals are looked at as having all the answers and being 'experts'.

Interviewees explained how the classroom can be used to teach one another about their own values and beliefs, and about multiple ways of knowing. Interviewees acknowledged that not everyone has to agree but be respectful and open to hearing and learning about one another's worldview. Clarke et al. (2012) describe this idea of respect in terms of reciprocity and state that, "…. educators, researchers and practitioners share knowledge, control, and power in teaching learning, research, and helping processes that everyone learns and grows from the exchange." (p. 90). Interviewees often acknowledged that the were learning from their students as well, and

often student discussion was student led, to give them the opportunity to learn from and

understand one another.

Finally, bravery and respect were shown in interviewees ways of teaching by responding

to difficult situation which arose in the classroom. Participant 1 explained that in a particular

situation, they had to say:

> *so I think I have to respond to that comment…then to not be judgemental but just try and open it up and say, 'and I don't have all the answers and I don't want to hurt you with my response, but I was just curious about what made you say that? Or what other people think about that.*

I think this example shows many teachings of not only respect and bravery, but love and honesty

as well.

Honesty and humility was demonstrated by most participants in their ability to admit and

acknowledge their position of unknowing and always learning. This was communicated

explicitly, straightforward, with integrity and humility (O'Brien, 2017). This was represented

throughout the interviews, specifically by Participant 1 when they stated that, "so I think there's

a lot to learn. There's no end to it. And I think if we ever think that we've got something by the

tail…we're just going to be fooling ourselves". Also by Participant 2 who stated that, "…I don't

think you ever stop learning". To add, Participant 1 stated, "…it seems like there is always

something that's going to happen to prove it…to prove it to me that I don't know about that. So I

guess we all need a good dose of humility".

Wisdom and truth were demonstrated when interviewees discussed their respect and

welcoming of Elders and other Indigenous knowledge keepers, their commitment to the truth of

Canadian colonial history and value of Indigenous knowledge (O'Brien, 2017). There were many

examples throughout the interviews where interviewees shared how they provided teachings on

colonization, Indigenous knowledge and research. Participant 4 explained that, "I will just deliberately bring in Indigenous content to get people thinking about Indigenous realities, because I think we are on Indigenous territory and it's something we need to do". Pete (2017) also states the importance of acknowledging that we are on traditional Indigenous territory, and clearly stating this at the beginning of any course.

Another example of truth and wisdom was noted when interviewees encouraged Elders and members from Indigenous communities to come teach and share personal stories in their classrooms. Battiste (2009) asserts that an important principle to understand, in teaching Indigenous knowledge is that, "elders, knowledge keepers, and cultural workers are indispensable to the process…" (p. 15). When discussing bringing in residential school survivors to the classroom, Participant 5 humbly stated that,

> *…it's not me giving it, it's the residential school survivors…they come in with a social worker and a friend from the community who is there for support. It is very, very hard. It is very traumatic. You know when they talk about their experience it is like bringing them right back there again...it's such a powerful class and it's such a turning point in the students understanding of First Nations history. Its real.*

It is clear from just a few of these examples, that interviews are creating community in their classrooms by either knowingly or unknowingly following the 7 Grandfather Teachings. The literature supports this idea as well.

7.8 Theme #6- Indigenizing & Decolonizing

Current Practices

There were many other examples of Indigenization and decolonization efforts during the interviews. Participant 4 talked about the importance of discussing colonial history and stated that, "…you have to talk about Indigenous realities in that course, because you can't talk about

anti-oppressive social work in the Canadian context without talking about the relationship between First peoples and the Canadian state, the historical relationship". Participant 2 also stated that it is difficult but important for themselves, their colleagues and their students to begin decolonizing their minds and, "…admitting that we are colonizers still. That colonization is still going on". These are more great example of decolonizing efforts from interviewees.

In terms of Indigenization, one participant explained how they were providing additional Indigenous resources to students who were interested and encouraging them to ask them questions. Participant 1 stated that their goal was to, "…create a safe space for them to talk to me about it, rather then feeling like they have no where to go to find out about it". This is also a way to encourage and create more allies. Participant 5 explained how they included cultural ceremonies into the curriculum and teachings. This participant did this by:

> *…getting students out…on some occasions we go and bring students for a sweat and go into a community and have a talking circle with an Elder and get some teachings from the Elders. So that's part of erasing the barriers or minimizing the barriers created by us with the First Nations communities. Because a lot of people don't dare go into the community, they are afraid…of the unknown. And all they have heard are bad things that are constructed for purposes.*

This concept of minimizing barriers by exposing students to Indigenous peoples came up during several interviews. Participant 1 said, "…you know I just basically encourage students to go to any place where Indigenous students gather. Just break down the barriers".

Faculty Needs

There were several needs identified by interviewees, for them to feel supported and better able to engage students and the academy in Indigenizing and decolonizing efforts. Interviewees identified requiring more support from colleagues, allies, faculty, and department leaders. Participant 2 stated that"

> *I think leadership is very important. And we definitely do have leaders in all the schools…really taking up this challenge. It has to be an institutional commitment. It has to be…it cannot be left up to the individual faculty…to the Indigenous faculty…it has to be non-Indigenous faculty, the Directors…to the chair of the committees. Everyone. Everyone should be involved in it because this is not an issue that is just one person's role…or Indigenous people's issues.*

Other participants also acknowledged that they required more support from their colleagues to address colonial practices in the academy.

Another need identified by participants was the need for building relationships and connections with Indigenous communities. Participant 2 said, "…that would require also building partnerships with Indigenous communities. Which definitely would bring more…the conversation alive…I think. And expose our students to working with Indigenous populations". In discussing their own personal need and the needs of social work students, Participant 3 shared that, "But I find in academia it is sometimes hard to connect with community, I mean you still have to be connected with community to do the work right, but sometimes it's hard…to maintain connections with the community". As mentioned earlier, Carriere and Richardson (2009) also discuss the importance of connectedness in social work.

What was identified strongly in the interviews, was a need for more understanding; understanding of Indigenous history, knowledge and the value within this knowledge. Participants identified needing more understanding from colleagues, students and the public. Participant 3 explained that:

> *I don't think the majority of faculty understand the Indigenous issues in the same way… in terms of being a…needing to be a separate issue from other diversity issues…we need to be seeing Indigenous issues in a different light. That given the positioning and the experience of Indigenous peoples as First peoples.*

In terms of student's misunderstandings of Indigenous knowledge and Eurocentric view of knowledge and education, Participant 3 also pointed out that they need students to be critical,

and "…questioning what you think knowledge is…and education is…and how to get knowledge". It was also explained that sometimes when Indigenous knowledge and practices are brought into the classroom, students will question or judge if this is 'real' education. Participant 3 stated that, "not that we don't necessarily do some sort of circle work, but you know say if you are doing a lot of that people could say that 'well this is not a real classroom', or it depends on the student's experience".

Finally, as mentioned earlier, it was discussed during different points in time that negative portrayals of Indigenous peoples and knowledge was a major barrier to Indigenizing and decolonizing. One participant explained that it is not just the academy, students or social workers who need to decolonize but society as a whole. Participant 4 stated that, "I think there is a lot that the public needs to unlearn and just stuff that people need to learn about…a lot of people don't understand treaty rights or land claims…and a lot of people don't know the history". It was clear from the interviews, that although schools of social work are making some headway in terms of Indigenizing and decolonizing, there were still a lot of challenges, barriers and faculty needs to fully support this endeavor.

Chapter 8: Relevance of Findings

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to discover how 'mainstream', undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada prepares social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples. Although there was adequate research on this topic in Canada, there was a major gap in research and literature in the Maritime and Atlantic provinces. Based on interviews and my analysis, it appears this process although not yet perfect or consistent, is indeed underway in the schools of social work, in the Maritime provinces of Canada. The following analysis will discuss the connection between themes and literature, the relevance of findings to social work in the Maritime Provinces as well as a discussion of recommendations for social work in the Maritimes.

8.2 Connection between themes and literature

The analysis identified many themes and sub-themes which are important to social work education in Canada. The six themes identified during the analysis included history, research & policy, eurocentrism & deconstruction, allies, community as classroom, and Indigenization & decolonization. All themes can be found in the literature as important to social work and working towards Indigenization and decolonization of social work curriculum and education (Battiste, 2009; Clarke et al., 2012; Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Hill & Wilkinson, 2014; Kovach et al, 2015; Pete, 2017; Widdowson, 2016). This analysis will focus on the major themes of Indigenization and decolonization, as all other themes can fit into these categories as best practices and efforts towards Indigenization and decolonization.

It was evident from the literature review that the process of Indigenizing and decolonizing social work education in Canada is fundamental in preparing social work students to work with Indigenous peoples. Macdonald (2006) explains that, "…many universities are making a conscious effort to bring indigenous people, as well as their philosophies and cultures, into strategic plans, governance roles, academic research and recruitment" (pp. 1-2). Indigenization is a way to create space for Indigenous history and knowledge into the existing academic structure. Examples of this can be found in the findings and included practices such as bringing in Elders and community members into the classroom to teach about history and residential schools, encouraging students to become more familiar with Indigenous worldviews and introducing students to Indigenous peoples, communities and cultural practices. Participants also described how they would discuss and provide examples of Indigenous values in social work practice and in the classroom, research principles, and supported students who wished to become allies or learn more about Indigenous social work.

Decolonization is also important to social work education. Decolonization provides non-Indigenous and Indigenous students with an opportunity to learn about colonial histories, how it affects Indigenous peoples today and how they can practice critical reflection to understand how they personally have and continue to perpetuate colonialism. Battiste (2009) describes decolonization as, "…exposing the injustices in colonial history and deconstructing the past by critically examining the social, political, economic, and historical reasons for silencing Aboriginal voices…" (p. 14). It appears this process is being encouraged in social work education in the Maritimes as there were many examples of decolonization efforts identified during the interviews. This included acknowledging traditional Indigenous territory in which the Universities reside on, classroom discussions on the histories of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous

research and policy, and eurocentrism, as well as supporting students during their own deconstruction of their worldview, values, biases and beliefs. Participants described using Indigenous values like the 7 Grandfather teachings to support and encourage decolonization and deconstruction for both themselves and their students.

However, although it seems clear from the interviews that schools of social work are making progress in terms of Indigenizing and decolonizing, there were still a lot of challenges, barriers and faculty needs to fully support this endeavor for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators. Furthermore, these efforts and interviews are based on participants who either identified as being Indigenous, having some Indigenous ancestry or at the very least an ally. My assumption is that these efforts and this commitment may not be a priority for many other educators teaching undergraduate social work, who interest, and passions are not centered on Indigenous social justice. Participant 3 pointed out how "other faculty tend to have areas of focus for other populations…like disability populations" and that although "there isn't a lack of support but there is…in terms of where people put their interests". Within society and within social work, there are so many social justice issues to attend to, and each instructor comes with their own experiences of marginalization, injustice and their own interests and passion to create change for specific groups.

8.3 Relevance of findings to social work in the Maritime Provinces

Although there was a shortage of research and literature, it appears from the interviews that social work educators in the Maritimes are beginning this process of Indigenization and decolonization. However, there were also many challenges and barriers identified as well as limitations to the study. The findings portray a very positive and robust set of practices and efforts made by participants. However, this analysis must also acknowledge the shortcomings of

the study and the many barriers identified to learn from participants and to encourage an increase in decolonization and Indigenization efforts. I believe this learning and commitment will help to address social justice for Indigenous peoples, families and communities.

First, one of the major limitations of this study is the small sample size and inability to generalize findings to most of the social work faculty in Universities in the Maritimes. My assumption that many educators in the schools of social work have other interests and passions and Indigenous social justice is not one of them, seems like a fair statement. Despite the many examples of Indigenous content during the interviews, the literature review consistently pointed out the lack of Indigenous content in mainstream social work education (Baskin, 2006; Clarke et al., 2012; Harris, 2006; Kovach et al., 2015). Furthermore, it was very difficult and time consuming for me to secure 5 participants for interviews from 3 Universities. Although I understand people are busy and this is a commitment, I also believe that those who participated have a vested interest in this study. This leads me to believe that many do not. With that said, I am so grateful for those who participated in this study and thank them again for their time and commitment.

This is important to the overall research question and study because the literature clearly states that not only do Indigenous children represent the highest rates of children in-care, but Indigenous peoples are also over-represented in all other aspects of social issues like violence, poverty, criminal justice system and mental health (Harris, 2006; Tamburro, 2013; Rae, 2001). Although it is reasonable to assume that many social work educators are not committing to addressing and teaching about Indigenous histories, cultures and worldviews, the literature clearly indicates that many social workers will work with Indigenous peoples during their careers (Harris, 2006; Tamburro, 2013; Rae, 2011). The research also indicated that if decolonization

and Indigenization does not become part of the curriculum, that we will continue to fail

Indigenous children, families and communities (Thomas, 2013).

Failure of Indigenous children, families and communities cannot continue, as the research

points out the effects of multi-generational trauma of Indigenous peoples and how it is connected

to colonial history, social work and education (Bourassa et al., 2015; Rae, 2014; Tamburro,

2013). Participants clearly understand the importance of colonial history as well as incorporating

decolonizing and critical thinking strategies and practices in class that disrupted the

Eurocentrism. The schools of social work must commit to adding decolonizing and 'disrupting'

education practices as well as Indigenous histories, knowledges and cultural practices in all

social work courses (Battiste, n.d.; Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Gair et al., 2005; Hill, 2012; Ives et

al., 2007).

However, what was missing from the interviews was the acknowledgment and

understanding of the cultural diversity of Indigenous peoples and communities. The CASW

(2017) and the Indigenous Corporate Training site (2018) suggest that to be a good ally, it is

important to understand the cultural difference of the people and communities you are working

with, to best support and advocate for culturally relevant services. The CASW (2017) suggest

that social workers "ask clients about their cultural beliefs they would like incorporated into their

work with you" (p. 18). Furthermore, the CASW (2017) cautions in making assumptions about

how your client identifies or their experience and knowledge of cultural practices, since much of

this knowledge and identity was lost with colonization. Kovach et al. (2013) point out how

informed, 'sensitive' and 'skilled' social workers can act as a protective factor for Indigenous

children and families. This is a very important step in protecting Indigenous children and

families and reconciling social work's horrific history with Indigenous peoples.

8.4 Recommendations for social work education

There are several recommendations for the schools of social work to become more consistent with their decolonizing and Indigenizing efforts. However, I believe more discussion, communication and research is required until best practices and guidelines can be established. There was so much value in sitting with and discussing this research with participants. I feel like I learned so much from them and hope that they learned from me as well, or at least from their own personal reflections. Communication is so important and as the literature and participants pointed out, there seems to be some tension or uneasiness between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators in terms of what to teach, how to teach it, who and when to ask for help. Furthermore, Indigenous colleagues report being exhausted by having to do all the teaching and supporting of their non-Indigenous colleagues. I believe that each school of social work should come together and start discussing how they can support one another, Indigenous colleagues and allies, to further this process of decolonization and Indigenization.

As mentioned previously, there was a large gap in research and literature in the Maritime provinces. One participant had even discussed their criticism of the Eastern provinces compared to the West, in their research and decolonization efforts (Personal Interview, 2017). Furthermore, to get a better sense of what is being taught and what is missing in most classrooms in the Maritimes as well as in Canada, more research and investigation is required. I would suggest that the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE), who is responsible for accrediting schools of social work send out a mandatory survey to the faculty in each school of social work to answer some of the questions proposed in this study. As mentioned, results of this study are not generalizable to most faculty in the schools of social work.

Additionally, I recommend that each provincial social work association institute a mandatory Indigenous component to each registered social worker's annual continuing education policy. Social workers are mandated to complete 40 hours of continuing education or professional development each year. I am currently advocating for this in my respective association, the New Brunswick Association of Social Workers, which will be discussed further during my personal reflections. At least one Western province has already instituted this initiative, specifically Manitoba. This would encourage registered social workers in Canada to stay informed about Indigenous social justice and social work.

Based on the interviews, there are many examples of best practices, decolonizing and Indigenizing efforts, however, there was little consistency among participants. For example, only one participant discussed acknowledging the specific, traditional territory in which the University resides on in their classroom. There needs to be an initial set of best practices set in place, which are easy for all educators to begin practicing in their classrooms. This is just one example of an important practice, which can easily begin immediately. This is where communication and discussion between Indigenous and non-Indigenous faculty could help in agreeing to some best practices to begin setting in motion a consistent set of practices in the schools of social work. Pete (2017) shares 100 ways to Indigenize and decolonize academic programs and courses, as well as many other researchers (Dumbrill & Green, 2008; Kovach et al, 2015).

Therefore, although there are some amazing social work educators working towards decolonization and Indigenization of social work education in the Maritimes, there is still much work needed. More research, more communication, consistent practices, mandatory Indigenous education for social workers and students are required, to name a few. As many participants

pointed out, it is all our responsibility to learn and to teach about Indigenous histories,

knowledge, culture and to continue decolonizing our hearts and minds.

Chapter 9: Personal Reflections

The readings and guidance of Indigenous educators throughout the Indigenous social work graduate program I am currently part of have taught me that there isn't really any one way or wrong way to do research, as long as your research is done with "a good heart and a good mind" (Robina Thomas, Personal Communication, 2015). I am still brainstorming ways to improve my research and the research outcome. One of the ways I had hoped to strengthen my research was to begin looking into my own Indigenous identity. Throughout this process I had hoped to look into my family's history and finally get some clarification on my Indigenous roots and where we are from. I felt like connecting to place and land would strengthen my Indigenous identity and will help me move forward in embracing and incorporating an Indigenous paradigm into my research. As Absolon and Willett (2005) suggest, "seeking our truth in our location aids us in recovering ourselves, our strengths, and uncovering historical oppressions" (p. 119). This was how I wanted to continue to work on my own decolonization and how I could honour my mother who is now in the spirit world and always wanted to know more.

Unfortunately, this didn't completely come to fruition. My attempts at trying to locate any living family that could give me guidance was difficult. I had finally contacted a great aunt who knew maybe even less then I did. She remembered knowing that she was Indigenous, but because of what I can only assume was apart of the 60's scoop, she was adopted into a non-Indigenous family and separated from siblings at a young age. I will continue to search for my history perhaps by hiring a professional to trace my ancestry, but for now I am happy knowing that I can be an ally with Indigenous roots.

I am content being able to use this idea of 'two-eyed seeing" (Antione, 2017). Through one eye I can see the world through an Indigenous worldview based on my roots, education,

work experience and guidance of Indigenous peoples. Through the other eye, I can use the best

knowledge and ideas from the Western world, one in which I was raised. Together, I can use

both eyes to come to an understanding of both worlds views. Not only how they collide but also

how they can come together to promote healing and decolonization within the social work

schools, profession and society as a whole to promote more social justice for Indigenous peoples.

I believe I can continue to use this study to promote social justice and adhere to a more

'participatory action' component (Kovach, 2005). I feel like adding a 'participatory action'

component will create more social justice for Indigenous peoples and encourage a process of

decolonizing mainstream social work education in the Maritimes (Kovach, 2005). For example, I

am aware of a social action research placement which takes place at St. Thomas University

(STU) in the fall. I am hoping to speak with faculty STU this coming spring 2018 and suggest a

research opportunity for the fall of 2018. This research would take this project one step farther

and begin to incorporate more Indigenous knowledge into the curriculum. This could be done by

learning from the Indigenous peoples in the communities and what information is important for

undergraduate social workers to learn, before working with Indigenous peoples. As Clarke et al.

(2012) suggest, "we can support a decolonizing framework in our classroom by integrating

critical, anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and anti-colonial perspectives in our curricula and programs

until they become a way of life" (p. 96).

I feel like I can accomplish this, especially being part of the New Brunswick Association

of Social Workers (NBASW) education committee. Through this committee I can advocate for

Indigenization and decolonization of the social work program here in Fredericton, NB. At our

last meeting this past November of 2017, we met to update our continuing education policy for

registered social workers. During this meeting, I advocated for adding a mandatory Indigenous

component to our continuing education policy. The NBASW is a great opportunity to begin to be more inclusive of Indigenous knowledge (IK) and teach others about the value of IK. Kovach et al. (2015) also support the notion of professional associations as being integral to including Indigenous knowledge, or "Indigenous presence" in social work practice (p. 57).

However, this idea of mandating social workers to including 2 hours per year of continuing education on Indigenous peoples and social work was met with some resistance. This was really frustrating for me even though I know members were not denying that this was important to social work. Arguments against included they tried mandating important topics before and the Board with not approve, other issues were equally important and that not all social workers work with Indigenous peoples. My counter-arguments were that the Board should be aware of recommendations from the TRC and government rulings, social workers have a responsibility to make these changes given our history with Indigenous peoples, and that based on research most social workers will work with Indigenous peoples at some point in time. It was two against and two supporting and now we are waiting to hear back from the fifth member, who could not attend the meeting. Sadly, if it is accepted this only means that it can now go to the Board for approval, which based on our conversation is unlikely. However, I still want to try. Not being in First Nations child welfare anymore, I forgot how exhausting it was to just get people to see things in a different way. No wonder I experienced 'burn out' and needed a change.

Immersion of Indigenous knowledge was an important idea in the research and was discussed by one participant. I did not add it in themes, but felt it was important to add in the discussion, as it feels like an appropriate next step. When discussing Indigenous knowledge, participant 1 stated that, "I think it has to be something that's woven throughout the program, throughout the curriculum". Many researchers supported this idea of immersion of Indigenous

knowledge as well (Munroe et al., 2013; Hill and Wilkinson, 2014). For example, Munroe et al. (2013) state that, "moving towards decolonization requires extensive transformation of education where learning is rooted in Indigenous knowledge rather then treating these knowledges as an 'add-on' or 'other' way of knowing" (p. 320). In my opinion, Indigenous knowledge should not be added to the curriculum just for the sake of being inclusive, but because it is truly valuable and beneficial to enhance our social services, mental health services, education and society.

The difficulty moving forward will be identifying a consistent process and policy for Indigenizing and decolonizing the social work education in Canada. This will have to be led and approved by Indigenous peoples, communities and leaders across Canada with the support of allies. Although this is way beyond the scope of this research project, I hope to be part of this process in some small way, beginning with my work with the NBASW education committee and advocating for social justice in New Brunswick, perhaps even the Maritimes or all the Atlantic provinces in the East. One participant pointed out that, "it's interesting though that out west there is more of a recognition and acknowledgement and focus on the Indigenous then in the East…I tend to critique the East for it's lack of a lot" (Personal Communication). This was also supported by the research in discussing lack of Indigenous students and graduates in social work programs, lack of support, financial aid, and a lack of support for Indigenous knowledge and identity in the East (Macdonald, 2016). This was the very perspective and understanding that initially fueled my interest in this topic.

When I first began this research project my understanding and judgement was that most interviewees would be non-Indigenous and at that point I had not even been considering or aware of this concept of allies. The literature shows that approximately only 2% of University educators identify as Indigenous peoples (Kovach et al., 2015). My understanding based on my

research and my own preconceived ideas of the academy was that my interviewees would not have a good understanding of Indigenous knowledge or history and that I would be bringing this to the attention of the schools of social work.

However, this was not the case. I was surprised and delighted when my first participant identified as an Indigenous person. It immediately changed the intent behind my research and I felt a sense of calm and connectedness with the participants and with the research. My assumptions in the beginning caused me to view the research purpose as looking for deficits in the social work curriculum and programs. Instead, I was immediately grateful for the invaluable knowledge participants were sharing with me. As interviews continued I became very humbled by how open and honest they were, discussing very personal and challenging experiences, opinions and beliefs. This was such a gift to my research process as it provided me with a renewed sense of positivity, hopefulness and connectedness to my research and to being an advocate and ally.

In hindsight, my initial assumptions seemed like a very negative view of my own professional affiliation. I understand now where such a harsh view came from; mainly my struggles balancing working in First Nations child welfare, while being guided by Western principles and policies of social services. It often felt like these policies, whether in social services, mental wellness or education were unfair and wanted a one-size-fits all model. Treating everyone the same does not equal fairness and equality and I often had to fight for my client's to be treated fairly. My idea of fairness was much different then those outlined in government policies and this created a lot of frustration and 'burn out' for me. I have so much respect for anyone working in child welfare, specifically those working in Indigenous child welfare and feeling like you are always fighting to obtain basic needs for your clients.

To conclude, this process of researching, interviewing, reflecting and writing has provided me with an understanding of what is being taught, how it is being taught, and how we can improve the social work education, and build on the strengths we already have. Pete (2017) outlines 100 ways to Indigenize and decolonize academic programs and courses. I believe this a great guideline to begin this process in the social work academy. Finally, I was able to engage in a lot of self-reflection and focus on the areas in which I need to improve as well. I may have even gotten more out of this research journey then I am able to give. However, I feel hopeful that social work education can improve how it includes more Indigenous knowledge and understandings, and that this thesis can contribute to the literature gap in the Maritimes and Eastern Canada.

Conclusion

To conclude, this was a qualitative study into how 'mainstream', undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada prepares social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples. This study was guided by critical, postmodern, anti-oppressive, and Indigenous paradigms and theories as well as principles of post-colonialism, decolonization and social justice. This study interviewed 5 social work educators from St. Thomas University in Fredericton, NB, University of Moncton in Moncton, NB and Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS. Participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interviewing style with open-ended question. Furthermore, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis.

I firmly believe that this project is important to Indigenous social justice. In their research, Dumbrill & Green (2008) tell a story in which they state that "...being inclusive does not begin with the social work academy understanding the Other knowledge, it begins with the academy understanding how it is dominated by European knowledge" (p. 492). Although the findings were presented in a very positive light in terms of the Indigenization and decolonization efforts of the interviewees, this may not be the case in all classrooms in the Maritimes. I think it is important to mention again, that those interviewees who did not identify as an Indigenous person, either identified as an ally, wanting to be an ally or that they had some Indigenous ancestry. It is very possible that Indigenization and decolonizing efforts are not as prominent in many classrooms across Canada. However, after reflecting on my initial negative view and judgements of mainstream social work education, I believe it is important to highlight the many impactful and important efforts that social workers are already a part of, as well as identify barriers and areas of improvement.

For me, this study is the beginning of many steps to take in terms of turning words into action to promote and create social justice for Indigenous peoples. As part of the social work profession we all share the past, present and future power and responsibility of our profession. We are all responsible to reconcile the past and repair the relationships social workers have with Indigenous peoples. At the beginning of this study I had a much more negative mindset, but focusing on our strengths as a profession can help encourage and support our colleagues going forward. Communication, relationships, trust, respect, support, honesty and relational accountability is integral to this research and to Indigenous social justice. I believe I stayed true to these Indigenous values and methods in which I had first proposed and feel a renewed sense of hope and commitment to social justice for Indigenous children, families and communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Invitation to Participate

I am writing to inform you about a research study I am conducting to fulfill the final requirement for the Masters of Social Work (Indigenous specialization) program at the University of Victoria. While I live in Fredericton, NB I am completing this program through distance education, with the guidance of my supervisor Dr. Jeannine Carriere in the School of Social Work, Faculty of Human Development. This is a qualitative study into how mainstream, undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada prepares social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples. I am looking for participants who teach undergraduate social work programs from St Thomas and Dalhousie University.

If you choose to participate, I will be conducting interviews at your place and time of choice. The interviews will take approximately 1-2 hours. Interviews are completely confidential and your names will not be used in any reports. I will be asking you to share your knowledge about, and experiences with teaching social work students about Indigenous history, policy, culture and Worldview. I will provide participants with a copy of the typed transcripts so you have the opportunity to make any corrections, additions or deletions. This may require another 1-2 hours of your time. I will also keep participants updated on my progress throughout the transcribing, analysis and writing process. If you decide to participate, you can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of Victoria. Their contact information is: (250) 472-4545 and ethics@uvic.ca. You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Carriere at carriere@uvic.ca for further questions.

Researching how 'mainstream', undergraduate social work education in the Maritime provinces prepares social workers to work with Indigenous peoples, is an important topic as social work and education have a long history of contributing to the colonization and oppression of Indigenous peoples. However, it is important to note that there has been progress within the last few decades. During my research I came across many promising research articles relating to this topic, but felt there was a knowledge gap in research for the Atlantic and Maritime Provinces. Since I am from the Maritimes I have chosen to concentrate on this area. If you would like to work towards social justice for Indigenous peoples and participate in this study please contact me at agoyette@uvic.ca.

Thank you in advance,

Ashley Goyette, RSW

Appendix B

<u>Research Consent Form</u>

Participant Information Letter

Purpose:

I am completing a thesis as the final requirement for the Master of Social Work (Indigenous specialization) at the University of Victoria. I have chosen to focus on how mainstream, undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada prepares social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous peoples are over-represented in many social services settings and social workers will work with many Indigenous peoples who do not reside in an Indigenous community. I feel it is important for social workers to have an understanding of Indigenous history, policy, culture and Worldview in order to work with Indigenous peoples in a meaningful way.

Study Procedure:

Participants will be asked to take part in an interview which will take approximately 1-2 hours. Participants will be able to choose the time and place of their interview. Interviews will be audio taped with your permission. If you do not agree I will take notes and repeat and reflect back to you what I have heard. Once the interview is transcribed I can email or mail a copy of the transcripts to you for you to review to ensure I have captured what you said and provide me with any feedback. This may take an additional 1-2 hours.

Confidentiality:

Interviews will be strictly confidential. Audiotapes will be stored in a safe which only I will have access to. I will not be using any names for this study and will be assigning numbers to each participant. The results from this study will be reported in a written research thesis as well as during my oral thesis defense. Since the research thesis is a public document, information could be used in future literature and

can also be found online. Finally, data will be stored short-term on my computer which is used by no one other then myself and is password protected. Once interviews are transcribed I will copy them onto a USB stick and store them as well as any interview notes in my safe, in which only I have access to. I will then delete them from my computer files. Transcripts, interview notes and audio recordings will be stored in my safe for 7 years, after which they will be destroyed.

Potential Benefits & Risks:

The benefit for participating in this study is knowing that you are contributing to social justice for Indigenous peoples with relevant social work education. My hope for this study is that educators have a chance to reflect on their own contributions to including Indigenous history, culture and worldview in the curriculum. Furthermore, I want participants to reflect on new ways they can be more inclusive and I hope this study will promote further research into how this can be accomplished.

This study is of minimal risk as participants. The only risk is that other colleagues may come to know the participants identity if personal stories are shared during the interview, which other colleagues may recognize. In order to minimize this risk, I will not identify which University participants teach at and you can choose not to use a story which may put your anonymity at risk when findings are reported.

Participation:

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you choose to discontinue for any reason at anytime, you may do so without any repercussions. Furthermore, no information from the interviews will be used without your permission.

Please contact me at agoyette@uvic.ca if you have any questions or concerns. This research has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Board at the University of Victoria. Their contact information is: (250) 472-4545 and ethics@uvic.ca. You may also contact my supervisor Dr. Carriere at carriere@uvic.ca for further questions.

Thank you,

Ashley Goyette, RSW

Signed Consent

 I, _____ have read the participant information letter, discussed concerns with confidentiality and addressed any concerns with the interviewer/researcher Ashley Goyette. By agreeing to participate in the research study I, _____ understand and agree to the following:

- Participation is voluntary

-Participants will be asked how they locate themselves or identify

- Interviews will be audio-recorded and kept strictly confidential

- The researcher will transcribe audio tapes and provide the participate with the opportunity to review and correct transcripts

- Participant names will not be used; numbers will be assigned to each participant

- Audiotapes will be stored in a safe which only the researcher will have access to

- Transcripts and recorded interviews will be kept in a secure safe which only the researcher will have access to for 7 years.

- The results from this study will be reported in a written research thesis, during the oral thesis defense and in a written report for participants to review. At The University of Victoria, thesis are available via the internet.

- No information from the interviews will be used without your permission

- Participants may withdraw at any time without penalty to them and their transcripts will not be used in any reports

-If a participant withdraws their interview data will be destroyed

_____   _____

(Participant Signature)   (Date)

_____   _____

(Researcher Signature)

Appendix C

Interview Guide

"A qualitative study into how 'mainstream', undergraduate social work education in the Maritime Provinces of Canada prepares social work students to work with Indigenous Peoples"

Guiding Questions:

1. Do you locate yourself? How do you identify?
2. How long have you been teaching undergraduate social work education?
3. What is your understanding of Indigenous history? How do you incorporate this into your classroom teachings?
4. What is your understanding of Indigenous culture and Worldview? How do you incorporate this into your classroom teachings?
5. What is your understanding of how policy and research affects Indigenous peoples? How do you incorporate this into the classroom teachings?
6. What other ways do you engage with Indigenous knowledge in the classroom?
7. What do you see as your own personal challenges in teaching students about Indigenous history, culture and Worldview?
8. What do you think you need to learn or unlearn in order to improve how you incorporate Indigenous history, culture and Worldview?
9. In what new ways could Indigenous history, culture, and worldview be incorporated into the classroom?
10. Do you have any further comments or recommendations to add?