

Resilient Responses: Coping with Racial Microaggressions

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June 2017

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in Counselling Psychology

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Abstract

Racial microaggressions are commonplace, brief, subtle denigrating messages targeted at people of colour because they belong to a racial minority group (Pierce, Carew, & Pierce-Gonzalez, 1978; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Because of their subtle and nebulous nature, these incidents may require complex coping strategies (Lewis et al., 2013; Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007; Pierce, 1995). In this dissertation, I examined responses among racialized university students and community members in Montreal, Canada. Research questions were as following: (a) how do individuals who experience racial microaggressions respond to or cope with racial microaggressions?; (b) what effects, if any, do intersecting social group identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, and social class) have on individuals' responses to racial microaggressions?

This dissertation comprises two studies. In study one, I conducted focus groups with five groups of students (i.e., East Asian, South Asian, Black, and Arab Canadians and Aboriginal students; $n = 32$) at a predominantly White Canadian university. To analyze the data, I used the consensual qualitative research approach (CQR; Hill et al., 1997, 2005) that has been utilized often in microaggression research (e.g., Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, 2008). In study two, I conducted individual interviews with Black Canadian ($n = 5$) and Indigenous ($n = 5$) community members who pursued employment directly following secondary education. I utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), a complementary qualitative approach to augment my earlier investigation. Across both the student and community samples, findings demonstrated that participants used a range of collective, protective, and resistant strategies in response to experiences with racial microaggressions. At times, participants' strategies differed based on intersecting social group identities. Response

strategies convey three important features: (a) the influence of racial/ethnic identity in the use of resistance; (b) deliberate strategies of disengagement as a form of resistance; and, (c) participants' use of humour to serve different functions depending on the context. Finally, I offered directions for future research, re-conceptualization of responses to racial microaggressions, and practice.

Résumé

Les microagressions raciales sont des messages habituels, brefs et subtiles qui visent les membres de groupes minoritaires visibles (Pierce, Carew, & Pierce-Gonzalez, 1978; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). En conséquence de leur nature subtile et nébuleuse, ces incidents peuvent mettre en marche des mécanismes de défense complexes (Lewis et al., 2013; Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007; Pierce, 1995). Dans cette thèse, j'ai examiné les réactions d'étudiants racialisés à l'université et d'individus racialisés dans la communauté. Les questions de recherche étaient les suivantes : (a) comment est-ce que les individus qui vivent des microagressions raciales répondent aux microagressions raciales? ; (b) quels est l'impacts de différents facteurs identitaires et sociales (par ex. rage, origine ethnique, genre ou classe sociale), les cas échéant, sur la réaction d'un individu?

Cette thèse comprend deux études. Dans la première, j'ai dirigée des groupes de discussions avec cinq groupes d'étudiants (c.-à-d. étudiants Autochtone et d'origine ethnique Est-Asiatique, Sud-Asiatique, Noirs, et Arabes Canadiens, $n = 32$) dans une université canadienne. J'ai employé la recherche qualitative consensuelle (CQR; Hill et al., 1997, 2005) qui a souvent était utilisé en investiguant les microagressions (par ex. Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, 2008). Dans la deuxième étude, j'ai tenu des entrevues individuelles avec des membres de communauté Noirs Canadiens ($n = 5$) et des membres de communauté Autochtone ($n = 5$) qui ont poursuivi un emploi immédiatement après leur éducation secondaire. J'ai utilisé l'analyse phénoménologique interprétative (IPA; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), une approche qualitative afin de compléter mon investigation initiale. À travers des groupes d'étudiants et des groupes de la communauté, les résultats démontrent que les participants ont utilisé une gamme de stratégies collectives, protectives et résistantes en réponse aux microagressions raciales. Les stratégies employées par les participants variaient dépendamment de l'intersection de plusieurs facteurs identitaires et sociales. Ces stratégies expriment trois traits importants: (a) l'identité raciale/ethnique influence l'utilisation de résistance; (b) des fois, l'utilisation de stratégies de désengagement par les femmes se manifestait sous la forme d'une stratégie de résistance; et (c) l'utilisation d'humour par les participants à servi des buts différents dépendent de contexte. Enfin, j'offre des directions pour le future de la recherche, pour la re-conceptualisation des réponses aux microagressions raciales et pour l'application pratique.

Acknowledgements

The best part of this journey has been the people I have met within academia and beyond. This work and my clinical development would not have been possible without research participants and clients who generously shared their stories with me.

Throughout my graduate studies, Lisa Spanierman has been unwavering in her support. With compassion and poise, she has fostered my intellectual curiosities and helped me embrace challenges. I am fortunate to work with her, and look forward to future collaboration.

Jack De Stefano welcomed me into his academic circle in the third year of my PhD and has supported me since. His sense of humour and tremendous guidance helped ease each transition.

I am thankful for excellent mentors who have shaped my approach to research and clinical practice. Thanks to Marilyn Fitzpatrick for inspiring me to find my own scientist-practitioner style; Lazarus Fitopoulos, Diana Brecher, and my colleagues at the London Health Sciences Centre and Western Student Development Centre for their influence on my development as a therapist. Thank you to D. Anthony Clark for his willingness to consult and share his expertise.

Thanks to Robert Whitley for his methodological input and guidance on the second study. I would also like to thank my committee members (Tara Flanagan, Chiaki Konishi, Myrna Lashley, Jioni Lewis, and Jessica Ruglis) for their thoughtful feedback on this dissertation.

My community of peers and collaborators at the McGill Diversity and Equity Research Lab – thank you for your tremendous assistance. My friends at the Post Graduate Students' Society enriched my time at McGill – our study breaks and meetings at Thompson House are now fond memories. My kind and talented peers in the program, it has been a pleasure to share this adventure with you.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my wonderful friends and family for sharing their love, laughter and strength throughout this journey. A special thank you to my parents - Amir and Nasrin, Mas'oud and Daniel for their unconditional support and encouragement.

Preface and Contribution of Authors

This dissertation comprises two qualitative studies. For both studies, I was responsible for conducting the literature review, conceptualizing the study design, data collection and analyses, and writing the dissertation. This dissertation encompasses original scholarship, as outlined in the final section.

Resilient Responses: Coping with Racial Microaggressions

Despite popular beliefs that national multiculturalism policies in Canada signal a post-racial context, race-related stressors, such as racial discrimination, continue to affect racial and ethnic minorities (Clark, Kleiman, Spanierman, Isaac, & Poolokasingham, 2014; Henry & Tator, 2009; Houshmand, Spanierman, & Tafarodi, 2014; Jiwani, 2006; Poolokasingham, Spanierman, Kleiman, & Houshmand, 2014). Moreover, modern notions of a post-racial context have paved the path for racial discrimination and bias “to operate in complex, nuanced, and covert [forms]” (Burdsey, 2011, p. 264). Popular sentiments that racism is non-existent leave targets who experience subtle, racial bias with feelings of self-doubt, frustration, and isolation (Harrell, 2000; Pierce, 1995; Solórzano et al., 2000). With its focus on subtle and unintentional forms of racism, racial microaggressions theory offers a useful framework to examine these experiences and subsequent responses (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007).

Racial microaggressions are commonplace, brief, subtle denigrating messages that target people of colour (Pierce et al., 1978; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Growing at a prolific rate since 2007 (see Wong, Derthick, David, Saw, & Okazaki, 2013), the literature on racial microaggressions has demonstrated that these incidents occur between peers and colleagues in both formal (e.g., classroom) and informal (e.g., locker room) settings across international borders (e.g., United States, United Kingdom and Canada). Certain racial microaggressions are broad and transferable to a variety of racialized groups. For example, racial and ethnic minorities report being excluded from social life by White peers (Allen, 2010; Clark et al., 2014; Houshmand et al., 2014; Kim & Kim, 2010; Poolokasingham et al., 2014; Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007) and experiencing colour-blind racial attitudes that render racial identity unimportant (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue, Capadilupo et al., 2007). Whereas Black Americans

report being perceived as criminals in the United States (Sue et al., 2008), South Asian and Arab Canadian male participants have described a similar phenomenon in Canada (Najih & Spanierman, 2014; Poolokasingham et al., 2014). Other times, racial microaggressions are unique to particular racialized groups. For example, Aboriginal student participants in Canada described encountering expectations of primitiveness (e.g., living in teepees or in rural, isolated areas) from non-Aboriginal peers (Clark et al., 2014). Taking an intersectional approach, recent research has examined targets' experiences with racial microaggressions alongside other forms of oppression (e.g., gay and bisexual Black men's experiences with racial microaggressions; Bowleg, 2013).

Scholars have demonstrated that racial microaggressions have detrimental social, psychological and behavioural outcomes for targets. As a result of these experiences, targets may develop distrust of others (Sue et al. 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008); decreased self-esteem (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008); a diminished sense of belonging (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007); anger, hopelessness, and fear (Blume, Lovato, Thyken, & Denny, 2012; Smith et al., 2007); and specific mental health symptoms (e.g., binge alcohol use; Blume et al., 2012; e.g., depression; Choi et al., 2016). Given their detrimental outcomes, it is important to understand how individuals respond to and cope with racial microaggressions.

In the burgeoning literature on coping with racial microaggressions, scholars have used qualitative methods to begin to identify five broad categories of coping with racial microaggressions: (a) a process of cautious deliberation; (b) spiritual; (c) resistant; (d) protective; and (e) collective forms of coping (e.g., Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008; Hernandez, Carranza, & Almeida, 2010; Houshmand et al., 2014; Lewis, Mendenhall, Harwood, & Hunt, 2013). These categories, generally consistent with the broader literature on coping with

racism, emerged from interviews with Asian international students, Black American students, faculty and community members, Latino students, and racialized mental health professionals. Spanning ten studies, the findings reflect experiences of undergraduate (i.e., Houshmand et al., 2014; Solórzano et al., 2000), graduate and professional students, as well as mental health and academic professionals (e.g., Constantine et al., 2008; Hernandez et al., 2011; Holder et al., 2015; Lewis et al., 2013; Pittman, 2012; Salazar, 2009). Research is warranted to examine responses to racial microaggressions among different racial and ethnic groups, with other social group identities considered, and in varying national contexts.

To date, ten empirical studies have focused on coping with racial microaggressions. Of these studies, the largest portion has focused on Black Americans (e.g., Constantine et al., 2008). The majority of the studies ($n = 8$) have been conducted in the United States, where racial climates and policies differ from the Canadian context. Almost all of the studies have included individuals with post-secondary or post-graduate education (e.g., Lewis et al., 2013; Pittman, 2012). Hence, current understandings of coping strategies and the cognitive energy expended by participants during the appraisal process of responding to racial microaggressions might be unique to those with high education levels. In other words, education may create a propensity toward certain strategies. In fact, findings from the coping with racism literature demonstrate that social resources (e.g., educational attainment and citizenship) influence the types of coping strategies individuals use in response to racism (Noh & Kaspar, 2003). Thus, in this dissertation I aim to address gaps in the literature by: (a) examining coping responses among five diverse racial groups in Canada (i.e., South Asian Canadians, East Asian Canadians, Arab Canadians, Aboriginal students and First Nations people, and Black Canadians); and (b) examining the

effects, if any, of intersecting social group identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, and social class) on individuals' responses to racial microaggressions.

In chapter two, I provide a detailed review of the literature on coping with racism and racial microaggressions. First, I summarize the literature on experiences with racial microaggressions to acquaint readers with empirically supported manifestations of racial microaggressions reported by racial and ethnic minorities. Second, I describe the emerging empirical literature on coping with racial microaggressions. While research on coping with racial microaggressions is growing, it is linked closely to a larger body of scholarship on coping with racism. Thus, I also discuss major approaches to coping with racism (i.e., problem- or emotion-focused strategies and culturally-specific strategies) and identify their relevance for racial microaggressions. Because of their subtle and nebulous nature, racial microaggressions may require complex coping strategies (Lewis et al., 2013; Noh, Kaspar & Wickrama, 2007; Pierce, 1995). Therefore, I integrate these two bodies of literature on coping with racism and coping with racial microaggressions and suggest important features from the broader literature on coping with racism for the literature on coping with racial microaggressions. Finally, I specify important limitations in the current literature and signal areas for future research.

In chapter three, I provide a brief orientation to the general research methods. First, I outline the philosophical considerations undergirding my tripartite framework of constructivist epistemology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and critical theory. Second, I articulate my stance as a researcher in this project.

Using a tripartite framework of constructivist epistemology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and a critical theory lens (Morrow & Brown, 1994), this dissertation comprises two research projects. Chapters 4 and 5 are research studies. These chapters report findings from

the two samples: (a) university students (Study 1); and, (b) Black Canadian and Indigenous community members (Study 2). In study one, I conducted focus groups with five groups of racialized¹ students (i.e., East Asian, South Asian, Black, and Arab Canadians and Aboriginal students) at a predominantly White Canadian university. To analyze the data, I used the consensual qualitative research approach (CQR; Hill et al., 1997, 2005) applied to focus groups that has been utilized often in microaggression research (e.g., Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, 2008). In study two, I conducted individual interviews with racialized community members who pursued employment directly following secondary education. I utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009), an approach that also has been utilized in microaggressions research (e.g., Constantine et al., 2008). IPA is not limited by certain features of CQR (i.e., commonality and consensus) and thus it facilitated a rich, thorough analysis of the phenomenon while emphasizing unique individual differences between participants using individual interviews (Stiles, 1997). Implications for research and practice are discussed within each study. Hence, each chapter provides a perspective for understanding the range of resilience that racialized individuals demonstrate in response to racial microaggressions.

Chapter 6 synthesizes the work by bringing together the findings from the two studies to identify key findings, highlight the unique contributions of this work, and offer directions for future research, future conceptualization, and for practice. Because racial microaggressions have the potential to pose a significant threat and harm to individuals and society, this dissertation has important social and psychological implications for racialized people, university personnel at predominantly White institutions, mental health practitioners and community organizers, policy,

¹ Racialization denotes the ideological and systematic process through which people of colour came to be associated with a particular race, and consequently marginalized. It also denotes the social construction of racial categories, including whiteness. This term is used commonly in the literature (e.g., Beagan, 2003).

and research. To avoid duplications, all references have been combined to create one complete reference list at the end of the dissertation.

Chapter II

Coping with Racial Microaggression: A Review of the Literature

Coping with Racial Microaggressions: A Review of the Literature

Similar to the concept of everyday racism (Essed, 1991) racial microaggressions reflect subtle, commonplace expressions of racial bias and discrimination rooted in systemic racism (Pierce et al., 1978; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, 2010; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Racial microaggressions oftentimes are not evident to the person delivering them, and in turn, may be intentional or not. Racial microaggressions are “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to people of colour because they belong to a racial minority group” (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007, p. 273). Because of their subtle nature, racial microaggression theory is well-suited to examine racism in the context of national multiculturalism policies in Canada, elaborated below, that signal a post-racial context (Henry & Tator, 2009; Jiwani, 2006; Warry, 2009). These modern notions of a post-racial context have paved the path for racial microaggressions “to operate in complex, nuanced, and covert [forms]” (Burdsey, 2011, p. 264).

Racial microaggressions have received significant empirical attention since Sue and colleagues (2007) published their influential article on the implications of racial microaggressions for the therapeutic relationship in mental health practice. While the majority of the research since has been conducted in the United States (e.g., Constantine, 2007; Lin, 2010; Rivera et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2008; Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007), newer investigations have examined racial microaggressions in international contexts, including Canada (e.g., Clark et al., 2014; Houshmand et al., 2014), United Kingdom (Burdsey, 2011) and Portugal (de Oliveira Braga Lopez, 2011). Scholars have documented various manifestations of racial microaggressions, and some also demonstrated the detrimental outcomes for individuals from a diverse range of racialized groups across settings.

Racial microaggressions have cumulative adverse effects, and can lead to myriad psychosocial and psychological challenges (Pierce et al., 1978; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007; Sue, 2010). Popular sentiments that racism is non-existent leave targets that experience racial microaggressions with feelings of self-doubt, frustration, and isolation (Pierce, 1995; Solórzano et al., 2000). Targets are vulnerable to develop what is often referred to as racial battle fatigue whereby they experience feelings of shock, anger, disappointment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, and fear (Smith et al., 2007). Other adverse outcomes of racial microaggressions documented in the literature include: psychological distrust of others (Sue et al. 2007; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008); decreased self-esteem (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008); a diminished sense of belonging (Smith, Allen, & Danley, 2007); and specific mental health symptoms (e.g., binge alcohol use; Blume et al., 2012). Given their detrimental outcomes, it is important to understand how individuals respond to racial microaggressions and the coping strategies they employ.

Researchers have begun to identify categories of coping with or responding to racial microaggressions (e.g., protecting one's self, challenging perpetrators, and relying on group support; Constantine et al., 2008; Hernandez, Carranza, & Almeida, 2010; Houshmand et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2013). I acknowledge that the term "coping" can be problematic in racism research. Racism is a social problem that reflects structural inequities, whereas coping may imply individual pathology. Scholars have clarified that the use of this term is not intended to communicate that the burden of racism is on its targets (e.g., Brondolo, Brady ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009). As an extension, by using "coping," I do not imply that targets of social inequities are pathological or victims. Instead, I assert that individuals use a range of responses to counter the detrimental impacts of everyday inequities. More importantly,

the purpose of this review is to examine the literature in order to understand how targets respond to these everyday experiences that may, in turn, have implications for future research and psychosocial interventions to aid racial and ethnic minorities and ameliorate intercultural tensions in society. Drawing from the preponderance of the literature in this area, I continue to use the term “coping” (i.e., the individual’s psychological response to a recognized stressful event) in the current review.

I present the literature review below in five parts. First, I summarize the racial microaggressions literature to delineate racial and ethnic minorities’ reports of their experiences with racial microaggressions. Second, I examine available empirical research on coping with racial microaggressions. While research on coping with racial microaggressions is in the early stages, it is linked closely to a larger body of scholarship on coping with racism (e.g., Harrell, 2000; Lee, Soto, Swim, & Bernstein, 2012; Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006; Noh & Kaspar, 2003). Third, I discuss major approaches to coping with racism (i.e., problem- or emotion-focused strategies and culturally specific strategies) and outline their relevance for racial microaggressions. Fourth, I synthesize the literature on coping responses to racism and racial microaggressions specifically to identify commonalities between the two and convey important features of the coping with racism literature for coping with racial microaggressions. Finally, I identify limitations in the racial microaggressions literature and offer the rationale for my dissertation.

Racial Microaggressions: Taxonomy, Examples, and Context

Sue, Capodilupo and colleagues (2007) specified three categories of racial microaggressions that have been documented across various contexts: microinsults (i.e., subtle racial slurs and non-verbal slights), microinvalidations (i.e., subtle negations of the lived

experience of racialized individuals), and microassaults (i.e., deliberate racial attacks). The first category, microinsults, describes indirect communications that convey insensitivity toward a person's racial heritage and identity. Second, microinvalidations negate racial and ethnic minorities' thoughts, feelings, and experiential reality. These latter two forms of racial microaggressions reflect pervasive, hidden forms of racism in society today. Relative to overt expressions of racial bias, subtle manifestations are less understood in popular discourse and actually may be more harmful to targets than overt forms (Noh, Kaspar, & Wickrama, 2007). Given these important distinctions and my interest in contemporary forms of racism, from this point on, I focus on microinsults and microinvalidations. The most overt of the three, microassaults, are deliberate attacks made by perpetrators to defame the target's racial background. These experiences are analogous to blatant racism (e.g., using the "N-word") and are well documented in the literature (Du Bois, 1903/1969), and thus are not the focus in this dissertation. Environmental microaggressions (i.e., macro-level microaggressions which manifest on systemic levels) initially were linked to microassaults; however, a growing body of research has underscored the more subtle nature of such microaggressions that is more aligned with the other two categories (Clark et al., 2014; Houshmand et al., 2014).

Targets' Experiences with Racial Microaggressions

In September 2017, I identified 153 published peer-review microaggressions articles using the PsycINFO engine with the search terms "microaggressions" or "racial microaggressions." Among these articles, I identified 93 empirical examinations of racial microaggressions across a variety of racialized groups in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and India. Specifically, empirical studies have been conducted in classrooms, counselling centers, campus residences, amongst community samples and with professional

athletes. I outline key themes and findings below. Racial microaggressions research predominantly has identified racial microaggressions experienced by distinct groups of racialized people (e.g., Asian Americans, Black American women, Aboriginal undergraduate students in Canada, and so forth.). Some of these experiences are transferable to more than one racial and ethnic group and are commonly encountered across racial and ethnic visible minorities.

Recent intersectional research has examined targets' experiences of multiple forms of oppression concurrently. For example, Bowleg (2013) used an intersectional approach to study gay and bisexual Black men's experiences with racial microaggressions. Race and ethnicity comprise two identity markers only; thus, scholars are beginning to address other identity markers such as gender, sexuality, and class when examining experiences of oppression among marginalized communities in order to address identity and oppression in their entirety. Prior racial microaggressions research predominantly has examined identity markers such as race as discrete and singular. This line of research on target-specific microaggressions, elaborated below, underscores the importance of examining the intersections of identity markers that impact the expression of and experience with microaggressions (e.g., between Black women students and Black men students).

Impact of racial microaggressions on targets. Noted above, racial microaggressions have harmful, cumulative impacts on targets. In addition to the impacts previously described, among racialized undergraduate students, racial microaggressions on campus contribute to students' academic performance (Solórzano et al., 2000). Scholars in the field of Higher Education demonstrated that racial discrimination results in adverse outcomes for students such as poor academic performance, greater levels of stress, and low college persistence (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pedersen, & Allen, 1999). Furthermore, quantitative research on the emotional

consequence of racial microaggressions demonstrated that Asian American participants reported greater negative emotion intensity when they attributed a subtle negative interpersonal interaction to their race (e.g., when a White woman does not sit next to an Asian American person on a crowded bus; Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011). In fact, the more the Asian American participants appraised the negative interpersonal interaction as relevant to their racial group membership, the more intense the negative emotion (i.e., anger, frustration, resentment, scorn, anxiety, embarrassment, shame, and confusion).

Common themes in racial microaggressions literature across groups. Rooted in systemic racism (Essed, 1991), all racial and ethnic minorities arguably experience certain types of racial microaggressions that tend to reflect assumptions and stereotypes about their racial and/or ethnic group. In fact, many racial microaggressions themes cut across various racial and ethnic groups. For example, on account of prejudiced attitudes and discrimination regarding race, racial and ethnic minorities report encountering assumptions that they are second-class citizens, observing colour-blind racial attitudes, being subject to myths of meritocracy, being excluded from social life, experiencing systemic and interpersonal invisibility, and encountering pathologization of their cultural values and communication styles. Below, I use three broad categories to feature these common experiences among racial and ethnic minorities: (a) acts of invisibility and exclusion; (b) pathologizing of differences; and, (c) colour-blind racial attitudes. I have constructed these three categories as a way to organize prevalent themes in the empirical literature.

Acts of invisibility and exclusion. Racialized individuals in the United States and Canada have regularly reported being treated like second-class citizens, experiencing exclusion, and feeling invisible among the dominant group (Allen, 2010; Clark et al., 2014; Houshmand et al.,

2014; Poolokasingham et al., 2014; Sue, Bucceri, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2009). Across several predominantly White universities, racialized students have reported (e.g., Harwood et al., 2012) experiencing segregation from certain parts of their campus. Elsewhere, Yosso et al. (2009) found that Latino American students who were the target of racist jokes on campus reported that these events hindered their sense of belonging. Moreover, some qualitative research has documented the elimination or misrepresentation of racial and ethnic minorities within the curriculum. In Clark et al.'s (2014) study examining Aboriginal students' experiences with racial microaggressions at a Canadian university, participants described that Aboriginal issues were not addressed or inadequately portrayed in class.

While these findings are specific to higher educational contexts, there is further evidence of this in the mainstream media (e.g., television and movies), which feature predominantly White casts and implicitly exclude people of colour, even among roles representing racial and ethnic minorities (Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Nnawulezi and Sullivan (2013) examined Black women participant's experiences at a domestic violence shelter in the United States and documented covert acts of invisibility and exclusion; e.g., Black women noticed a dearth of Black hair products, culturally specific food and diversity among the staff. Acts of exclusion and avoidance such as limited products or culturally specific food may seem minor, but serve to portray messages of what people spaces are meant to serve and thereby solidify dominant cultural narratives that produce inequities and marginalization.

Pathologizing of differences. In racial microaggressions research, participants reported receiving insults that reflected assumptions that people of color were regarded as unusual and inferior to White individuals (e.g., Nadal, Vigilia Escobar, Prado, David, & Haynes, 2012; Sue et al., 2008). Among Asian American students, Sue, Bucceri et al (2007) identified that such insults

typically target cultural values and communication styles and convey an intolerance of difference. Further, people of color often receive comments and actions that reflect an underlying assumption about their intelligence as compared to White people (Solórzano et al, 2000; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2010). For example, people of Asian descent have reported being perceived automatically as being intelligent, particularly in disciplines related to science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (i.e., STEM) as well as in business contexts (e.g., Poolokasingham et al., 2014).

Similarly, considerable empirical research employing focus groups have shown that Black American participants described how they were assumed to be intellectually inferior and incompetent (e.g., Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2008; Torres et al., 2010). In one study, Black clinical supervisees observed their White supervisors making negative assumptions about the inability of Black clients to engage in intrapsychic therapeutic work and to change unhealthy habits (e.g., drinking heavily; Constantine & Sue, 2008). Assumptions about intellectual abilities are harmful and may serve to restrict opportunities for Black Americans as well as people of Asian descent in Canada and the United States.

In an examination of positive stereotypes, Tran and Lee (2014) employed an experimental method to decipher how Asian Americans rated interactions in which they were complimented for speaking English well. The authors found that many such compliments targeted at Asian Americans (e.g., “You speak English well for an Asian”) communicated the hidden message that the person was a positive exception to an otherwise inferior racial or ethnic group. Even participants who received compliments that were not directly linked to race (i.e., “You speak English well”) allotted less time for future conversations with the person delivering the compliment in the experimental study, suggesting that compliments about English language

abilities, which are grounded in subtle assumptions about Asian Americans, were costly to cross-racial relationships with Asian American participants.

As noted above, at times, unique experiences with racial microaggressions reflect the intersection of different forms of oppression based on one's identity (e.g., race and gender, or race and religion). Using the framework of intersectionality (Bowleg, 2008; Cole, 2009; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1993), recent research on these incidents has placed greater focus on individuals' experiences of multiple systems of oppression (e.g., race, gender, class). That is, race and ethnicity comprise only two identity markers and oppression often targets multiple identity markers simultaneously; thus, an intersectional approach is intended to address one's entire identity, as opposed to distinct segments that make it up. Intersectionality in racial microaggression research underscores the importance of considering how various identity markers, such as race and gender, may influence the expression of and experience with microaggressions. In a distinct combination of racial and gender oppression, particular groups of women of color reported being exoticized or sexualized (e.g., Sue et al., 2008). In Sue, Bucceri et al.'s (2007) qualitative study with Asian American participants, Asian American women described White men as being very forthcoming about their stereotypes, communicating an inherent message that equated the women's identities to "that of [being] passive companions to White men" (p. 76). In a focus group with Black American participants (Sue et al., 2008), Black American women reported feeling that their hair was "on display" for White persons to gaze upon and reach out and touch. Moreover, Asian American women participants (Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007) and Arab Muslim Canadian women participants (Najih & Spanierman, 2014) also described having to withstand perceptions that they were subservient and docile. Thus, certain racial microaggressions that target or devalue difference are linked to the dominant group's

assumptions and biases about the gender characteristics and expressions of people from particular racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Voicing colour-blind racial attitudes. Colour-blind racial attitudes refer to the denial, distortion, or minimization of individuals and to institutional racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Neville, Awad, Brooks, Flores, & Bluemel, 2013; Neville et al., 2000). By minimizing race and the existence of racism, the lived realities of people of color are negated. In one qualitative study, Black clinical supervisees reported that their White supervisors minimized, dismissed or avoided racial dialogues in supervision (Constantine & Sue, 2008). The supervisees attributed their supervisors' colour-blindness to discomfort surrounding racial issues and to a lack of multicultural training. In turn, supervisees described feeling frustrated and invalidated. Further, these assumptions might have negative consequences for the clients of supervisees (e.g., Constantine & Sue, 2008). In another study, Latino American students reported that when they attempted to address racial microaggressions explicitly, they were accused of being oversensitive because of what was regarded as a growing attitude that race was a non-issue (Yosso et al., 2009). Indeed, in one investigation that focused on perpetrator expressions of racial microaggressions on the web, researchers found that a common racial microaggression theme was *alleging oversensitivity* (Clark, Spanierman, Reed, Soble, & Cabana, 2011). Colour-blind racial attitudes and myths of meritocracy erroneously conceal and invalidate the system of racial stratification in the United States and Canada, as well as the lived realities of racialized people.

Expanding the Context of Racial Microaggressions Research Beyond the United States

While much of the research described above has been conducted in the United States, as evident in the previous examples, scholars also have investigated racial microaggressions in other national contexts, namely Canada and the United Kingdom. The contextual features of a

nation (i.e., multicultural laws, policies, and practices) can exert important influences on coping responses. For example, unique to Canada, funding programs offered by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) to eligible Status Indian and Inuit students for assistance with tuition, travel, or living expenses are intended to encourage and increase accessibility of educational attainment among this marginalized population (AANDC, 2008; Canadian Federation of Students BC, 2008). In Canada, the national multiculturalism policy and large population of foreign-born individuals as compared to other leading advanced global economies (i.e., 21%; Statistics Canada, 2011) serve to promote widely accepted beliefs that racism is absent (Henry & Tator, 2009; Jiwani, 2006; Warry, 2009). Canada, with its own legacy of historical and present-day injustices is also a context in which racial microaggressions emerge. To my knowledge, five studies have been conducted in the Canadian context among five different communities: East and South Asian international students (Houshmand et al., 2014), mental health professionals of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds (Hernandez et al., 2010)², South Asian undergraduate students (Poolokasingham et al., 2014), Aboriginal undergraduates (Clark et al., 2014), and Arab Canadian undergraduates (Najih & Spanierman, 2014). Certain findings reflect particular characteristics of the Canadian context, including the Aboriginal population in Canada, distinctions between East and South Asian Canadians, and popular notions of multiculturalism in Canada (Clark et al., 2014; Houshmand et al., 2014; Poolokasingham et al., 2014). Each of these characteristics is addressed below.

Notions of Canada as beyond-racism or post-racial, in official policies and the media, promote colour-blindness, and contribute to the erasure of a history of colonialism and the commonplace marginalization of racialized people in Canada (Henry & Tator, 2009; Jiwani,

² Nearly half of the participants were Canadian and the rest were American. No distinction was made per country (Hernandez et al., 2011).

2006; Warray, 2009). Canada is metaphorically portrayed as a “cultural mosaic” in which each cultural group retains their distinct identity while contributing to the nation. The cultural mosaic was intended to manage the incoming flux of immigrants and to promote a national identity (Breton, 1987). Critics of the mosaic have proposed that the mosaic offers an illusion of cultural freedom without any power thus concealing the ways in which certain groups of people are marginalized (Porter, 1965). John Porter’s (1965) term “vertical mosaic,” capturing the unequal division of power in Canadian society, serves as an alternative classification. The federal Multiculturalism Act of 1988, which espouses an inclusive culturally diverse country, contributes to popular beliefs that racism is nonexistent in Canada. As articulated by Aujla (2000) “multicultural goals of unity in diversity do not acknowledge the deeply rooted racist, sexist, and colonial discourse that has constructed ‘Canadian identity’” (p. 42). Visible racial and ethnic minority Canadian citizens experience different forms of othering. Thus, there is a significant difference in the lived experience of being in their country of origin and being “of it” (Aujla, 2000, p. 43).

In Canada, the idealization of the nation as multicultural and therefore post-racial, is documented in empirical studies of racial microaggressions targeting South Asian Canadians and Aboriginal students. First, Aboriginal students at a predominantly White university in Canada expressed withstanding jealous accusations for tax redemptions and educational funding regardless of whether they received them (Clark et al., 2014). These accusations reflect microinvalidations and incorrect information regarding Canadian history, law, and policy (Clark et al., 2014). These accusations might resemble similar anger towards affirmative action for Black individuals (Kuklinski et al., 1997) and claims of reverse racism in the United States (Cabrera, 2012). Second, South Asian undergraduate student participants in Canada reported

experiencing insults based on assumptions that they do not fit in Canadian society and are “Fresh Off the Boat” (FOB; Poolokasingham et al., 2014). Similar to the US context, there is a long history of racialized people immigrating to Canada via boats. Notably, the history of boat immigration has been ridden with conflict for South Asian people since the Canadian Government turned a Japanese steamship, the Komagatu Meru carrying South Asian immigrants away in 1914 (Fernandez, 2002).

In the United Kingdom, Burdsey (2011) documented covert, nuanced, and complicated racial microaggressions targeted at British cricket players of Asian descent in the form of racial jokes. For example, British Asian cricketers’ teammates called them “bombers” referring to assumptions of terrorism and criminality. More overtly, British Asian cricketers reported being referred to by racist insults such as “Paki” (i.e., a derogatory term for persons of South Asian descent). Burdsey argued that high participation rates in sports are believed to provide support to the claim that discrimination no longer influences opportunities and advancement for racialized persons. However, the players’ experiences with racial microaggressions indicate that such stressors limit their psychological sense of belonging in subtle, yet harmful ways. High rates of participation do not convey the absence of racism. In fact, a significant number of White respondents of a national representative survey administered by the Policy Studies Institute admitted to prejudice against racial or ethnic minorities in the United Kingdom (Commission for Health Improvement, 2000).

The empirical scholarship on racial microaggressions, spanning almost 100 empirical investigations, has demonstrated the subtle yet piercing ways racial microaggressions manifest in the lives of racial and ethnic minorities across settings and international borders. Certain themes apply to all groups of racial and ethnic minorities, while others are unique to particular groups of

people. Notably, racial microaggressions perpetrated by White individuals are documented in contexts (i.e., the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada) wherein racism is assumed to be absent or irrelevant. In such contexts, notions of multiculturalism often conceal deeply embedded and systemic White privilege. Consequently, ensconced beliefs in the absence of racism and colour-blind racial attitudes may be critical in the manifestation of racial microaggressions (Burdsey, 2011). Within these countries, racial microaggressions are commonplace, occurring between peers and colleagues in both formal (e.g., classroom) and informal (e.g., locker room, residence halls) settings. As documented by scholars, these incidents have detrimental cumulative psychological, behavioural, and social effects (Blume et al., 2012; Smith, Allen, & Danlye, 2007; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007; Wang, Leu, & Shoda, 2011). Racial microaggressions require the mobilization of coping methods to restrain, monitor, or improve their adverse effects (Pearlin et al., 1983; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). Notably, the covert, ambiguous, and often-unintentional nature of racial microaggressions may require more complex coping strategies relative to overt forms of racial bias (Burdsey, 2011; Lewis et al., 2013; Noh et al., 2007; Pierce, 1995). Thus, I now address the empirical literature on coping responses to racial microaggressions.

Coping Responses to Racial Microaggressions

Using qualitative methods, researchers have begun to examine coping responses to racial microaggressions (Constantine et al., 2008; Hernandez et al., 2010; Houshmand et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2013; Pittman, 2012; Salazar, 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000; Yosso et al., 2009). Across ten studies, researchers identified 37 themes of coping amongst mental health professionals of colour, Asian international students, Black students and community members, and faculty of colour. These themes comprise of a two-step process of cautiously deliberating

responding to racial microaggressions, followed by four broad coping categories: spiritual, resistant, protective, and collective strategies. Prior research has identified appraisal processes and strategies whereby participants made deliberate decisions on when and how to respond to racial microaggressions (Constantine et al., 2008; Hernandez et al., 2010; 3et al., 2012).

Originally referred to as picking and choosing one's battles, as elaborated below, this deliberative process also serves a protective function. Amongst the categories, collective coping was the most popular. Notably, one theme in the literature (i.e., creating counterspaces; Solórzano et al., 2000; Yosso et al., 2009) fits in multiple categories. In this section, I discuss the process of picking which racial microaggressions to respond to, as well as spiritual, resistant, protective, and collective forms of coping with racial microaggressions.

A Process of Cautious Deliberation

Racialized individuals typically undergo a deliberate, cognitive, and often lengthy, process of decision-making when responding to racial microaggressions. Because of the often ambiguous and indirect nature of these incidents, the process of decision-making is further complicated by concerns that one's appraisal of an experience is valid. For example, in a study by Hernandez et al. (2010) participants discussed their interpretation of racial microaggressions with members of their support networks before proceeding with a response. Sue, Capodilupo, and Holder (2008) described this process as a "sanity check" (p. 332) whereby targets turn to others for validation of an experience.

Additionally, using an intersectional approach to examine responses to gendered racial microaggressions, Lewis et al (2013) reported that at times, Black American women participants felt powerless in the face of racial microaggressions, and lacked information about how to efficiently resolve these incidents. Hence, participants cautiously deliberated their appraisal of

the situation and explored response options alone and/or with others. Among these racialized women, the process of cautious deliberation required much cognitive energy to deconstruct the often subtlety of racial microaggressions and to identify appropriate response strategies (Lewis et al., 2013). After the appraisal process, some targets rely on collective, resistant, protective, and spiritual strategies.

Collective Coping

A prevalent coping response to racial microaggressions, collective coping consists of group-centred strategies and reliance on support networks. Oftentimes, collective coping refers to seeking support from family members, allies, friends, and partners. All ten empirical investigations included variations of collective coping. For example, to challenge deficit notions of African American people and support one another, Black university students came together in networks referred to as counterspaces such as African American student organizations, Black fraternities and sororities, peer groups, and study halls (Solórzano et al., 2000). Elsewhere, Black faculty members responded to racial microaggressions by doing racial service work to ameliorate the campus racial climate and providing support to students of colour on campus (Pittman, 2012). At a Canadian university in a large, metropolitan area, Asian international student participants reported they coped with racial microaggressions through campus and community groups (Houshmand et al., 2014). Because participants felt excluded and avoided by White Canadians, at times, they deliberately chose to stay in their racial and cultural circles. In one study, mental health professionals of colour sought support by connecting with White allies (Hernandez et al., 2010). For example, a Latina participant described the powerful impact of support from White colleagues when her nomination to a University committee was challenged. She reported that her White colleagues supported her, validated her struggle, and advocated on

her behalf to the dean (Hernandez et al., 2010). The majority of empirical studies on coping with racial microaggressions documented collective forms of coping.

Another form of collective coping relies on the use of the environment to cope with racial microaggressions. The diverse surrounding milieu served as a reminder that other racial and ethnic minorities also experience racial microaggressions, consequently providing a sense of reassurance that one is not alone. This category was captured in one theme whereby Asian international students in Canada reported seeking support in the multicultural milieu in which they lived (Houshmand et al., 2014). Attending university in a major metropolitan location enabled access to highly diverse surrounding communities. This suggests that in light of pervasive racial microaggressions, racial and ethnic minorities may find comfort in simply knowing thousands of other people (familiar and strange) also experience similar adversities, serving to validate their experience.

Resistant Coping

This form of coping includes direct and indirect behavioral strategies that confront perpetrators and challenge dominant ideologies. For example, in one study, Black women chose to wear their hair natural and control their body image as forms of resistance to gendered, racial microaggressions in the United States (Lewis et al., 2013). In another study, African American college students in the United States created counterspaces, such as Black Students' Network and sororities, not only to provide support to one another but also to challenge dominant ideologies (Solórzano et al., 2000). This collective form of coping that involves support from others also is resistant because it involves the creation of a space to counter-act and challenge experiences of racism. Among academic professionals of colour, Salazar (2009) found that naming experiences as racial microaggressions allowed them to be more assertive when responding to

microaggressions. In another example, mental health professionals of colour reported documenting experiences at their workplace (Hernandez et al., 2010). One Asian American professional, for instance, described keeping record of verbal and non-verbal racial microaggressions to present to their supervisor at an appropriate time. Across these studies, racial and ethnic minorities reported a variety of strategies of resisting racial microaggressions.

Protective Coping

Protective types of coping encompass acts of safeguarding one's self against the negative effects of racial microaggressions (Constantine et al., 2008; Hernandez et al., 2010; Houshmand et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2013; Salazar, 2009). Racial and ethnic minorities used self-protective strategies such as detaching and distancing from experiences of racial microaggressions by focusing on work, eating, or sleeping (Lewis et al., 2013; Salazar, 2009). For example, mental health professionals in Canada and the United States used self-care techniques (e.g., exercise, acupuncture, taking time off, and positive thinking) to compensate for the distress associated with racial microaggressions (Hernandez et al., 2010). In another U.S. study, Black faculty members resigned themselves to the fact that racial microaggressions were pervasive to shield themselves against negative feelings (Constantine et al., 2008). The process of cautiously deliberating one's battles and responses also served a protective function. In one case, despite wanting to confront a professor who delivered a racial microaggression, power differentials led one Black student to employ social support to decrease her anger first before obtaining other active coping strategies (Lewis et al., 2013). Resembling the process of deliberation, Black women reported acknowledging that it was not realistic to fight every battle and persevere. However, beyond an appraisal process, Black women reported that this acknowledgment helped them become desensitized to racial microaggressions. Acknowledging that fighting each battle

would hinder their well-being, some Black women guarded themselves from spending cognitive energy to decide how to respond to each racial slight (Lewis et al., 2013).

Spiritual coping. Emerging in two of the ten empirical studies, spiritual coping refers to the use of prayer, meditation, and other rituals to direct tensions associated with racial microaggressions toward a Higher Purpose (Constantine et al., 2008; Hernandez et al., 2010). For example, a Black mental health professional reported using a ritual to call upon the help of her ancestors upon entering her work environment (Hernandez et al., 2010). In another example, Black faculty members employed meditation to cope with various racial microaggressions at an American university (Constantine et al., 2008). Spiritual coping strategies offered support to certain racial and ethnic minorities in the face of racial injustices. Participants reported that spirituality was helpful in redirecting negative feelings. Notably, both studies examined coping responses among professionals in mental health fields (i.e., mental health professionals of colour and Black Counselling and Counselling Psychology faculty). Spirituality has not yet been reported in non-professional samples.

Summary. Amongst Black American women, faculty members in the United States, mental health professionals and Asian international students in Canada, the literature on coping with racial microaggressions suggests that racial and ethnic minorities use: (a) a process of cautiously choosing which racial microaggressions to respond to and how to proceed; (b) a range of non-exclusive collective, resistant, protective, environmental, and spiritual coping strategies; and, (c) certain coping strategies (e.g., collective and resistant) more commonly than others. While these findings are promising for current understandings of responding to racial microaggressions, they are based on a growing body of literature that requires further investigation. At this time it is unclear whether certain coping responses (e.g., spiritual coping)

are more appropriate to cope with particular types of microaggressions. Future research should aim to extend the existing categories. In this pursuit, there is also a substantial body of research on coping with racism that may help to better understand coping strategies.

Broader Literature on Coping with Racism

Scholarship on coping with racism historically has used dichotomous conceptualizations of coping strategies based in the transactional stress and coping framework. The premise of the transactional framework is that a situation is perceived as a stressor if it disturbs the relationship between a person and his or her environment (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Harrell, 2000). In general, the stress and coping literature is replete with distinctions between efforts targeted at the stressor or the emotions surrounding the stressor (e.g., Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Moos, 1992). For example, behavioural cognitive efforts aimed at the stressor are classified as approach- or problem- focused strategies. In contrast, efforts targeted toward the emotions surrounding the stressor are classified as avoidant or emotion- focused strategies. Expanding earlier models of coping strategies, scholars now incorporate additional factors, such as racial or ethnic identity, and social resources (Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Brondolo et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2012; Mossakowski, 2003). In this section, I review the literature on coping with racism because racial microaggressions are a subtle form of racism, and thus, the extensive literature on coping with racism has implications for coping with racial microaggressions. First, I introduce racism as a form of stress that requires the mobilization of emotion- or problem-focused coping strategies. Then, I describe emotion- and problem-focused strategies to coping with racism. Because coping responses oftentimes are congruent with and reflect cultural values and practices, I outline culturally congruent forms of coping with racism. Last, I note the influence of social resources in coping responses.

Race-Related Stress and Coping

The literature on coping with racism predominantly has employed the transactional stress and coping model as the overarching framework to coping and its associated strategies (i.e., problem- or emotion-focused strategies). According to the transactional model of stress and coping, a two-stage appraisal process is at the crux of coping when one is confronted with racism, a psychosocial stressor (Harrell, 2000). The specific stages involve deciphering whether the stressor will lead to the mobilization of coping methods to take direct action against the stressor (i.e. problem-focused) or to regulate emotional stress (i.e., emotion-focused; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The transactional stress and coping model is appropriate for examinations of coping responses because it is empirically supported (e.g., Clark et al., 1999) and because it features the critical role of the appraisal process in initiating coping responses. Further, it offers a parsimonious system for categorizing coping responses based on the function of the strategy (i.e., to target the stressor or to regulate emotions associated with the stressor). During the first stage, the individual assesses whether the event is irrelevant, beneficial, or stressful. If the event is deemed stressful, the individual initiates the second stage to assess what can be done about the stressful event (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

The scholarship tends to focus on two coping strategies: emotion-focused or problem-focused (Endler & Parker, 1990; Scott, 2004). Problem- focused strategies encompass tactics to take direct action (e.g., seeking information, seeking instrumental support) and aim to alter the person-environment relationship associated with the stressor (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980). Emotion-focused strategies are typically conceptualized as passive tactics that aim to regulate emotional distress. For example, avoiding, detaching or denying the situation or alternatively, turning to religion are strategies which ameliorate emotional responses to race-related stress

(Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989). Scholars also have referred to the emotion- and problem-focused dichotomy as approach or avoidance (Moos, 1992) and active or passive (Dion, 2002) in the coping with racism literature (e.g., Clark et al., 1999; Everett, Hall, & Hamilton-Mason, 2010; Harrell, 2000; Plummer & Slane, 1996; Utsey & Ponterotto, 1996). I will use the terms interchangeably to reflect the literature.

Scholars also have expanded the problem- and emotion-focused categories in different ways. For instance, the categories have been expanded to include: (a) three dispositions of problem-focused coping (see Heppner, Cook, Wright, & Johnson, 1995); (b) a more integrated conceptualization of approach/avoidance and cognitive/behavioural coping responses (see Holahan, Moos, & Schaefer, 1996); and, (c) individual or collective forms of approaching stressors (see Lalonde & Cameron, 1994). While these extensions are notable, the transactional stress and coping model and its associated coping strategies (i.e., emotion- or problem-focused) remain the overarching framework on coping.

Dichotomous Coping Responses to Racism

Research on coping with racism started with exploring the emotion- and problem-focused dichotomy to examine which strategy was most adaptive amongst the two most-studied samples: Black and Asian peoples in North America (e.g., Feagin, 1991; Krieger, 1990; Noh & Kaspar, 2003; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978; Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2013; Tyler, Brome & Williams, 1991; Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, & Cincelli, 2000; Wei, Ku, Russell, Mallinckdrodt & Liao, 2008). Problem-focused strategies often have been linked to better psychological outcomes. For example, it has been documented that Black people who employ emotion-focused responses to modulate negative emotions associated with racism (e.g., remaining quiet and accepting the situation) are more likely to suffer from adverse outcomes such as higher blood

pressure (Krieger, 1990), lower self-esteem and lower life satisfaction (Utsey, Ponterotto, et al., 2000), as well as depressive symptoms (West, Donovan, & Roemer, 2010). In particular, Black women who used problem-focused coping were less likely to suffer from adverse effects of perceived discrimination and depressive symptoms (West et al., 2010).

Scholars have demonstrated that whereas problem-focused coping facilitates adjusting to and mastering racism-related stressors (Torres, Driscoll, & Burrow, 2013), emotion-focused strategies amplify negative consequences (West et al., 2010). For example, emotion-focused tactics (e.g., self-control and avoidance) have been associated with depressive symptoms amongst people of Asian descent in the United States and Canada (Noh & Kaspar, 2003; Wei et al., 2008). However, benefits associated with emotion-focused coping also have been identified (e.g., Shorter-Gooden, 2004). Thus, the literature is inconclusive in terms of which coping strategy is employed and most adaptive for racial and ethnic minorities (Mossakowski, 2003).

Coping with Racism Using Culturally Congruent Responses

Scholars have argued that racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to use certain strategies that are closely aligned with their culture, and, culturally congruent responses are most adaptive (Lalonde, Majumder, & Parris, 1995; Lee et al., 2012; West et al., 2010). This line of research led to the erroneous generalization that indirect, emotion-focused responses reflect values of Asian culture (e.g., group harmony, forbearance, and indirect communication), whereas direct, problem-focused strategies are consistent with values of Black American persons (Lee et al., 2012; Noh, Beiser, Kaspar, Hou, & Rummens, 1999; Shelton et al., 2006; Soto, Perez, Kim, Lee, & Minnick, 2011). For example, Lee and colleagues (2012) examined Black and Asian women undergraduate students' responses to a racist comment made by a confederate during an online interaction. The majority of the Black women were born inside the United States,

whereas, just over half of the Asian women were born outside of the United States. The authors demonstrated that Black women were more likely to challenge the virtual confederate's racist comment, whereas Asian American women typically reported they would not respond directly to a racist comment, often to avoid conflict. This generalization erroneously infers that people of Asian descent in the United States and Canada are always passive recipients of racism. This generalization is inconsistent and hence invalid. While confronting racism may be a central aspect of Black American children's socialization as a result of a historical segregation between Whites and Blacks in the United States (Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson & Spicer, 2006), Black people also use emotion-focused coping strategies (Krieger & Sidney, 1996; Utsey, Ponterotto, et al., 2000). Similarly, emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies both have been documented amongst Korean Americans and Korean Canadian immigrants (Kuo, 1995; Noh & Kaspar, 2003). In another example, Filipino Americans demonstrated high levels of problem-focused coping (Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Kuo, 1995). Thus, the research in this area is inconsistent and suggests that both Black persons and Asian Americans use a range of coping strategies.

Cultural specificity in coping. Emic, or culturally specific dimensions of coping, offer an alternative framework to etic (i.e., universal) dimensions. For example, if emotion- or problem-focused types of coping are assumed to be universal then they are assumed to be etic. On the other hand, cultural specific coping is emic because it characterizes "cultural variation and specificity across national, ethnic, and cultural markers" (Kuo, 2011, p. 1092). The dimensions of a culture, including its normalised attitudes, orientations, and values, determine the preferential coping patterns of members of a certain culture (Aldwin, 2007; Chun, Moos, & Cronkite, 2006; Hobfoll, 1998). In this way, emic consideration of coping attends to important

cross-cultural differences. However, as previously noted, emic approaches can be limited by their propensity to overgeneralize and rely on stereotypes. Despite these limitations, scholars have conceptualized four specific coping responses to racism that may hold promise for understanding coping with racial microaggressions. These unique responses include: Afrocentric coping, spirituality, humour, and collective coping.

Afrocentric coping. Utsey, Adams, and Bolden's (2000) developed a model of Africultural coping based on communal and spiritual strategies prevalent amongst individuals of African descent. The four-component Africultural coping model reflects Afrocentric philosophy and includes: cognitive/emotional debriefing (e.g., hoping things would get better); spirituality; group-centred activities (e.g., acquiring from and giving support to in-group members); and ritual-centred strategies (e.g., lighting candles or burning incense) to manage stress as a means of recognizing and respecting ancestors or religious deities. For example, Black Canadians reported that spiritual- and ritual-centered strategies were the most crucial in response to interpersonal discrimination (e.g., assumptions of unintelligence; Joseph & Kuo, 2009). A component of Africultural coping, spirituality, is another culture-specific coping strategy for people across cultures (Heppner et al., 2006; Lewis-Coles & Constantine, 2006; Pargament, 1997; Utsey, Adams, et al., 2000).

Spirituality and Religion. The theoretical constructs of spirituality and religion have been used both as distinct and interchangeable in the psychological literature. Subsuming spirituality, religion often is defined as the commonplace and pragmatic acts of spirituality (Constantine, Wilton, Gainor, & Lewis, 2002). Spirituality and religiosity encompass rituals that demonstrate a belief in a higher force or Supreme Being such as relying upon church personnel for support in response to a stressor, regular church attendance and prayer. Further, they can encompass the

acceptance of a stressor as fate. These coping strategies can provide targets of racism with a connection to a Higher Purpose, meaning, guidance or comfort. Constantine et al (2002) draw upon previous literature and argue that African Americans employ more religious involvement than that of the general U.S. population and in comparison to Whites. In the coping with racism literature specifically, Lewis-Coles and Constantine (2006) demonstrated that higher institutional racism was associated with greater use of spiritual-centred coping amongst African American women.

Humour. Humour is a prevalent and effective coping response to racism for marginalized people (Dokis, 2007). Among First Nations people (Dokis, 2007), it may be expressed through storytelling and teasing. Humour serves as a practice of control, agency, to redefine and to accept stressors (Deloria, 1969; Dokis, 2007). Often, it is expressed in self-deprecating ways, which suggests a requirement for intimacy (e.g., join teasing from community members with self-deprecation; Spielmann, 1998). This strategy is an effective source for coping in Indigenous cultures (Dokis, 2007). However, it should be noted that within contexts of heightened power-imbalance (e.g., amongst White and Asian athletes), humour has been problematized as a strategy that serves to not only minimize the harmful effects of racial microaggressions but also perpetuate them by validating stereotypes (Lockyer & Pickering, 2008; Müller, van Zoonen, & de Roode, 2008; Yosso et al., 2009). Therefore, at times, humour may be problematic.

Collective coping. A prevalent component of the coping with racism literature, collective coping, occurs in interpersonal contexts (Dokis, 2007; Utsey, Adams, et al., 2000). Collective coping with racism resembles collective coping with racial microaggressions, listed above. People can learn how to cope with racism by observing their family members and through the process of racial socialization (Harrell, 2000; Hughes et al., 2006). For example, Asian

Americans may rely upon their family norms of handling stressors when responding to racial microaggressions. Alternatively, they may accept guidance from elders (Wei, Heppner, Ku, & Liao, 2010). Further, seeking support from others may be a protective factor for adverse outcomes of racism. Specifically, African American students who talked with each other about experiences of discrimination tended to have a higher grade point average than students who did not (Powell & Arriola, 2003). Similarly, family support and collectivistic strategies moderated the relations between racial discrimination stress and depressive symptoms among Asian American students (Wei et al., 2010).

These culturally specific dimensions of coping reflect important ways of coping with racism among visible minorities and Aboriginal peoples. These coping methods are unique to certain groups and may reflect features of one's culture as in the case of spirituality and Africultural coping. As noted above, they do not eradicate problematic generalizations when culture is considered, or explain inconsistencies in the coping with racism literature. Similarly, other important within-group differences such as social class and racial/ethnic identity are glossed over in such generalizations and warrant an intersectional approach to better understand responses to racism. Recently, scholars have called for more research on the influence of other important factors, such as social resources, to clarify inconsistencies about the sorts of strategies used by racial and ethnic minorities in response to racism (e.g., Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011; West et al., 2010).

Influence of Social Resources on Coping Responses

Another explanation, referred to as the contextual hypothesis, asserts that social resources are as important as racial and cultural background for understanding coping responses to racism (Noh & Kaspar, 2003). That is, problem-focused types of coping may be more accessible to

racial and ethnic minorities with more social resources (Kuo, 1995; Noh et al., 1999; Noh & Kaspar, 2003). Notably, the contextual hypothesis may imply an additive or hierarchical approach to social identity (e.g., race plus social class), which is the antithesis of intersectionality research (Bowleg, 2008; Collins, 1990). I use the contextual hypothesis here to underscore the interaction between two inter-related identity markers (i.e., racial identity and social class) in responses to racism. In line with this hypothesis, differences in coping strategies between racialized individuals reflect their context and other important identity markers, such as gender, social class, immigration status, education, and acculturation (Ahmed et al., 2011; Allen, 2010; Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Kuo, 1995; Torres et al., 2013; West et al., 2010).

Intergroup differences in social resources influenced coping strategies amongst Black middle-class high school students in Arizona (Allen, 2010) and people of Asian descent in both the United States and Canada (Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Kuo, 1995; Noh et al., 1999; Noh & Kaspar, 2003). For example, Alvarez and Juang (2010) reported Filipino American men used problem-focused strategies most frequently and avoidance least frequently; however, amongst Filipino Americans, participants who described their socioeconomic status as “lower-class” were more likely to use avoidance coping. Drawing upon the contextual hypothesis, Alvarez and Juang (2010) acknowledge that nearly 90% of the sample had at least a college degree and had resided in the United States for an average of 30 years, which may, in turn, influence their resources and access to problem-focused coping.

The same trend between coping strategies and social resources has been observed in quantitative research conducted in Canada. Korean immigrants were found to employ problem-focused strategies, whereas Southeast Asian refugees were more likely to use forbearance (i.e., emotion-focused tactic of self-control) as a response (Noh et al., 1999; Noh & Kaspar, 2003). In

both studies, the respective coping strategy was shown to be effective in reducing the impact of racism on depressive symptoms. The authors describe that Korean immigrants had greater social resources in comparison to refugees. Thus, irrespective of efficacy, Noh and Kaspar (2003) argued that racial and ethnic minorities are more likely to confront racism using problem-focused strategies when they are empowered with sufficient social resources. Noh and colleagues (1999, 2003) argue that perceived powerlessness and limited opportunities to respond to racism amongst Southeast Asian refugees directly exert influence on the choice of strategy. Racial and ethnic minorities often are reluctant to report incidents of racism out of fear of consequences, absence of institutional support, or lack of resources to navigate the system (Kotori & Malaney, 2011; Lewis et al., 2013), lending support to Noh and Kaspar's (2003) contextual hypothesis.

Summary. Although initial models of coping with racism were predominately dichotomous in nature (i.e., problem- and/or emotion- focused), contemporary models now include intersectional identities and contextual factors (e.g., racial and ethnic culture and social resources). In addition to problem- or emotion-focused strategies, at times, racialized individuals use specific coping strategies that are culturally congruent. Further, the strategies they use depend on their context, including access to social resources, which often reflect class status. Accordingly, it seems warranted that comprehensive frameworks that examine coping with other forms of racial bias, including racial microaggressions, should include racial or ethnic cultural factors and available social resources.

Coping with Racism and Racial Microaggressions: Synthesis

Taken together, scholarship on coping with racism and racial microaggressions reveals important similarities. I identified four categories of coping that are common to both literatures: resistant, spiritual, collective coping, and protective. Specifically, resistant strategies, such as

challenging and documenting racial microaggressions, are similar to previously documented problem-focused strategies of coping (e.g., Lalonde et al., 1995). Spiritual strategies have been conceptualized as an emotion-focused strategy (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and are a key feature of culturally-specific coping (Utsey, Adams, et al., 2000). Scholars have documented collective coping strategies as both problem-focused and emotion-focused, sometimes depending on the details of the strategy (i.e., venting versus seeking support to challenge). Collective coping is another important coping strategy (Heppner et al., 2006; Utsey, Adams, et al., 2000). Although self-protective strategies consist of emotion-focused strategies (e.g., detachment and avoidance) identified in the broader literature, they typically have been understudied (Lewis et al., 2013) and may be particularly relevant to racial microaggressions. For example, Lewis and colleagues (2013) identified a unique self-preservation strategy, which involved the internalization of a “Superwoman” schema (i.e., self-reliance and expectations that one must overcome all hardship) amongst college-educated Black women in the United States. This self-preservation strategy is also linked to culture (gender, social class and racial/ethnic) demonstrating that coping strategies can be extremely nuanced.

Collective responses that are environmental in nature are novel to the study of racial microaggressions. This category emerged from one empirical examination which documented that the social environment, or surrounding milieu, has an important contribution to East Asian international students’ coping responses (Houshmand et al., 2014). Although previous literature on coping with racism has not yet addressed how the environment might aid coping, other scholarship has addressed the importance of a multicultural milieu. For example, Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, and Gurin (2003) found that a diverse milieu appeared to be conducive to the establishment of strong ethnic and cultural networks among student. Similarly, Stevenson,

McNeil, Herrero-Taylor, and Davis (2005) found that diversity in the environment bolstered racial socialization among Black youth in the United States, which served as a protective factor for child maladjustment in response to racism. In the context of racial microaggressions, Asian international students in Canada reported finding comfort in multicultural environments in which they often saw other racial and ethnic minorities who could relate to their commonplace experience of being a racial or ethnic minority (Houshmand et al., 2014).

In sum, there is much overlap between the literature on coping with racial microaggressions and the literature on coping with racism. At present, much of the broad literature on coping with racism has moved toward a more comprehensive approach, including culture and social resources, which extend beyond the problem- and emotion-focused taxonomy. The broad literature on coping with racism easily translates to the five nuanced coping categories that have emerged in the racial microaggressions literature. Further, it informs readers that racialized people use a variety of coping strategies and coping strategies often reflect one's culture (Lalonde et al., 1995; Lee et al., 2012). However, culture is not limited to race and ethnicity and includes other important identity markers that also may influence coping strategies (Noh et al., 1999; 2007; Noh & Kaspar, 2003). As compared to the broad literature on coping with racism, there appear to be subtleties in responding to covert and unintentional forms of racism. The covert and commonplace nature of racial microaggressions appears to call upon a wider range of similarly indirect and nebulous coping styles. For example, seeking support or avoiding the situation to protect one's self may be better suited for subtle, unintentional forms of racial microaggressions. Similarly, racial microaggressions are less likely to be directly confronted at the time of their occurrence. While this may be because they have not yet been

integrated into nation-wide and institutional policies, it may also reflect hesitancies to directly confront often-unintentional and difficult to articulate experiences.

Gaps in the Literature

Existing models of coping with racism and racial microaggressions are useful in understanding the range of strategies used across cultural groups in North America; however, certain limitations and inconsistencies must be noted. In this section, I outline gaps in the literature (i.e., limiting dichotomies; reproducing Eurocentric values; reflecting African American samples and individuals with high education levels) and their relevance for future research on coping with racial microaggressions.

Initial empirical literature and related conceptual models tended to dichotomize coping processes into one of two categories (i.e., problem- or emotion- focused), which limit current understandings of the nuances between different strategies. Coping does not fit easily into discrete categories. For example, one study demonstrated that faculty of colour coped with racial microaggressions by choosing to stay at the institution or to seek positions in other universities. On one hand, staying is an acceptance of the stressor, which is emotion-focused (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984); on the other hand, faculty member participants reported that it provided them with a sense of agency because it was an active choice made in response to a stressor (Salazar, 2009). Conceptualizing the theme as a broad emotion-focused strategy would exclude participants' phenomenological understanding of their choice to stay as a calculated act of resistance. Thus, it is recommended that future research avoid simplistic dichotomies and present themes separately. The popular dichotomous conceptualization does not capture the richness of certain coping themes.

Furthermore, traditional stress and coping models tend to reflect Eurocentric values of individualism, reason, control, and active problem solving (Heppner, 2008). In other cultures the focus on indirect strategies such as accommodating and reframing existing realities may be preferred, consequently reflecting the value system of maintaining interpersonal harmony (Heppner, 2008; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Moreover, self-censoring may not necessarily be related to poor psychological functioning and may be protective for certain people lending support to the inclusion of diverse worldviews when examining stress and coping (Gabrielidis, Stephan, Ybarra, Pearson & Villareal, 1997; Lee et al., 2012; Noh et al., 1999). Incorporating cultural values always runs the risk of invalid generalizations, especially when categorical distinctions (e.g., between the East and West, Black peoples and people of Asian descent, etc.) are created. Indeed, people within a given racial or ethnic group use a multitude of coping strategies, some of which are consonant with their culture and others not (Alvarez & Juang, 2010; Noh et al., 1999). Culturally-congruent coping strategies reveal important practices that apply to certain cultures. However, they do not imply that all members of an ethnic or racial group will employ that specific strategy or that they will use it exclusive of other coping strategies. Thus, it is important to avoid cultural generalizations and consider within-group heterogeneity. Researchers must accurately and responsively address cultural and racial differences without overgeneralizing and relying on stereotypes.

Reflecting the broader coping with racism literature, much of the research has focused on Black American samples and individuals with high education levels while other groups have remained relatively unexamined. Among ten empirical studies on coping with racial microaggressions, most focused on Black Americans (i.e., six studies; Constantine et al., 2008; Holder et al., 2015; Lewis et al., 2013; Nnawulezi & Sullivan, 2013; Pittman, 2012; Solórzano et

al., 2000) and samples of “mixed” race in the United States (i.e., two studies combining Asian Americans, Black Americans, and other multiracial/ethnic individuals; Hernandez et al., 2010, Salazar, 2009). One study examined coping responses to racial microaggressions among Latino students, and another examined response among East and South Asian international students. At times, other important factors about the participants are noted, including their place of birth; however, this information seldom has been used in discussing findings. Notably, one of the ten studies used an intersectional approach to examine Black women’s responses to gendered, racial microaggressions. Moreover, almost all of the studies have included highly educated people (i.e., graduate and professional students, mental health professionals, academic professionals; Constantine et al., 2008; Hernandez et al., 2011; Lewis et al., 2013; Salazar, 2009). Thus, response strategies and the cognitive energy expended by participants during the appraisal process of responding to racial microaggressions may be unique to high levels of education. In other words, education may create a propensity toward reasoning. Appraisal procedures and coping strategies may be different for others (e.g., amongst younger students or in working-class samples). Notably, the two studies that examined college students’ responses to racial microaggressions did not document appraisal processes in their results (Houshmand et al., 2014; Solórzano et al., 2000). Alternatively, the resources associated with educational attainment may influence strategies (Noh & Kaspar, 2003). While educational attainment is only one indicator of social class, it is necessary to broaden samples to nuance our understanding of within group variations in coping. Further, by broadening samples to include a greater diversity of people, research can examine other important factors such as educational attainment, socioeconomic status, and acculturation on coping responses to racial microaggression (Alvarez & Juan, 2010; Brondolo et al., 2009; West et al., 2010).

Rationale for Present Investigation

Research is warranted to extend understandings of coping with racial microaggressions by examining responses among different racial and ethnic groups, with other social group identities considered, and in varying national contexts. Moreover, at this time it is unclear whether certain coping responses (e.g., spiritual coping) are more appropriate to cope with particular types of microaggressions and/or in particular contexts. In the proposed dissertation, I aim to address gaps in the literature by: (a) examining coping responses among five diverse racial groups in Canada (i.e., South Asian Canadians, East Asian Canadians, Arab Canadians, Aboriginal students and First Nations' people, and Black Canadians); and (b) examining the effects, if any, of intersecting social group identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, and social class) on individuals' responses to racial microaggressions. Below, I support and elaborate upon my research aims.

First, the majority of the research on racial microaggressions has focused on Black Americans and multiracial samples in the United States therefore I will examine responses among a broad range of racialized persons in Canada. Research conducted in the Canadian context has identified microaggressions unique to racialized persons in Canada (i.e., Clark et al., 2014; Houshmand et al., 2014; Najih & Spanierman, 2014; Poolokasingham et al., 2014). Accordingly, laws, policies and practices can exert an important influence on coping responses. For example, explicit policies targeted at preventing racial microaggressions or politicized speech surrounding racial and ethnic relations might encourage more resistant forms of coping. Additionally, hyper colour-blind racial ideology may encourage collective coping responses in "counterspaces" where one's experiences with racial microaggressions are validated (Solórzano et al., 2000). Further, I will examine responses among previously under-studied racialized groups

(e.g., South Asian and East Asian Canadians). Differentiating between East and South Asian Canadians, scholars underscore important within-group differences among people of Asian descent. For example, people of South Asian descent, whose heritage is linked to British colonial rule, have greater exposure to Western worldviews and languages (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002). Subsequently, their relationship with Western worldviews and Western countries will differ from that of people of East Asian descent. Thus, in the proposed project, I will extend the current scholarship by examining responses to racial microaggressions among diverse racial groups in Canada.

Second, empirical studies have begun to include other identity markers such as gender (e.g., Lewis et al., 2013) to offer intersectional analyses of experiences with microaggressions. Indeed, race and ethnicity are only two components of identity. It is important to include other identity markers, as they will influence one's worldview, and accordingly their behaviour. For example, racialized women report experiencing exocitization whereas racialized men report experiencing assumptions that they are violent criminals (Najih & Spanierman, 2014; Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007; Sue et al., 2008). In particular, Arab Canadian and South Asian Canadian men report experiencing assumptions that they are terrorists (Najih & Spanierman, 2014; Poolokasingham et al., 2014). Thus, in the proposed investigation I will extend analyses to differentiate between gender and other identity markers.

Finally, the broad literature on coping with racism has highlighted the important influence of educational attainment on coping strategies therefore it is important to consider the effects, if any, of educational attainment on responding to racial microaggressions. As previously noted, the existing literature on coping with racial microaggressions has predominantly focused on participants who were highly educated, which, in turn, may influence findings. For example

professionals with high education levels may access a diverse range of responses in comparison to working-class community members with secondary education. To my knowledge, only one study has discussed the role of social resources on coping with racial microaggressions. Allen (2010) found that Black American men in high school from middle-class families were provided with mentoring about how to successfully handle situations of conflict including racial microaggressions. As detailed by the author, this knowledge “puts the [students’] immediate schooling experience in a larger context, allowing them to weather racial microaggressions knowing that the failure to do so could result in a hindered academic future” (p. 136). Middle- to upper class parents not only transmitted information about racial awareness to their sons but they also advocated for their children when they observed racial discrimination (Allen, 2010). These parents held Associates, Bachelors, or Masters degrees and were employed in management or academic positions (Allen, 2010). Given the influence of social class on responding to racism and racial microaggressions, it is critical to examine what effects, if any, educational attainment has on coping with racial microaggressions. Thus, in the proposed investigation, I will examine responses to racial microaggressions among racialized community members who pursued employment directly following secondary education.

Research Questions

I plan to address two research questions in the current project: (1) How do individuals who experience racial microaggressions respond to or cope with racial microaggressions in Canada? (2) What effects, if any, do intersecting social group identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, and social class) have on individuals’ responses to racial microaggressions?

Chapter III

General Method

Similar to other race-related phenomenon (Ponterotto, 2010), qualitative research methods are well suited for examinations of racial microaggressions. As articulated by Ponterotto (2010), “where race relations have been replete with misunderstanding, stereotyping, and conflict, qualitative research can bring deeper appreciation and understanding across cultures” (p. 583). The research project will employ constructivist epistemology (Schwandt, 2001), a hermeneutic phenomenology approach, and a critical theory lens (R. A. Morrow & Brown, 1994). Constructivist epistemology maintains that multiple, equally valid social realities exist and that knowledge is co-constructed and cannot be observed directly. The constructivist approach in this research project is phenomenological, positing that human experience is known as it is lived and interpreted based on one’s background (Heidegger, 1962). More specifically, the approach is hermeneutic as it employs language or texts to interpret and reveal hidden meanings and knowledge through dialogue about lived experiences (Schwandt, 2001). Heidegger (1962) maintained that lived experiences are situated within social, cultural, and political contexts. Thus, I will employ a pervasive interpretive lens informed by critical theory throughout the research project (Kaplan, 2003). This combination of critical theory and hermeneutics serves to identify the power relations embedded in the lived experiences of marginalized individuals. Rather (1994) has used this combination effectively in prior research to examine themes of oppression in the experiences of nurses returning to school to acquire a bachelor’s degree.

A tripartite framework encompassing constructivist epistemology, hermeneutic phenomenology, and critical theory will serve as the frame for the two interrelated studies in this project. Notably, I will use two different qualitative methods: consensual qualitative research (CQR) and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Methodologists suggest that different qualitative approaches have potential to elucidate different aspects of a phenomenon

and are a valued characteristic of qualitative research (Creswell, 2012; Haverkamp & Young, 2007; Mason, 2006). In this research project, I employ CQR and IPA for several reasons. Briefly, a CQR approach has previously been used to analyze focus group data in the racial microaggressions literature. In these studies, CQR guided teams of researchers in attaining different understandings of the phenomena in question (Sue, Bucci, Lin, Nadal, & Torino, 2009). While certain scholars attribute post-positivistic elements to CQR (Ponterotto, 2005), a CQR approach that is consistent with the paradigmatic framework will be used in this research plan. As articulated by Haverkamp and Young (2007), the same qualitative method can be pursued from more than one paradigm. Thus, in the current investigation, I have modified the CQR approach in the following ways: inclusion of “rare” themes (i.e., themes only reported by 1-3 participants); and using consensus among members of the research team to gain a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon as opposed to one proximal reality.

IPA offers another promising framework to examine responses to racial microaggressions within the current paradigmatic framework (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). IPA is committed to a detailed examination of unique and individual cases (i.e., how does this particular person experience this phenomenon; Smith et al., 2009). Thus, it is more suitable for gaining a richer understanding of coping with racial microaggressions using interview data. Further, IPA is not limited by certain features of CQR (i.e., commonality and consensus) thus it may facilitate a rich, thorough analysis of the phenomenon while emphasizing unique individual differences between participants (Stiles, 1997). In this chapter, I outline the philosophical considerations undergirding hermeneutic phenomenology. Then, I describe my stance as a researcher in this project, which is an essential aspect of qualitative research (Morrow, 2005).

Philosophical Considerations: Hermeneutic Phenomenology Informed by a Critical Lens

In the context of the current research project, the philosophical considerations underlying a hermeneutic phenomenological approach correspond well with a constructivist epistemology informed by critical theory. Namely, hermeneutic phenomenology and constructivism both adopt an interpretivist view of reality (Laverty, 2008); this means every experience and understanding requires an interpretation influenced by one's background. They both underscore the role of the researcher as integral and inevitably biased. Last, both aim to examine commonplace, yet taken for granted aspects of experience, which are at the crux of how individuals interpret their lived experiences (Creswell, 2012). Given that this research project seeks to describe marginalized individuals' unique lived experiences of dealing with racial microaggressions, hermeneutic phenomenology with a critical theory lens also fits with the research questions. Hermeneutic phenomenology situates lived experiences within socio-political contexts and allows for the use of a theoretical orientation (e.g., racial microaggressions theory) as a component of inquiry (Lopez & Willis, 2004). Considering these compatibilities, hermeneutic phenomenology informed by critical theory will serve as the approach for the proposed investigations.

Hermeneutic phenomenology serves to illuminate lived experience and its associated meaning using dialogue and interpretation of dialogue (Van Manen, 1990). By contextualizing and amplifying participants' lived experiences, hermeneutic phenomenological researchers gain a clear and accurate depiction of the phenomenon under investigation. Van Manen (1990) explained that hermeneutic phenomenology involves the interplay of six essential research activities. First, researchers turn toward a phenomenon of interest. Second, they investigate the individuals' lived experience of the phenomenon. Third, they reflect on themes. Fourth, through an iterative process of writing, they describe the phenomenon. Fifth, they maintain a firm

commitment to the research question. Finally, they balance the context of the research by considering its parts and the whole process. All six of these tenets will be maintained throughout the research project.

In the hermeneutic stance, qualitative researchers acknowledge that they cannot put aside altogether their current expectations and prior biases at the onset of the research plan (Creswell, 2012; Van Manen, 1990). Researchers must be aware that their assumptions and biases will shape their interpretations throughout the research process. Therefore, they must make their assumptions and biases explicit throughout the research project (Hein & Austin, 2001). In other words, the hermeneutic stance assumes that research findings are not simply a product of participants' responses, but rather the dynamic interplay of open dialogue about participants' lived experiences of a certain phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). Participants' experiences, participants' interpretation of their experiences, and the researchers' interpretations combine to form the hermeneutic stance. Researchers, as partakers in data collection and as readers of the texts, continue to influence research findings through their interpretations. Hence, researchers must attend to and reflect "what is said in and through the [participants'] words" (Van Manen, 1990, pp. 130-131). Below, I outline my subjective researcher stance for this research project.

Researcher Subjective Stance

I am an Iranian Canadian female doctoral candidate in counselling psychology. As early as 10 years old, I recall noticing power dynamics between visible minority students, immigrants, students from a lower social class, and White upper-middle class Canadian students at my diverse elementary school. For example, I noticed that White students often were more popular than visible minority students. Similarly, I recall that students teased peers with non-Western names. I have lived in three urban cities in Canada (i.e., Mississauga, Toronto, and Montreal),

and have observed the same power dynamics being reproduced in different ways. For example, I have observed hostile attitudes from White individuals toward successful visible minorities (e.g., large enrolment rates of visible minority students at top-tier research universities). Furthermore, I have noticed how different identity markers interact and influence access to resources (e.g., visible minorities in higher socioeconomic status brackets have certain privileges that visible minorities in lower socioeconomic status brackets do not). Thus, I am sensitive to issues related to racial and ethnic identity, minority status, and power dynamics. My sensitivity towards these issues has paved the way for me to develop a deep interest in and appreciation of social justice and equity. For example, I have served as equity commissioner to the Post-Graduate Students' Society of McGill University, where I maintained that the activities of the society were in accordance with the equity policy. I believe in challenging the status quo to promote social justice, provide all individuals with equal access to societal resources, promote diversity, and ameliorate oppressive attitudes.

Chapter IV

Students' Responses to Racial Microaggressions

Method

The purpose of study one is to examine racialized university students' responses to experiences with racial microaggressions. To this end, I employed a consensual qualitative research approach applied to focus group data (CQR; Hill et al., 2005; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997; Hill, 2012), which has been used widely in racial microaggressions research (Clark, Kleiman, Spanierman, Isaac, & Poolokasingham, 2014; Clark, Spanierman, Reed, Soble, & Cabana, 2011; Houshmand et al., 2014; Poolokasingham et al., 2014; Sue, Capodilupo, & Holder, 2008; Sue, Capodilupo et al., 2007). The method is appropriate for the study of racial microaggressions because it guides a team of researchers in gaining a new, nuanced understanding of the phenomenon in question (Sue et al., 2008). The cornerstone of CQR is employing teams of three to five researchers and auditors to ensure a variety of opinions to arrive at consensus judgments. The CQR approach borrows from phenomenology and other qualitative approaches by using open-ended questions and multiple perspectives to describe a particular phenomenon within the context it emerges as experienced by the participant (Hill et al., 2005).

A key adaptation in these studies has been using CQR to analyze focus group data rather than individual interview data. In studies with only one focus group, it is not possible to conduct a cross-analysis as per CQR guidelines. However, I used multiple focus groups and conducted a cross-analysis to examine categories and domains across groups. Another key modification in the current study pertains to the philosophical underpinnings of constructivism with certain post-positivistic features related to the CQR methodology (Hill et al., 2005; Ponterotto, 2005). I employed a team of researchers to arrive at a consensual understanding about the meaning of the findings in the present study. A post-positivistic feature, CQR employs teams to increase the likelihood that multiple perspectives will deduce approximate "truths" emerging from participant

descriptions of the phenomena in a particular context, with the assumption that truths exist but are unknowable. I used the consensus process to encourage team members to share divergent perspectives and discuss ambiguities in meanings with the assumption that truths are not known (or unknown) but rather that they arise and evolve through dialogue. This constructivist approach to CQR acknowledges: participants have subjective constructed realities; interactions among the participants and the researchers are multi-directional; and, CQR employs interactive data collection methods (Hill et al., 2005).

This study was part of a larger project on students' experiences with racial microaggressions at McGill University, funded in part by the Deputy Provost and Office of Student Life and Learning. To date, the primary research team, described below, has published two articles from the data. The present study is the first study to examine students' coping responses to experiences with racial microaggressions across racial groups.

Participants and Recruitment

I employed purposeful sampling to select student participants ($N = 32$) willing to discuss the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 1990). I conducted seven focus groups with Canadian undergraduate students who self-identified as East Asian ($n = 7$), South Asian ($n = 7$), Arab ($n = 9$), Black ($n = 7$), and Aboriginal students ($n = 6$). Each group comprised of participants who self-identified with the same racial group identity. These five groups are reflective of the student population on campus. See Table 1 for additional information about participants. Participants' parents often were college-educated professionals (e.g., professors, accountants). South Asian and Aboriginal participants' parents occasionally had none or little college education and held occupations as customer service representatives or in the trades (e.g., machine operator).

I recruited participants from organizations that serve the groups of interest (e.g., South East Asian Students' Association, First Peoples' House, Arab Students' Association, and so forth). I contacted the coordinators of the respective organizations and asked them to forward the initial recruitment e-mail (see Appendix A) to their members. I sent a follow-up e-mail to students who responded to the initial recruitment e-mail and demonstrated interest in the research project to thank them for their interest (see Appendix B). Further, I asked students to complete a brief questionnaire and to communicate their availability across several weeks (see Appendix C). The brief questionnaire acted as a screening form for interested participants to ascertain basic demographic information: age, gender, racial and pan-ethnic identification, primary ethnic background, citizenship, number of years spent in Canada, and status at McGill University. I used the screening form to ensure that participants were students and to ascertain their self-identified racial identity to organize racially uniform focus groups. The interim coordinator of First Peoples' House was involved actively with the research team and served as a liaison between the researchers and Aboriginal participants. Due to scheduling issues, a Master's Counselling Psychology student and I separately conducted two focus groups for the Aboriginal students (see Clark et al., 2014 for details). Similarly, because only Arab Canadian women ($n = 5$) responded to the initial recruitment call, another Master's student conducted a separate focus group with Arab men ($n = 4$).

Data Sources

The study materials included: a demographic information form and a semi-structured interview protocol. I constructed all materials along with my doctoral research supervisor with feedback from other professional, graduate, and undergraduate members of our research lab.

Demographics. I used a brief demographic questionnaire to obtain background information and contextualize participants' lived experiences (see Appendix E). Participants chose a pseudonym and answered a series of personal questions. Specifically, they provided information regarding age, gender, sexual orientation, birth country, racial and ethnic identification, socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, their year and major at the university, and the number of years spent in Canada. As one indicator of students' socioeconomic status (Liu, 2002), I collected data on students' parents' or caregivers' level of education as well as their occupations.

Interview Protocol. I developed a semi-structured focus group interview protocol to guide the focus group discussions (see Appendix F). Consistent with a constructivist approach, I used a review of the microaggressions literature to gain clarity about the phenomenon under investigation (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Eight general questions guided the focus group discussions. After asking a general warm-up question, the focus groups discussed various forms of discrimination that participants might have experienced on campus. The interviewer posed the question of specific interest to the current investigation: "Some of you have described experiencing racial discrimination on campus. What are some of the ways that you have coped?" I used potential follow-up probes for clarification and elaboration.

Procedures

Ethics. The Research Ethics Board of McGill University approved the study prior to data collection. The Institutional Review Board at Arizona State University, where Professor Spanierman currently works, also approved the study after I collected and analyzed the data. Prior to commencing the focus groups, the facilitators described the goals of the study and any potential risks involved. Then, participants read and signed the informed consent form.

Participants signed an informed consent form that ensured they were aware of the purpose and nature of the research, their rights, the protection and limits of confidentiality, risks and benefits associated with participation, and how the research would be disseminated (see Appendix D). In particular, myself or the interviewer when I was not present reminded participants that confidentiality could not be guaranteed because of the nature of focus groups and asked them to refrain from sharing confidential information with anyone other than the research team or other participants. All participants agreed with these stipulations and signed a copy for the researcher's record. Participants received an additional copy for their own records with the primary investigator's contact information to allow them to follow up about the project at a later date.

At the beginning of the focus groups, facilitators provided information about logistics (e.g., the focus group will be audio-recorded), reiterated consent, and guided participants to choose pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. Facilitators guided groups to establish ground rules (i.e., discussion guidelines that everyone agreed to follow). All groups maintained the following ground rules: to speak one at a time, to maintain confidentiality, and to refrain from judgment. All participants used self-selected pseudonyms throughout the focus group discussions. In addition, researchers used pseudonyms in any field notes that described participants. Finally, findings are presented only by pseudonym or are combined anonymously in aggregate form.

Data collection. Because of the novelty of this area of study, focus groups were an effective instrument to generate meaning surrounding the phenomenon under examination (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Focus groups have several advantages over individual interviews. Namely, they allow for interaction among the respondents. Rich information can emerge in focus groups as members interact with one another to elaborate, disagree on points, and reconcile

differences (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Given that differing opinions are treated as equally valuable and informative, the group format may lend itself to more spontaneous, thoughtful, and interactive responses than individual interviews (Hennink, 2014; Krueger & Casey, 2015). Focus groups have been used in prior racial microaggressions research (e.g., Lewis et al., 2013; Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue, Bucci et al., 2007).

Focus groups were conducted in accordance with Krueger and Casey's (2015) procedures and ethical guidelines. The participants guided discussion topics as a group while the facilitators maintained some structure (see Appendix F). I served as the primary facilitator (or moderator) of four of the seven focus groups. I was not able to serve as the primary or secondary facilitator in the other three groups because of scheduling issues. Other team members replaced my position in the South Asian (i.e., a Sri Lankan Canadian female master's student in the primary research team) and Arab Canadian (i.e., Arab Canadian female master's student) focus groups. In accordance with recommendations (Hennink, 2014; Krueger & Casey, 2015), a research assistant served as co-facilitator and note taker in all groups. In each focus group, at least one co-facilitator self-identified with the particular group under investigation. I aimed for $n = 6 - 8$ participants as per the recommendations for focus group sample size (Hennink, 2014; Krueger & Casey, 2015). However, I was unable to achieve that number in the Aboriginal and Arab Canadian student groups thus, I conducted mini focus groups (i.e., groups with less than six participants; Krueger & Casey, 2009; see Clark et al., 2014 for more information about challenges when recruiting Aboriginal students). As noted above, participants used self-selected pseudonyms. I audio-recorded each focus group interview and transcribed recordings verbatim. Interviewees received a pizza dinner and \$20 for participating. The majority of the focus groups occurred in a private room in the Faculty of Education. Joined by the in-house coordinator and a

community elder, we conducted the Aboriginal undergraduate student focus groups at McGill's First Peoples' House.

Data analysis. Drawing from Sue and colleagues' focus group research, I used a CQR approach applied to focus group data. I retained the essential components of CQR (i.e., reliance on consensus amongst team members, cross-analysis) and adapted the approach to analyze focus group data. Related to the constructivist underpinnings of the research project and CQR, I did not report frequencies in this study. Because I collected data from multiple focus groups, I used cross-analysis to identify common coping themes across all five groups (Hill et al., 2005). Professor Spanierman, a South Asian Canadian female Master's Counselling Psychology student, a Jewish Canadian male Master's Counselling Psychology student, and I comprised the primary research team.

We completed data analysis in ten steps. Initially, the primary research team reviewed all transcripts independently and developed a start list of domains (i.e., topic areas) within cases. We met to discuss the start list of domains. Second, we began to develop core ideas (i.e., summaries) within each case by coding the transcripts individually. We compared and discussed our respective analyses of each interview until achieving consensus and then we proceeded to the next interview; this unfolded over a six-hour team meeting. In step three, informed by our group discussions, I cleaned up the data and documented core ideas (i.e., summaries) and related illustrative quotations for each domain in each case. In step four, the primary research team reviewed and agreed upon the illustrative quotations and core ideas. In step five, two graduate students served as internal auditors who reviewed all transcripts and analyses and suggested modifications. As per CQR recommendations, the auditors are experienced in CQR and have expertise in racial microaggressions. In step six, we, the primary research team, addressed the

internal auditors' suggestions. In step seven, as a group, we conducted cross analysis by discussing our conceptualization of common categories (i.e., consistent core ideas across cases). We discussed and achieved consensus on categories across domains as well as any areas of disagreement. In step eight, I developed a findings table representing a comprehensive preliminary account of the analysis. In step nine, the auditors reviewed the table and suggested modifications. In step ten, we, the primary research team, addressed the suggestions and I prepared a final table of the findings before drafting the results.

Trustworthiness

I used several measures to ensure that the research study met standards appropriate for qualitative studies (i.e., they are trustworthy and credible; Morrow, 2005). Criteria for trustworthiness often span across different qualitative paradigms (Morrow, 2005). Thus, the expression or salience of criteria can differ depending on the particular paradigm of research. Therefore, in this study, to address a constructivist approach with certain post-positivistic features, I did not use frequencies, I emphasized participants' unique identities and subjective realities in our team meetings as well as the narrative account of findings, and I explored the multi-directional interactions between researcher and participant through discussion with my research team. Below, I outline how I addressed the trustworthiness of the study.

Credibility. I engaged several steps to enhance credibility, which refers to ensuring that findings accurately reflect participants' experiences of responding to racial microaggressions. First, throughout the research project I maintained a clear "phenomenon" (i.e., responding to racial microaggressions) to study (Creswell, 2012). Second, I used illustrative quotes to support coping response categories. Last, I used peer researchers to maintain internal consistency. Specifically, internal auditors reviewed my interpretations to ensure the conclusions derived

from the data are sound (i.e., not simple reflections of my own personal biases). Auditors ensured that other understandings had been considered.

Transferability. Related to maintaining sensitivity to context, every effort was made to ensure that all constituents of the research process were described sufficiently. To maintain sensitivity to the context, I provided “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of the context in which the data emerge. This will ensure that readers do not perceive the findings as transferable to populations and settings not included in the present study (Morrow, 2005).

Dependability. The process through which the findings were derived is explicit and transparent. To this end, I conducted memoing by keeping systematic, detailed records of the research activities, including the order in which the activities were conducted, the process through which the domains and categories emerged (e.g., cross-analysis), and influences on the research process (Morrow, 2005).

Confirmability. I maintained a reflexive stance through peer debriefing and journaling (Lather, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Morrow, 2005). Qualitative research places the role of the researcher as the central means of data collection (Morrow, 2005). Thus, all peer researchers and collaborators identified personal values, assumptions, and biases at the onset of the study. We discussed these during regular group meetings.

Findings

In response to racial microaggressions, student participants reported employing four strategies: (a) *using humour to mitigate tension*, (b) *seeking community and solidarity for support*, (c) *avoiding or withdrawing for protection* and, (d) *confronting perpetrators and challenging stereotypes*. Below, I define each strategy and provide illustrative quotations where appropriate. The categories are not mutually exclusive. At times, strategies overlapped and were

used in combination. I present the categories in order of salience (i.e., frequency of occurrence across cases) in the data. See Table 2 for a list of categories and accompanying core ideas.

Using Humour to Mitigate Tension

Students reported using humour, including self-deprecating humour, to connect with White Canadian students, diffuse racial tensions, and assert power. Students described a culture of joking on campus in which racial microaggressions were masked as innocuous jokes among peers. The prevalence of race-based jokes created pressure for racialized students to respond in ways that would alleviate discomfort in cross-racial relationships and allow them to integrate into the dominant culture. For example, J-Z, a Chinese Canadian student, reported using race-based jokes to connect with others when he first started university. He shared:

I admit I used to make a lot more [jokes] than I do now and that was very much at the beginning of university. When I first moved into residence, it was an icebreaker to build friendships, just to connect through humour. And once they [others] knew I was fine with it, they started making jokes like that and I got very uncomfortable with it and since then ... it has been an issue that I took upon myself to cut down on those kinds of jokes.

J-Z noted a change from his first year in university to the end of his second year, where he deliberately refrains from racist jokes because of the potential for negative consequences.

Sarah, a South Asian Canadian woman, described playing along with racist jokes. She said:

Someone brought up [a story] about some girl who was like locked up in her room making the assumption that the girl was Muslim. And then they [classmates] made a comment like... "Oh that probably happened to you too, right?" And then I was like "Ha, ha, actually it did." Like I played along, I was like [with sarcasm] "Oh yeah, you know it! It was a good time though." ... Obviously that didn't happen.

In this example, Sarah used irony to diffuse tension following an insulting remark targeting her racialized background as pathological.

At times, students discussed being the first to make self-deprecating racial jokes to prevent racist jokes being made at their expense. When peers questioned Tony, a Black Canadian man, about how genuinely Canadian he is, he responded with humour. He shared that if peers continue to ask, “Where are you from?” after he informs them that he is “from Canada,” he tells “some Black joke.” For example, “I’m from Africa but I lived in London, Ontario... and I’m really fast compared to Canadians.” Tony described relying upon “stereotypical” characteristics to respond to racial microaggressions. He believes if he is the first to joke about his racial identity, then others will not direct racist comments at him. With regard to making the derogatory jokes first, Portia, an Arab Canadian woman, described it as a way to assert power. She explained, “I think there is a lot of power in turning or making the joke before it’s made at your expense.” However, for Tracy, a Chinese Canadian student, using self-deprecating humour was “kind of uncomfortable.” She explained:

Sometimes I do use that kind of self-deprecating humour... One time my friend took a picture with her eyes closed and I made a joke [by pulling out my eyelids and making a peace sign with my hand]. Well, like I can do that because I’m Asian, the stereotype about having small eyes, and so I know it’s my own fault in that sense, me on one hand saying I feel kind of uncomfortable, but at the same time perpetuating that kind of thing. Tracy expressed tension about her use of self-deprecating humour because of the ways in which it also breeds racist jokes. Almost all students employed humour, for slightly different reasons and based in a broader culture of joking on this predominantly White campus.

Seeking Community and Solidarity for Support

Another response to racial microaggressions involved connecting with racialized individuals for affirmation and emotional support. One student, for example, travelled to areas with greater racial and ethnic diversity for social interaction. Jess, a South Asian Canadian woman, reported, "My first year wasn't so great because I felt like I didn't belong. I'd go to [racially diverse neighbour campus] because I feel like I belong there more." Others found support among racialized communities on campus. Arab Canadian participants described certain classes and student organizations as affirming spaces to discuss and process racial microaggressions. Participants also found support at various student-led cultural clubs and campus organizations, including spiritual spaces. Maria, a South Asian Canadian woman, reported that the "international students' club" helped her to "meet other people" and "share personal experiences." All Aboriginal students found support at the First People's House. For example, when we asked the students where they "feel a sense of belonging," Aeris, an Aboriginal male student, provided the address of the First People's House. Following Aeris' remark, the Aboriginal students in the first focus group broke out in laughter and nodded in agreement of finding a sense of community at First People's House. Within these campus spaces, students were able to connect with allies and other racialized students.

Because some students felt hesitant to address racial microaggressions directly with White individuals on campus, they tended to discuss with family members, racialized students, and occasionally with racialized staff on campus. Tracy, a Chinese Canadian woman, shared concerns about appearing overly sensitive if she were to talk about racial microaggressions with White individuals. Thus, student participants chose to discuss experiences with other people of colour. For two Aboriginal students, processing experiences with racial microaggressions with

other Aboriginal friends was both “educational” and “fun.” On one hand, they had a thoughtful discussion about their experience and on the other, they could “tell jokes about it.” Blue Shirt described, “someone said I live in a teepee and we’ll make a joke about it. ‘Yeah, of course we do’ [said with sarcasm].” In a combination of two categories (i.e., *using humour* and *seeking community and solidarity for support*), some participants described laughing with family and friends in supportive environments to alleviate stress. In one illustrative example, Simone, a Black Canadian woman, reported, “[I] find some place where everyone understands... and I tell them, and we laugh about it. Then, I’ll call my sister and we laugh about it some more.” In response to experiences with racial microaggressions, students drew upon pre-existing support groups (e.g., family) to discuss and laugh about their experience.

Avoiding or Withdrawing for Protection

Students reported choosing to disengage or detach emotionally from experiences with racial microaggressions. This took the form of hiding their racial background, disengaging from perpetrators, or choosing to ignore racial microaggressions, most often in the service of protecting themselves. At times, to protect themselves from stereotyping and discrimination, certain participants avoided discussing activities pertaining to their cultural identity. For example, Raj, a Black Canadian man, described not telling dominant group peers in residence about Black cultural group meetings on campus to avoid the negative “reactions” of others. Another student, Turquoise, an Aboriginal woman, described choosing to hide her racial background. She shared that to avoid “a million questions and ... getting called out, it's probably easier just to be neutral and just not always be, you know, I guess, I don't want to say 'Super Native,' but like always talking about Native issues or where I come from.” In this way, certain

students reported choosing to avoid conversations about their racial background and about cultural activities to protect against racial microaggressions.

Students often ignored racial microaggressions if perpetrators were in positions of power (e.g., professors). Jess, a South Asian Canadian woman, reported ignoring microaggressions delivered by professors because of fear of retaliation. Aboriginal student participants were concerned that faculty, teaching assistants, and staff would invalidate their experiences if they challenged racial microaggressions. In another example, after her professor skipped over her during student introductions in a class in which she was the only “one wearing Hijab,” Sarah, a South Asian Canadian woman, ignored the incident in the moment and then stopped participating in class. She explained, “I would listen and I would engage but I would not put up my hand.”

Among perpetrators who seemed unresponsive to feedback about how they committed a racial microaggression, students chose their battles cautiously. Alicia, an Arab Canadian woman said, “If you know that this person [a peer] is not willing to listen to what you're saying and it's just going to have negative repercussions in the end... there is no point in putting yourself in it.” Thus, in service of self-protection, students reported carefully evaluating their responses by disengaging from racial microaggressions in situations where the potential for negative repercussions outweighed the potential for reparations.

Confronting Perpetrators and Challenging Stereotypes

Confronting perpetrators and challenging stereotypes took several forms. At times, students expressed racial pride and endorsed an educator role. Jane, a Black Canadian woman, shared:

Since I'm at [University]... I admit where I come from... I'm not afraid of saying, “This is how I did my hair. This is how you're pronouncing my name” and then talk about it

openly. Yeah, I have endorsed this educator role. In high school, I would avoid this stuff, thinking I could just say everything in my head. Now I say it out loud. Yes, I'm Black. I go to [club for students of African descent].

Similarly, Tony, a Black Canadian man, adopted an educator role and informed his White roommate about the importance of cultural organizations on campus. He stated:

I was telling my roommate about going to [club for Black students] and he was expressing that there could never be a White student association here... And, so we went into a really educated discussion about it, and I found that it was really his ignorance and not realizing [what] being an outsider in a primarily White society [feels like]... and the group is there to bring together people... of similar cultures. It was just enlightening to him and made him understand.

Blue Shirt, an Aboriginal student, “corrected stereotypes” by “explaining” their hurtful implications or false assumptions. He described when dominant group peers perpetuate stereotypical message such as “Do you guys live in teepees still?” he prefers to explain “No, there’s not a community of just teepees on the [Reserve]” instead of ignoring the comment. Blue Shirt chooses to “educate people” and provide individuals with “the right story so they are not going around” perpetuating racial microaggressions. He said people typically respond by thanking him for the information. In these ways, students described confronting peer perpetrators as educators and cultural experts effectively.

Other participants described how they confronted negative stereotypes about their racial and ethnic groups through their actions. Specifically, they acted in ways that contrasted prejudicial notions of how members of their communities are expected to behave. Raj, a Black

Canadian man, described not wanting to express anger among peers as to avoid perpetuating stereotypes of the “angry Black person.” Allie, an East Asian Canadian woman, reported:

The idea that Asian people are a lot more quiet, a lot more studious, a lot more hardworking, they're more docile... I feel like if I'm in a group of people I don't know I will push myself to be more social, almost more than I would in a group of friends I feel more comfortable with, because I need to show that I am an individual more so than a stereotype.

In sum, student participants dismantled prior assumptions about their racialized backgrounds by asserting their cultural identities, educating others, and acting in contrast to stereotypes.

Discussion

Findings from the current study highlight university student participants' resilience in response to experiences with racial microaggressions. In particular, four categories emerged from the data: *using humour to mitigate tension*, *seeking community and solidarity for support*, *avoiding or withdrawing for protection*, and, *confronting perpetrators and challenging stereotypes*. These strategies are consistent with coping domains identified in prior microaggressions research and also extend previous findings. Key findings elucidate: (a) the dialogue between avoiding and confronting perpetrators, (b) the complex role of humour in responding to racial microaggressions, and (c) the importance of social support as strategy for students in university settings. Below, I discuss these key points, and offer implications for researchers, university faculty, staff, and counsellors.

Dialogue between Avoiding and Confronting Perpetrators

Students employed protective, distancing strategies by complying with or ignoring racist remarks made by high status perpetrators (e.g., professors). Research has demonstrated that

targets of oppression are less likely to confront perpetrators of higher relative power in comparison to the target (e.g., a boss) than those in equal- or lower- power positions (e.g., co-workers; Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). Furthermore, perpetrator power is associated with reduced ability to decide on a course of action and a greater potential cost of action to lower-power targets of oppression (Ashburn-Nardo et al., 2014). Among professors, student participants worried about negative repercussions such as appearing like an outcast in the classroom. In the present study, ignoring racial microaggressions in the moment led to a reduction of engagement with the perpetrator or diminished class participation over time. At times, students also ignored racial microaggressions perpetrated by peers as a result of similar fears of negative consequences of challenging racism; e.g., appearing overly sensitive. Consistent with previous literature on responses to interpersonal racism (Kuo & Joseph, 2009), students used resistant coping least often.

When students deemed remediation possible, they confronted racial microaggressions perpetrated by similar-status peers (i.e., individuals who did not hold positions of power). Findings suggest that Black Canadian and Aboriginal students were more likely than other groups to confront others by educating them about the implications of racial microaggressions and by asserting their racial pride. It is possible that this trend represents sociocultural characteristics unique to these two groups, or alternatively, that the coping strategy depends on the types of racial microaggressions students experienced. However, important within-group differences emerged. As an example, in the theme of *confronting perpetrators and stereotypes*, one heterosexual Black man chose to educate others in response to racial microaggressions, while another bisexual Black man chose to avoid confronting others out of fear of perpetuating stereotypes of the “angry Black man.” Similarly, Lewis et al. (2013) found that Black women

refrained from actively speaking against experiences with gendered racial microaggressions to avoid characterizations of the “Angry Black woman.” Thus, acts of proving oneself to White peers and professors to be seen differently from widely-accepted, negative stereotypes may have influenced their likelihood to confront racial microaggressions by asserting racial pride or educating others.

Across groups, students challenged stereotypical expectations of their groups by acting in ways that negate gendered stereotypical characterizations. In this way, additional identity markers, such as gender and sexual orientation, may have shaped students’ experiences with and responses to microaggressions. For example, South Asian women reported dressing well (i.e., dressing formally) to avoid characterizations of “FOB³ South Asians,” while East Asian women describing over-compensating for stereotypes of the “docile Asian woman” by being assertive and social. In addition, an Aboriginal woman reported choosing to not disclose her indigenous identity to negate stereotypes of “being super Native.” Therefore, students’ awareness about the ways in which resistant coping may perpetuate gendered racial stereotypes influenced their responses.

Humour as a Coping Strategy Among Racialized Students

Racialized students used humour in response to racial microaggressions in nuanced ways that differed based on situation. Laughter in response to racial microaggressions was at times adaptive, often reflected pressures to integrate into the dominant culture on campus, and occasionally, reflected internalized racism. Students described a culture of race-based jokes on campus, whereby racial microaggressions were masked as seemingly benevolent jokes that often went by unchallenged by members of campus. Among peers, student participants played along

³ The acronym FOB (i.e., Fresh off the Boat) denotes the assumption that South Asian Canadian students do not fit into Canadian society (see Poolokasingham et al., 2014).

with jokes to alleviate tension and integrate into the campus culture. Occasionally, students made self-deprecating jokes. Students used humour as a protective and avoidant strategy among dominant group peers. Among allies and family members however, laughing about experiences with racial microaggressions served as a collective strategy.

Consistent with extant research among members of racialized communities, humour can serve as a requirement of intimacy, a practice of control to redefine and accept stressors, and an adaptive response to stress among members of racialized communities (Campos, Kelter, Beck, Gozaga, & John, 2007; Deloria, 1969; Dokis, 2007; Lefcourt & Martin, 1986; Spielmann, 1998). However, within contexts of heightened power-imbalance (e.g., amongst White and Asian athletes within White cricket culture in the UK), humour has been problematized as a strategy that serves to not only minimize the harmful effects of racial microaggressions but also perpetuate them by validating stereotypes (Lockyer & Pickering, 2008; Müller, van Zoonen, & de Roode, 2008; Yosso et al., 2009). Self-deprecating humour in these contexts may reflect the internalization of negative dominant group messages about one's racial or ethnic identity (i.e., internalized racism; Speight, 2007) and can be detrimental (Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsh, 2004). East Asian students in particular seemed to make more self-deprecating jokes than other groups of students. Notably in the East Asian focus group, as students discussed self-deprecating jokes, they noticed internalized forms of racism and accepted some responsibility for perpetuating racism. Thus, the nuanced use of humour in response to racial microaggressions reflects the culture of joking on campus and differs based on context (e.g., among allies or among dominant peers).

Seeking Support

Consistent with literature on the adaptive function of networks with people of colour (Franklin & Boyd-Franklin, 2000; Lam, 2007), students in the present study identified seeking support from pre-existing networks to resist and validate experiences with racism, consequently diminishing the adverse impact of racism on self-esteem and self-understanding. Campus groups for students of colour such as the First Peoples' House offered important places of belonging and support on the predominantly White campus. Being securely embedded in one's ethnic culture provides support and resilience to racialized students on campus (Houshmand et al., 2014) and has been shown to ameliorate some of the distress associated with discrimination in general (Brondolo et al., 2009). As a testament to the importance of collectivist coping, one student sought community and solidarity at a nearby campus with greater racial diversity. A diverse milieu can be conducive to supportive racial and ethnic networks (Hurtado, Dey, Gurin, & Gurin, 2003) and a source of comfort for racialized students (Houshmand et al., 2014).

Notably, all Aboriginal students relied on the First Peoples' House as a form of support on campus whereas students in the other focus groups interacted with a variety of clubs, some of which were culturally-based (e.g., Black Students' Network; Catholic Chapel). This pattern may be associated with the specialized nature of First People's House as an official stakeholder and residence of campus life as well as their outreach efforts to connect with Aboriginal students on campus. Alternatively, the under-representation of Aboriginal students at Canadian universities (see Clark et al., 2014) may create unique obstacles for Aboriginal students looking to connect with other Aboriginal students on campus, which may then increase students' motivation to participate at First People's House. Finally, we recruited Aboriginal students in collaboration

with First People's House hence findings may not be representable to Aboriginal students who do not affiliate with the First People's House.

Limitations and Future Directions for Research

The current study is not without limitations. Findings represent undergraduate students at one research-intensive, predominantly White university in Canada. Although the purpose of qualitative research is not transferability, additional research must examine students' responses to experiences with racial microaggressions at different universities to determine whether these findings apply in different settings. Another limitation pertains to a potential selection bias whereby certain demographic characteristics are overrepresented at the university under investigation. Almost all of the students' parents and/or guardians had at least attended college, and the majority were employed as professionals (e.g., engineers, professors, pharmacists). Moreover, on average, students were 20 years old. It is possible that this sample of student participants represents limited age, educational and social class diversity. Among a broad sample of Black Canadians, educational status influenced Black Canadians' use of problem-focused coping with racism strategies (Joseph & Kuo, 2008). Thus, the strategies reported in this study may not represent people of colour from community settings, with lower or higher levels of education. Research should examine how adults in community settings from various racial groups and social class backgrounds cope with racial microaggressions.

Certain preliminary patterns emerged in these data and warrant future research. To understand these patterns, future research could conduct additional focus group and individual interviews with students belonging to the same racial identity. Because I identified group patterns (e.g., Black Canadian and Aboriginal students are more likely to confront others through education), future research should investigate the ways in which multiple social group

identities (e.g., age, gender expression, and sexual orientation) intersect and influence individuals' responses to experiences with racial microaggressions. In the present study, I focused only on *racial* microaggressions. In another study, Lewis and colleagues (2013) examined Black women's coping responses to their experiences of gendered racial microaggressions. Consistently, future research might explore the ways in which multiple social group identities (e.g., religion, race, and social class) intersect and inform racialized students' responses to racial microaggressions.

There are both strengths and limitations to employing a focus group approach. Although focus groups allow participants to discuss phenomena as a group and create new mutual understandings, it is possible that this process fosters groupthink (Janis, 1982). Thus, the group format may have silenced divergent perspectives in the present study. Individual interviews might elicit richer understandings of the phenomenon unique to each individual participant. Future research could employ individual interviews to increase understandings of strategies used by racialized individuals in response to racial microaggressions.

Implications for University Practice

Students relied on campus services, such as multicultural associations and the First Peoples' House as a source of support in response to racial microaggressions, thus campuses should develop opportunities for collective forms of coping, including specialized services for racialized students. Active campus engagement, specifically in cultural clubs such as the Black Students' Network may serve as a buffer against the adverse effects of racial microaggressions (Harper, 2015; Samuel, 2004). Targets of racial microaggressions may accept and internalize the underlying negative messages of racial microaggressions, come to feel shame associated with their racialized identities (Speight, 2007; Watts-Jones, 2002), and disengage from campus life.

The broad literature on racism and coping has found that racialized individuals who demonstrate a strong sense of collective identity with their ethnic group are less prone to distress (Crocker et al., 1994; Lam, 2007; Phinney, 1989). Specialized support services such as the First Peoples' House address the unique needs of students who belong to historically underrepresented groups. Moreover, in the present study, focus groups themselves served as a form of coping that allowed almost all students, if not all, an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss racism in guided discussions with peers from the same racial background. The findings and extant literature on the use of adaptive collective coping (e.g., Utsey, Adams, et al., 2000; Wei, Heppner, Ku, & Liao, 2010) suggests that group work, whether in the form of peer support, psychoeducation, or counselling groups, should become a preferred mode of providing services to racialized students who have or continue to experience various forms of racial microaggressions.

Given the influence of power on students' responses to racial microaggressions, university personnel in power positions may be important agents of change in mitigating racial microaggressions on campus. In fact, prejudice scholars speculate that when high-power people (e.g., managers) call out discriminatory behaviour they observe in work settings among employees, they likely reduce future expressions of discrimination from the perpetrator (Swim, Gervais, Pearson, & Strangor, 2009). Because of the covert nature of racial microaggressions, well-intentioned perpetrators often are not aware that they have microaggressed. Student participants' relied on education and discussion to increase awareness about the implications of racial microaggressions among peers. There is a need for formal intervention targeting White university personnel to reduce pressure on racialized students to act as cultural experts (Clark et al., 2014) and to address the ways in which they perpetuate racial microaggressions, and potentially enable the culture of race-based jokes among undergraduate students.

Across focus groups, students described a culture of race-based jokes on campus that appears important and warrants the attention of university personnel. In the East Asian focus group, as students discussed self-deprecating jokes, they gained awareness of the implied meanings of such jokes and their social and psychological outcomes. It is possible that students will recount these sentiments in counselling settings; thus, university counsellors could help students explore their meanings in individual or group formats. Further, university personnel could address race-based jokes in residence halls.

Conclusion

This qualitative investigation of responses to racial microaggressions among racialized students suggests that participants demonstrated resilience by employing a range of self-protective, collective, resistant and environmental strategies. They used humour to mitigate tension related to racial microaggressions, relied upon support networks, cautiously chose to ignore or detach from racial microaggressions, and at times, confronted racial microaggressions. Findings revealed the dialectic between avoiding and confronting racial microaggressions, demonstrated the nuanced role of humour as a coping strategy, and underscored the importance of social support for racialized students. Student concerns about issues of power and context influenced their response strategies. To build a climate of anti-racism on campus, university personnel in positions of power must mitigate racial microaggressions and disrupt the culture that contributes to perpetuating racism on campus. Further, universities must bolster supports for racialized students, such as the First Peoples' House or group counselling to empower racialized students.

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Sexual Orientation	Racial Identification	Primary Ethnic Background
Alicia	Female	19	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian	Egyptian
Dalida	Female	20	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian	Lebanese
Blue	Female	18	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian	Egyptian
Portia	Female	22	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian/White European	Moroccan American
Fanta	Female	18	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian	Egyptian
Pizza	Male	21	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian	Syrian
Adam	Male	19	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian/White European	Algerian
Naz	Male	20	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian/Black Canadian	Afro-Arab
Juice	Male	20	Heterosexual	Arab Canadian/White European	Franco-Algerian
A	Male	18	Heterosexual	East Asian Canadian	Chinese
J-Z	Male	18	Bisexual	East Asian Canadian	Chinese
C	Male	19	Heterosexual	East Asian Canadian	Chinese
Tracy	Female	19	Heterosexual	East Asian Canadian	Chinese
Lisa	Female	19	Heterosexual	East Asian Canadian	Chinese
Ali	Female	21	Heterosexual	East Asian Canadian	South Korean
Jenny	Female	18	Heterosexual	East Asian Canadian	Chinese
Bill Nye	Female	20	Bisexual	Aboriginal/White European	Cree First Nation
Lauren	Female	20	Heterosexual	Aboriginal	Cree
Daisy	Female	19	Heterosexual	Aboriginal	Cree/Metis
Turquoise	Female	24	Heterosexual	Aboriginal	Mohawk/Mikmag
Blue Shirt	Male	21	Heterosexual	Aboriginal	Mohawk
Aeris	Male	20	Homosexual	Aboriginal	Mohawk

Emily	Female	19	Bisexual	Black Canadian	Jamaican
Montreal	Female	21	Heterosexual	Black Canadian/Mixed	Rwandese
Sheba	Female	22	Heterosexual	Black Canadian	Ghanaian
Simone	Female	20	Bisexual	Black Canadian	Jamaican
Jane	Female	20	Heterosexual	Black Canadian	African
Tony	Male	20	Heterosexual	Black Canadian/African	Ethiopian
Raj	Male	19	Bisexual	Black Canadian	Trinidad
Praba	Male	23	Heterosexual	South Asian Canadian	Tamil
Seven	Male	21	No Response	South Asian Canadian	Sri Lankan Tamil
Sophie	Female	19	Heterosexual	South Asian Canadian/White European	Sri Lankan/French
Maya	Female	20	Heterosexual	South Asian Canadian	Sri Lankan
Maria	Female	21	Heterosexual	South Asian Canadian	Indian
Jess	Female	21	Homosexual	South Asian Canadian	Tamil
Sarah	Female	22	Heterosexual	South Asian Canadian	Bangladeshi

Table 2

Coping Responses to Racial Microaggressions

Categories	Core Ideas
Using humour to mitigate tension	Students described making jokes, including self-deprecating humour, to diffuse racial tension, assert power, and connect with members of the dominant group on campus.
Seeking community and solidarity for support	Students reported connecting with other racialized individuals, including family members, for affirmation and emotional support.
Avoiding or withdrawing for protection	Students reported disengaging or detaching emotionally from experiences with racial microaggressions. To safeguard themselves from stereotyping and discrimination, students reported avoiding identifying with their racial background.
Confronting perpetrators and challenging stereotypes	At times, students described challenging subtle forms of racism by expressing racial pride, educating others, and defying stereotypes of their racial group.

Bridging Study One and Study Two

In study one I employed a consensual qualitative research approach applied to focus group data to examine racialized undergraduate students' responses to racial microaggressions at one specific university. To my knowledge, study one is the first to examine racialized students' responses in a Canadian context, excluding international students. The findings suggest that racialized students used four strategies: (a) using humour to mitigate tension, (b) seeking community and solidarity for support, (c) avoiding or withdrawing for protection and, (d) confronting perpetrators and challenging stereotypes. Findings revealed: (1) a dialect between avoiding and confronting perpetrators; (2) the nuanced role of humour in responding to racial microaggressions; and, (3) the importance of social support.

In the extant racial microaggressions literature, scholars have examined coping responses among participants who are college-educated, professionals, and/or affiliated with institutions of higher education. Thus, in study two, I sought to examine responses to racial microaggressions amongst a racialized sample that pursued employment following post-secondary education. I chose to conduct individual interviews with participants in study two to complement the findings of study one. Open-ended interviews are an effective means to gain understanding through detailed insight from participants. I expected that social class would be an important identity marker in study two. Because the research topic was novel, multidimensional, and related to identity, I employed interpretative phenomenological analysis to analyze interview data. Throughout the research process, in consultation with community members, I removed any use of the term "Aboriginal" and used the term "Indigenous" in study two.

Chapter V

Individual Interviews with Community Members

Methods

The purpose of study two was to examine responses to racial microaggressions among visible minority Canadians and Indigenous individuals who pursued employment directly following post-secondary education. By examining coping among a unique under-represented sample, I hoped to gain a new perspective on coping responses to racial microaggressions. To fulfill this purpose, I employed interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA; Smith et al., 2009). IPA has previously been used in racial microaggressions research (i.e., Constantine, Smith, Redington, & Owens, 2008). IPA is appropriate where the research topic is multidimensional, contextual, novel, and related to identity, as in the current investigation (Osborn & Smith, 2006). The conceptual roots of IPA reflect the philosophical underpinnings of constructivism and IPA lends itself to a hermeneutic approach (Smith et al., 2009).

Participants and Recruitment. Following recommendations for IPA (Smith, 2011), I conducted interviews with 12 participants: Black Canadian ($n = 5$), South Asian Canadian ($n = 2$), and Indigenous ($n = 5$) community members willing to engage in a discussion about the phenomenon under investigation. The idiographic nature of IPA lends itself to small samples with three – six participants (Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009); however, IPA studies generally include a range of 3 – 14 participants (Smith, 2011). I obtained theoretical saturation after the eighth interview, ensuring adequacy of data among a diverse sample (Morse, 1995). Because I was not able to recruit other South Asian Canadians who pursued employment directly following post-secondary education, I excluded the two interviews with South Asian women from the current study. The exclusion of the two interviews did not compromise the adequacy of the data.

Participants ($N = 10$) self-identified as Black Canadian ($n = 5$; male = 2, female = 3) and Indigenous individuals ($n = 5$; male = 2, female = 3) who did not pursue or complete college

education (see Table 1). All participants were Canadian citizens and all participants had lived in Canada for 14 or more years. Although participants ranged in age from 30 to 71 years, most participants were in their late thirties. Six participants reported annual before-tax incomes in the \$23,999 or below bracket, two in the \$24,000 to \$29,999 bracket, and two participants reported incomes in the \$30,000 to \$36,999 bracket. When the last Canadian census was collected, the low-income threshold for a family of four in Canada was \$41,568 after taxes (Statistics Canada, 2014). Considering the number of people that participants reported as relying on their annual income, all participants earned less than half of the national median income and meet criteria for the “low-income” designation in Canada.

I used purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990) to recruit community members through community organizations in Montreal. Specifically, I sent recruitment e-mails or notices (see Appendix G) to community centres such as “Women on the Rise” and the “YMCA.” I collaborated with community leaders throughout the research project in the following ways. I introduced myself to agency directors and described the study before approaching individuals at community centers or agencies. I shared that the research study is interested in examining community members’ responses to subtle forms of racism. I stated explicitly that I would use their responses for my doctoral dissertation, publications, and presentations. I inquired if the agencies or community centers have their own research ethics board process, and none of them did. With the support of the organizations, I gave them the recruitment notice for distribution among their members. I visited or telephoned community members who demonstrated an interest in the study to thank them for their interest (see Appendix H). Finally, I asked community members to respond to a brief screening questionnaire and communicate their availability for a meeting time (see Appendix I). The purpose of the screening questionnaire was to ensure that

participants met the requirements of the study (i.e., have not completed college-education and have prior experiences with racial microaggressions).

Setting. The research study was conducted with Black Canadian and Indigenous participants in Montreal, Quebec. Montreal is an urban city located in the province of Quebec with distinct customs and policies related to diversity, language, and culture relative to the rest of Canada. The French, White residents of Quebec encompass a small population (0.3%) relative to the White English majority in Canada. Since the 1960s, the preservation of Quebecois culture and the French language have been important political issues within the province. The Quebecois have shaped the policies and norms of the province to promote their customs. For example, newcomer parents to Quebec are required to register their children within the French school system. In allegiance with the preservation of the French, White culture, newcomers to Quebec from different cultures and languages may be viewed as a cultural and political threat to the province (Turgeon & Bilodeau, 2014).

Researcher Stance

I used an intersectional approach to examine community members' responses to gendered, class-based, racial microaggressions. I expected that social class would be an important identity marker in this study and defined social class using four multiple indicators: i.e., self-identification, occupation, education, and income (Liu, Soleck, Hopps, Dunston, & Pickett, 2004). Following guidelines for community-based research, the research study maintained cultural sensitivity (e.g., encouraged dialogue on institutional inequities), reciprocity (e.g., treated participants as collaborators), and accountability (e.g., will disseminate findings to participants; Henderson, Sampsel, Mayes, & Oakley, 1992; Jackson, 2002).

Data Sources

The data sources comprised a demographics information form, and a semi-structured interview protocol. I constructed the materials in collaboration with my research supervisor and other committee members.

Demographics. A brief demographic questionnaire obtained background information (see Appendix K). Participants chose a pseudonym and answered a series of personal questions regarding age, gender, sexual orientation, birth country, racial and ethnic identification, range of income, occupation, level of education, religious affiliation, as well as the number of years spent in Canada. Where possible, questions used multiple-choice responses to aid participants and for analytic purposes. For example, several income ranges were provided to locate participants on a continuum of incomes representative in Canada. I responded to participants' questions if anything unclear and reviewed their responses with them afterwards.

Interview Protocol. Following recommendations for IPA (Smith et al., 2009) and general guidelines for interview strategies (Kvale, 1996), the interview protocol comprised open-ended general questions and potential prompts to ascertain information about participants' experiences coping with racial microaggressions (See Appendix M). First, I asked participants to consider and reflect upon their experience as a racialized individual in Montreal. I made every effort to use language in the interview that was consistent with the participants' language. For example, I used the demographics questionnaire as a foundation to frame certain questions (e.g., "What is it like being a Black Canadian man in Montreal?") that were unique to each individual participant (Kvale, 1996). Then, I asked participants to describe experiences in which they encountered racial discrimination. I prompted participants to consider a range of both overt and covert discrimination. Afterwards, I asked them to describe how they have responded to racial

discrimination and some of the ways that they have coped. As indicated in Appendix M, the semi-structured interview protocol consisted of five general questions and several possible prompts to guide the conversation with the participants (e.g., rephrasing or clarifying participants' responses; Kvale, 1996). During a pilot test with two volunteers, I obtained feedback from pilot participants regarding questions that need to be modified, added, or excluded. Based on their feedback, I reviewed the protocol for psychological jargon and made the language accessible and clear.

Procedures

Ethics. McGill's Research Ethics Board, which adheres to the Tri-council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants, and the Institutional Review Board of Arizona State University, where Dr. Spanierman currently works, evaluated and approved the research materials. Participants received consent forms (see Appendix J) addressing the purpose and nature of the research, their rights, the limits of confidentiality, risks and benefits associated with participation, and how the research would be disseminated. I reviewed the informed consent form with participants and provided an oral description. I asked participants to explain what I described in their words and responded to any questions (see Appendix K; Kripalani, Bengtzen, Henderson, & Jacobson, 2008). All participants understood and agreed with the stipulations therein, signed a copy of the informed consent form for the researcher's record, and received a copy for their own records.

Data Collection. Because of their in-depth nature, open-ended individual interviews are an effective means to increase understandings of an under-studied topic through detailed insight from participants (Creswell, 2012; Smith et al., 2009). I used semi-structured, open-ended individual interviews to elicit a narrative about participants' lived experiences of the

phenomenon under investigation. I conducted interviews in private rooms at community centres. On average, interviews typically lasted 60 – 90 minutes. Participants received \$20 as compensation for their time. I audio recorded each session and transcribed each verbatim.

Data Analysis. Using guidelines for IPA (Smith et al., 2009), I analyzed data in seven steps. First, I read interview transcripts one at a time and multiple times each to become immersed in the text and obtain a holistic picture of the participants' experiences. Second, I focused on the first transcribed interview and re-read the transcript multiple times. I annotated texts of importance on the right margin of the transcript (i.e., the case). Third, I documented emerging theme titles on the left margin. I transformed my initial notes on the margins into phrases to capture what emerged in the text. Fourth, I searched for connections across emergent themes and took note of any theoretical ordering; for example, I abstracted (i.e., placing two similar themes together and renaming the cluster) or subsumed (i.e., collapsing one theme into a super-ordinate other; Smith et al., 2009) themes. Then, for the fifth step, I moved onto the next transcript and repeated steps two to four. I used the emergent themes from the previous case(s) to inform thematic analysis of new data cases. Sixth, I examined emergent themes for patterns across transcripts (i.e., cases). I repeated these steps for the remaining eight transcripts.

To ensure that participants' voices guided data analysis, I engaged in an iterative process (i.e., a reflexive process whereby the researcher continuously re-examines data throughout the research process in order to refine understandings and connect developing insights; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). Accordingly, I revisited the transcript texts throughout data analysis. I created a final table including all themes from all cases to communicate the findings. Finally, in the seventh step, Professor Spanierman conducted an audit of my findings and I made appropriate revisions, based on Professor Spanierman's feedback. Consistent with IPA guidelines, I

identified themes to feature in the present study on the basis of prevalence, richness, and relationship to other themes and findings (Smith, 2007).

Trustworthiness

I engaged several measures to ensure that the research study meets standards appropriate for qualitative studies (i.e., data are trustworthy and sound; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Morrow, 2005). I used four criteria to address trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility. I used several steps to enhance credibility (i.e., to ensure that the findings reflect participants' realities). First, throughout the research study, I maintained a clear "phenomenon" to study (i.e., community participants' self-reported responses to racial microaggressions; Creswell, 2012). Second, I used illustrative quotations to support my interpretations of the data. Third, Dr. De Stefano served as an auditor and reviewed my interpretations of the data to reduce bias. I worked closely with Professor Spanierman to address his suggestions. Last, I checked in with participants throughout interviews to ensure I had an accurate understanding of their interpretations. For example, I asked, "You said that you would hide emblems on your work outfit that might suggest you are Indigenous, did I hear you right?" These different measures helped to retain credibility of the data.

Transferability. Related to maintaining sensitivity to context, I made every effort to describe all components of the research process sufficiently to ensure that readers do not perceive the findings as transferable to populations and settings not included in the research project (Morrow, 2005). I maintained sensitivity to the context by providing "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1973) of the context in which the data emerge.

Dependability. The process through which findings are derived was made explicit and transparent. To this end, I conducted memoing (i.e., kept systematic, detailed records of the research activities, including, the order in which the activities were conducted, the process through which the data were interpreted, and influences on the research process; Morrow, 2005). I enhanced the trustworthiness of the project by describing fully all data analysis steps.

Confirmability. I used the iterative process, peer debriefing, and journaling to maintain a reflexive stance (Lather, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Morrow, 2005; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). Because qualitative research places the role of the researcher as the central means of data collection (Morrow, 2005), all peer researchers identified their personal values, assumptions and biases at the onset of the study. I kept a reflective journal throughout the process to note my own biases and assumptions (Laverty, 2008).

Findings

Participants used seven strategies to respond to racial microaggressions: *calling out perpetrators, seeking support, choosing a positive outlook, empowering self and others, choosing to not engage, using humour* and, *taking care of self*. Below, I define each theme and provide illustrative quotations with pseudonyms, where appropriate. I present themes in order of salience (i.e., repetition of occurrence) in the data. See Table 1 for coping themes and definitions.

Calling Out Perpetrators

All but one participant confronted verbal and nonverbal racial microaggressions directly. Participants described encountering racial microaggressions in public spaces, including public transportation and grocery stores. They challenged perpetrators and called out insulting comments reflecting negative stereotypes. In one example, Ojibeq, an Ojibwa man, described calling out a man's comment that all Indigenous people "have bugs." He told the pedestrian,

“That’s not true. That’s an insult.” In another example, when a White French woman told Annie, an Inuit woman, to “go home,” Annie retorted, “I am First Nations. You should go back home.” She described that calling perpetrators out makes her “feel better.”

Black Canadians spoke out against racial profiling by police officers and security guards in stores. Madlene described experiencing racial profiling when a police officer pulled her over for “no absolute reason.” She said, “[I asked the officer] straight up, ‘Is it because we are Black?’” Madlene compared her experiences to accounts of racial profiling in the United States and in “racist movies.” Similarly, Crab, a Caribbean man, described calling out security guards who follow him in stores by asking, “You following me?” Though confrontations did not lead to admissions of racism or apologies, participants addressed racial profiling by calling them out as they occurred. Confrontations often positively altered the immediate situation by ending racist behaviour and made participants feel better.

At times, women called out racial microaggressions targeting their children. Two Caribbean participants, for example, described calling out racial microaggressions directed at their sons. Annel recalled witnessing a lady glare at her toddler’s dreadlocks on the bus. She looked back at the woman who “kept looking.” Annel protested, “What you looking at?” Annel described, “she get up [*sic*] and I said, ‘good. More seat for me! If you are not happy sitting on the bus next to my son, then get a car.’” As a result of racial profiling, the two women explained that they worry about the psychological and physical safety of their boys in Canada.

In a unique manifestation of *calling out*, two Indigenous participants rejected the term “Aboriginal” on the demographic form and provided self-definitions during the interview. For example, Parsa Humour, an Inuit woman, explained, “I’m not Aboriginal... Aboriginal to me means ‘Native.’ I wouldn’t be using that.” She defined herself as “Inuit.” Consistently, Ojibwa,

and Ojibwe man, explained that to him, “Aboriginal” denotes “savage.” He preferred the specific designation “Ojibwa.” In sum, participants described challenging racial microaggressions by calling them out and at times, explaining their reactions to perpetrators.

Seeking Support

All but one participant in the present study described turning to others for advocacy, resources, and emotional support. Participants described seeking help from others including family members, friends, and professionals (e.g., social worker, lawyer, and so forth) in response to racial microaggressions.

At times, participants sought advocacy from others to help them take action against microaggressions. For example, Annel, a Caribbean woman, explained that her husband helped her identify that she was missing payments for days worked from her employer. Together, they confronted her employer. Annel said her husband’s advocacy “gave her voice” and empowered her to confront these incidents on her own in the future. Other participants sought advocacy from individuals in positions with higher authority (e.g., lawyers or building superintendents). After her baby was born, Annie, an Inuit woman, described that a nurse asked her insulting questions such as, “Are you Eskimo? What are you doing in Montreal? How come you’re not home? Where did you learn to speak English? You can’t speak French?” Annie shared her concerns with her social worker, and her social worker reported the nurse’s inappropriate conduct to the hospital. Consequently, Annie was assigned a new nurse. Similarly, Annel leaned upon her superintendent for help responding to experiences with racial microaggressions in the building. Although the present study focuses on more subtle forms of microaggressions, in one illustrative example, Annel sought the support of the building superintendent to remove a tenant who wrote “N* get out of my building” on the walls. Unfortunately, advocacy was not always effective.

Crab described seeking legal advocacy twice in response to racial profiling and racial bias in a custody battle. In both cases, Crab lost and thought that he was misrepresented by the justice system.

At other times, seeking support referred to obtaining access to housing and employment. Indigenous participants, for instance, sought access to resources from family and friends, the Native Friendship Centres of Montreal, and other professionals. This particular strategy was linked to participants' experiences with employment and housing discrimination. Some participants said potential landlords were eager to meet with them on the phone, but in person, they were turned away. For example, landlords told them their rental applications were "lost" or the apartment was "suddenly rented." At times, participants confirmed their interpretation by asking other friends to inquire about the apartments only to discover that the listed apartment was still available. Other Indigenous participants described similarly being turned away from jobs. Thus, in order to access housing and jobs, Indigenous participants relied upon resources from one another. Sara, an Ojibwa woman, said finding a job on her own was difficult because "people automatically assume we steal or we will come [to work] drunk or something." She "managed to find an apartment through friends... and a job ... through help from associations that are trying to help Aboriginals." Indigenous participants also sought other resources such as food and diapers from social workers and the Native Friendship Centre.

Finally, participants sought solidarity and validation from friends, family, and community centres. Amanda, a Caribbean woman, said, "coming here [to community centre for racialized women] I try to let out as much as I can. I've heard other people complaining... They help me to come out and not think about it [alone]." Other participants confided in family and friends. Madlene, a Caribbean woman, stated:

If it's really bothering me I have to get it out. We [the people I confide in, my boyfriend, my sister, and my best friend] are going through the same thing anyway. They always let me know that the person who is making these assumptions... there is most likely something going on with them inside.

At times, emotional support from friends helped participants to expand their understanding of racism and “stick up for [their] right[s].”

Choosing a Positive Outlook

In this cognitive and behavioural strategy, eight of ten participants chose to be positive in response to racial microaggressions through spirituality and cognitive reframing. Participants reframed negative experiences with four specific strategies: (a) identifying perpetrators' ignorance, (b) viewing perpetrators as individuals who have been hurt previously, (c) using positive self-talk, and (d) choosing to be mindful. Ojibeq and Madlene described feeling “sorry for them [perpetrators].” Ojibeq identified perpetrators as ignorant and Madlene said the perpetrator “is hurting inside... [so] they lash out.” Other participants were mindful of their attitudes and chose positivity. In response to pervasive racial microaggressions on public transportation, Ojibeq and Ijinginut chose to be positive. Ijinginut, an Inuit man, used positive self-talk by telling himself, “I will have a nice day, and it usually turns out that way.” When others avoid sitting or standing next to Ojibeq on crowded subways, he prefers to think he has a “superpower” in the form of “a shield” around him. “I try to have no bad feelings about that and just live life and be happy,” Ojibeq said. Midnight, a Black Canadian man, explained that having “lived so long with a little bit of discrimination. Cuz that's what Canada is, it's so subtle,” he also chooses to “pay attention to the positive stuff.”

Some Black Canadian participants maintained a positive outlook through their connection with a higher purpose. They relied upon God and prayer in response to racial microaggressions. Amanda, a Caribbean woman, for example, asks the Lord for forgiveness for perpetrators for “they know not what they do.” She reported that she chooses to let go of any hatred toward perpetrators. Crab described, “God puts some joy in my heart.” By using spirituality and cognitive reframing, participants maintained compassion for others and self.

Empowering Self and Others

Seven participants relied on two strategies of empowerment: asserting racial pride and using education. Notably, all Black Canadian participants reported some form of empowerment, whereas two of five Indigenous participants did so.

Participants asserted pride in their racial identity, their ancestors, and their ability to overcome challenges. Three Black Canadian participants identified Black intellectual scholars (e.g., Frantz Fanon) and celebrities (e.g., Harry Belafonte and Rhianna) as impactful in their racial pride. Madlene described that as an adolescent she disliked natural hair and wished for hair like her “White best friend’s.” Madlene shared that she now embraces her “natural” hair and celebrates it by colouring it “Rhianna red,” commenting on similarities between her hairstyle with that of celebrity Rhianna. With regard to self-definition, Madlene explained, “I don’t like when some Caucasian people will say, ‘you’re not Black you’re really light skinned.’ I [say] ‘No I’m Black. I’m African Canadian.’ I love being chocolate. I’m very proud.” Other participants took pride in their ancestors’ resilience. Midnight, a Black Canadian man, described Black Canadians as “kings and queens that come from many uphill battles.” Similarly, Ojibeq was proud to be a “descendent from the kings and rulers of this country, people who knew about the back of the turtle... I came from some pretty tough people that survived a lot of stuff.” Ojibeq

referred to his ancestors' resilience as "strong medicine." Participants used pride in their racial identity and ancestors to shape their self-concept and reject the negative messages of racial microaggressions.

Participants also used education to empower themselves and others. Participants sought general education as well as culturally-relevant education (e.g., Black intellectual scholars and learning languages). For example, Amanda, a Caribbean woman, went "back to [high] school" after experiencing racial microaggressions working as a nanny. She said:

I used to babysit kids and on many different occasion the kids were telling me, "Your colour is like the caca in the toilet" and stuff like that. I tried to talk to the mother about it and she would do nothing ... I changed that job and went to different houses to work and it's the same problem. I kind of make a promise that I'm not going to go back into a house and work. I'm going to better myself and find something better to do ... I told her [my employer], "You know what I'm going to go back to school" and she's like, "Oh, it's going to be hard! You're not going to make it!" So I went and I did the exam, and after I did the exam, I said, "You know what? I'm at the high school level. I did it!"

Two Indigenous participants described re-learning Indigenous languages to assert pride in their identity. They also transmitted cultural education and pride to younger generations. For example, Ojibeq described teaching his children Ojibwa phrases. He shared, "I'm trying to let them know they can be proud of who they are... [My son] is growing up in the city and if people ask 'are you Indian?' [I tell him to] say 'I'm Ojibwa!'" Participants relied on strategies of empowering self and others to resist negative dominant portrayals of Indigenous peoples and Black Canadians across generations.

Choosing To Not Engage

Seven participants, six women and one male used cognitive and behavioural strategies to ignore, disengage from, or avoid racial microaggressions as a form of self-protection.

Participants employed a range of distancing strategies from simply leaving certain stores through to quitting their job to get out of a situation. Participants chose to walk away from perpetrators and shrug off the incident, and occasionally, they changed their behaviour to avoid being targeted on account of race.

Participants attributed choosing to overlook and disengage from racial microaggressions to: (a) avoiding stress, (b) the ambiguous nature of racial microaggressions, and (c) their commonplace nature. For example, Madlene chose to walk out and not spend money in stores where sales associates and security guards followed her as if she was “going to steal from them.” Madlene said, “I just try to not make the thing stress me out, because I am a stress case as is. I really put stuff in the back of my head sometimes to avoid it.” Midnight attributed his decision to not engage with racial microaggressions to their covert nature. He said, “Most of the time you’re not really sure [of what happened]... so you kind of shrug it off and go about your business... I’ll walk it off or just talk to myself.” Similarly, Annel and Amanda described leaving their jobs as nannies as a result of several experiences with racial microaggressions. Annel said:

When you go work with people [in their homes], they look at you like “you’re Black” [said in a negative tone]. You’re like garbage. I can’t stand that... For so many years I’ve been here [in Canada] and they still don’t treat us like we are human... It’s low. I’d rather stay home.

Ultimately, they both chose to leave those jobs.

Two other women described altering their behaviour to avoid being targeted by racial microaggressions. In one example, Madlene described turning down her music when stopped at a red light to reduce attention to herself. In another example, Sara, an Ojibwa woman, shared that she hides “Aboriginal” emblems on her clothes. When wearing a shirt referencing her “Aboriginal network” she said, “I put my bag over my shirt. I don’t want anyone to recognize [I am Aboriginal] because I don’t want everyone to think bad of me.” In comparison to Madlene, Sara’s behavioural strategy was intended to prevent racial microaggressions, and linked to feelings of internalized racism. Later, she explained that she has “fantasies about being White” because she wants to experience living without fear of racial microaggressions. While some participants struggled with internalizing racial microaggressions, for the most part participants chose to disengage from and ignore experiences with racial microaggressions as a form of self-protection.

Using Humour

Six participants used humour and sarcasm in response to experiences with racial microaggressions. At times, participants directly confronted perpetrators with sarcasm and teasing. Other times, they joked about the incident with members of their support network. Throughout the interviews, participants often made jokes about their experiences and laughed while telling their stories.

Occasionally, participants responded to perpetrators of racial microaggressions with laughter and sarcasm. Annie explained:

I just laugh instead of getting angry... One time we were gathering and eating caribou. It was frozen and [my friend] cut it with an axe. The [French man] neighbour didn’t like all the noise. He started knocking on the door calling us names. We just started laughing.

Similarly, Sara, an Ojibwa woman, described responding with sarcasm when the myth of meritocracy is used to explain employment discrimination. One day on the streets, she heard a White woman talk about her with a friend saying, “Why doesn’t she go to school?” In response, she sarcastically responded “I went to school thanks.” Sara said she uses sarcasm in response to experiences with racial microaggression to “bounce [them] off.”

Linked to *seeking support*, participants reported joking and laughing about experiences with racial microaggressions with family and friends. Madlene said since “we [my sister and I] are going through the same thing we just joke about it.” In another example, Ojibeq said he chooses to “get a laugh out of” experiences with racial microaggressions with friends. For example, commenting on the arbitrary use of race for oppression, Ojibeq “joked” with his friends about starting a cult with “tattoos on our forehead so we know who is in our cult and we can set up our own beliefs, own theory, own way of life and tell people about it.” Participants described sharing their experiences with members of their support network and laughing about their experiences to alleviate distress.

Participants also used humour while recounting experiences with racial microaggressions during the interview. For example, while recounting an experience in which a White former colleague described that he would not date “Black women because they smell,” Madlene mocked the perpetrator to the interviewer. She teased, “He doesn’t even look good anyway” and laughed. Commenting on their use of humour throughout the interview, two Black Canadian participants equated laughter with “remedy” and “medicine.” Participants used humour in different ways. For example, by laughing with friends, by responding to perpetrators with sarcasm, and by making light of experiences with racial microaggressions throughout the interview. For a few participants, humour served an adaptive healing function.

Taking Care of Self

Four participants engaged in self-care through creative expression and comforting activities. Male participants who expressed themselves creatively did so in a way that was culturally grounded. For example, Midnight played songs he heard that informed his racial identity development as well as ones he wrote himself. He wrote and performed songs focusing on human rights for Black Canadians as well as other marginalized groups. He sang, “Bigotry and indifference reminds me of slavery... Human rights is guarantee [*sic*] for all... [I’m] standing up for my rights. I’m in it to win this fight.” Ojibeq also shared his art with me during the interview. He showed a sculpture he was carving for a non-Indigenous client and described the cultural symbolism he used to leave his “legacy behind.” Finally, two participants reported engaging in comforting activities on their own in order to release stress from racism. For example, Annel played games and read books. In this way participants used art, creative expression, and comforting activities to heal.

Discussion

In the current study, Black Canadians and Indigenous participants described their resilience by employing seven strategies in response to experiences with racial microaggressions. Consistent with previous literature on coping with racial microaggressions (e.g., Lewis et al., 2013), the themes encompassed a combination of resistant, protective, and collective forms of coping. The present study is, to my knowledge, the first to examine responses to racial microaggressions among low-income Black Canadian and Indigenous community members who did not pursue or complete college education. Key findings demonstrate: (1) the importance of social support in accessing resources and confronting racial microaggressions; (2) participants’ use of culturally-grounded strategies, including spirituality and interconnectedness, as well as

cultural rituals; (3) participants' multi-faceted use of humour to confront and to minimize racial microaggressions; and, (4) the strategic use of avoidance among women participants. Below, I also address limitations of the present investigation and, I offer directions for future research and implications for social and clinical interventions.

Social Support is Integral

Participants frequently sought the support of others for access to cultural and social capital in ways that previous microaggressions research has not documented. In the present study, participants' difficulties accessing employment, and other resources (e.g., clothing) often were linked to racial profiling, assumptions of criminality and second-class citizenship (Sue, Capadilupo et al., 2007). In a review of the literature on discrimination among the homeless population, Torino and Sisselman-Borgia (2016) posited different themes of classist microaggressions that may target homeless individuals in the United States. Themes included assumptions of criminality, invisibility, and assumptions of intellectual inferiority. Support from others (e.g., community organizers, social workers, janitors, family members) was integral in accessing resources and confronting racial microaggressions. A key finding in this study, all but one participant frequently called out perpetrators. This finding is notable because while social class privilege does not mitigate racism (e.g., Holder et al., 2015), in prior research, socioeconomic status influenced the dynamic of responding to racial microaggressions by way of social and cultural capital (e.g., Allen, 2010; Nnawulezi & Sullivan, 2013). Participants' intuitive use of social supports to confront racial microaggressions corresponds with Noh and Kaspar's (2003) sociocontextual explanation of coping processes; i.e., racialized individuals are more likely to resist racism when they are empowered with sufficient social resources. With care and advocacy from others, low-income participants who did not pursue college education assertively

responded to racial microaggressions and accessed essential resources, such as employment, housing, and diapers for children.

Culturally-Grounded Strategies

Across many themes, community participants used strategies that reflected cultural values and practices, such as spirituality and interconnectedness. An appreciation for spirituality and interconnectedness, and distinct culturally-grounded rituals are prevalent throughout most Aboriginal and African-centered cultures (McCormick & Wong, 2006; Utsey, Adams & Bolden, 2000). Themes pertaining to these values (e.g., spirituality; Hernandez et al., 2010; e.g., seeking social support; Lewis et al., 2013, or seeking comfort in the multicultural milieu; Houshmand et al., 2014) previously were documented in research on responses to microaggressions.

The present study is the first to document the use of spirituality among a non-professional sample. Black Canadian participants who did not pursue or complete college used prayer to re-frame their experiences with racial microaggressions. Unique to this study, participants asked God to forgive perpetrators' ignorance and chose to be compassionate toward perpetrators.

Linked to *empowerment of self and others*, participants relied on their ancestors' history and cultural identity as a form of strength. For Indigenous participants specifically, providing affirmative self-definitions and re-learning Indigenous languages could be important strategies to challenge stereotypes. These targeted efforts to restore languages serve to recover cultural traditions and assert a positive cultural identity among Indigenous individuals in Canada (Kirmayer, Simpson, & Cargo, 2003). In another manifestation of *empowerment of self and others*, Black Canadian participants connected to Black scholars and celebrities to affirm their identity.

Furthermore, Black Canadian participants and Indigenous participants who were parents instilled racial and/or ethnic pride in younger generations by teaching them about their cultural backgrounds and supporting them in rejecting the negative messages of racial microaggressions. Allen (2010) examined Black American students' responses to racial microaggressions and found that students from middle-class families with college-educated parents generally received guidance from their parents on how to confront racial microaggressions. In this study, low-income Black Canadian and Indigenous parents who did not pursue college indirectly taught children to counteract racial microaggressions by encouraging them to be proud of their racial identity. Previous racial microaggressions research among faculty and mental health professions of colour that conceptualized supporting and empowering students of colour as a form of mentorship (Holder et al., 2015; Hernandez et al., 2010; Salazar, 2009).

Finally, in the present study, male participants used cultural rituals, such as sculpting and hip-hop, in response to racial microaggressions. In fact, the interview process itself may have been associated with the re-enactment of the cultural ritual of oral story-telling (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Livo & Rietz, 1986). At the end of the interview, several participants identified that they enjoyed the interview process and sharing their experiences with the interviewer.

Multifaceted Use of Humour to Challenge or Minimize

Participants used humour in response to racial microaggressions in different ways depending on the context. Among perpetrators, participants used sarcasm to resist or debunk racial microaggressions. Hernandez et al (2010) also found that mental health professionals of colour in the United States and Canada confronted racial microaggressions with sarcasm. Thus, at times, humour served a resistant function in response to racial microaggressions. Hernandez et

al (2010) conceptualized using humour as a form of calling out perpetrators. In this study, using humour was multifaceted.

Among peers, humour was a collective, protective strategy used to minimize racial microaggressions and alleviate distress. Although racial microaggression research has not previously documented this collective manifestation of humour, broader racism research has. In previous racism research among Indigenous Australians, Mellor (2004) conceptualized participants' use of humour (e.g., mimicking perpetrators to friends) as a way to gain control of racism. Further, Garde (2008) articulated that for Indigenous Australians, laughing about experiences with racial microaggressions among peers might indicate intimacy and kinship. Participants laughed about experiences with racism among friends, family, and at times, the interviewer to mitigate negative feelings.

Strategic Use of Avoidance and Confrontation among Women

While participants were generally more likely to confront racial microaggressions, relative to men, women were more likely to also distance themselves from perpetrators of racial microaggressions and related situations. Women participants used a combination of confrontation and avoidance depending on the context and/or their cognitive capacity. Only one male participant reported disengaging from racial microaggressions as a result of their ambiguous nature, which made it difficult to decipher intentionality or respond to the client. Previous research has demonstrated that targets of racial microaggressions routinely become desensitized to or evade experiences with racial microaggressions as a form of psychological survival and to manage negative emotions (Lewis et al., 2013; Nnawulezi & Sullivan, 2013; Sue, 2010). Joseph and Kuo (2008), who examined responses to subtle forms of interpersonal racism among Black Canadians, hypothesized that the potential costs (e.g., being labelled a

troublemaker for confronting racism) of using resistant coping may be too vast in comparison to alternative options (e.g. collective and protective coping). Hence, it is possible that among women, the aggregate of gendered and racial oppression along with low-income levels increase the risks of resistant forms of coping.

Limitations

The present study is not without limitations. First, the findings represent only two groups of racialized individuals with individuals the majority of who are in their late thirties, and who live in one province and are heterosexual. Hence, these findings may not be transferrable (Morrow, 2005) to other low-income racialized individuals (e.g., East Asian Canadian) of different ages and sexual orientations living in other Canadian settings (e.g., rural areas with lower numbers of racialized individual).

Furthermore, this study took place in an urban city in Canada where the official language is French and where the milieu is distinct in comparison to other Canadian cities. In order to participate in this study, participants had to speak English. Four participants were fluent in French (Ojibeq, Madlene, Midnight, and Sara) while the majority did not speak French. Thus, the findings may not adequately represent the experience of racialized and Indigenous individuals in Quebec who use French as their primary or sole language. Moreover, it is possible that responses to experiences with racial microaggressions may differ in other urban and rural areas of Canada. For example, the language politics in Montreal may exacerbate racial segregation and employment discrimination thus increasing English-speaking racialized individual's reliance on collective forms of coping in response to racial microaggressions.

Finally, although the current study employed an intersectional interpretive lens informed by critical theory, it is possible that certain questions in the interview protocol imply an additive

approach to intersectionality, whereby racial and ethnic identity, gender and social class are treated as independent and hierarchical variables. In particular, in the first opening question the interviewer asked participants about their experience as a racialized, gendered individual (e.g., a Black Canadian woman or an Ojibwa man). Subsequently, in follow-up prompts, the interviewer asked participants how other identity markers (e.g., sexual orientation or social class) indicated on their demographics forms influence their experiences. Although the protocol facilitated rich information, it is possible that this order of questions implied a hierarchy between gender and racial or ethnic identity and other identity markers (e.g., social class). As articulated by Bowleg (2008), future researchers should be mindful to how they word their questions using an intersectional methodological approach.

Directions for Future Research

The present study examined responses among Black Canadian and Indigenous individuals in one city; thus, additional research is required to examine responses to racial microaggressions among diverse racialized community members (e.g., South Asian Canadians) and develop understandings of how individuals of diverse racial backgrounds response to racial microaggressions in different settings (e.g., Vancouver or Toronto). The present findings demonstrated novel, culturally-grounded manifestations of existing coping themes in response to racial microaggressions. Future research could employ an interview format to better understand subtle manifestations of responses among racialized community members who did not pursue or complete college.

The present study focused exclusively on responses to racial microaggressions rather than other types of microaggressions (e.g., gender). Race is only one of the social categories that influenced participants' lived experiences. At times, participants were uncertain of whether their

experiences with microaggressions were based on class, race, social class, or a combination. Other times, they discussed the ways in which different identity markers intersected to influence their experiences. For example, Amanda considered how her experience with being exoticized could reflect both her gender and racial background. Thus, additional research is necessary to distinguish the influence of intersecting identity markers (e.g., gender, race, social class) on coping responses.

Future research could employ different methods to develop coping categories, including collective strategies and using humour. Not featured in previous racial microaggression research, participants' use of humour in to respond to racial microaggressions was multifaceted and may be best categorized as a separate category of coping in addition to protective, resistance, and collective forms. Future research could further examine the use of humour, including self-deprecating and sarcastic humour, among racialized and Indigenous individuals to better understand this nuanced theme and develop its conceptualization. Qualitative methods (e.g., focus groups; Houshmand et al., in preparation) can develop an understanding of the phenomenological experience of humour, while quantitative methods can further inform its conceptualization as a coping strategy relative to the existing categories. Finally, community-based participatory research could be employed to ensure findings and related implications have relevance for racialized communities.

Implications for Practice: Re-shaping Psychosocial Services

Participants demonstrated a range of resilient strategies that can be used to inform social and clinical interventions. One mechanism for increasing resilience within Black Canadian and Indigenous peoples is through the preservation of their cultural values and history. Among Indigenous populations, the erasure of culture and removal of land have been detrimental to

Indigenous survival and values like interconnectedness. Similarly, the exclusion of Montreal's Black Canadian community from dominant realms may be attributed to little awareness about their rich history in the province (Sevunts, 2016). Thus, social interventions must have cultural relevance and act to preserve the traditions, languages, and histories of these communities (Anderson & Bone, 1995). For example, public schools could integrate Indigenous languages and Afrocentric pedagogy into the curriculum to support identity development in these populations from an early age (Dei, 1996; Dei et al., 1995).

Because participants obtained resources and validation through their engagement with organizations such as the Native Friendship Centres and "Women on the Rise" (an organization for racialized women), another way to increase resilience is by developing community organizations. Kishigami (2008) similarly advocated for cultural organizations to support the increasing Inuit population in Montreal. Among a range of services, these organizations provide a secure address to receive mail and welfare cheques for individuals without stable housing (Kishigami, 2008). Further, linked to participants' use of *social support* and *empowerment of self* through culture in response to racial microaggressions, these organizations reflect the cultural values of Black Canadian and Indigenous individuals and provide a space to connect with others. For example, Montreal residents of African descent appreciated organizations such as a Black church and a non-profit organization committed to the empowerment of racialized women through childcare and education. These organizations offered tangible (e.g., food, child-care) and non-tangible (e.g., spiritual and psychological) support to Black Canadians. Resources should be allocated to these types of organizations that play an instrumental role to underserved communities.

Black Canadian and Indigenous participants demonstrated capacity for growth through *empowerment of self and others* and *choosing a positive outlook*, which suggest that strength-based interventions are a promising approach for promoting wellness in these populations. In individual or group modalities, counsellors can empower individuals by working with them to identify their strengths, learn about their ancestors, and connect with their cultural roots (e.g., through language class, eating traditional food, or organized cultural activities). Models of counselling that rely on a psychological model of behaviour and identity alone may not be sufficient or relevant to clients. Thus, practitioners should incorporate alternative healing methods such as creative expression, laughter with trusted others, and spirituality into their repertoire of skills (e.g., Gone, 2009). Comas-Diaz (2013) encouraged the use of creative methods to help women of colour to recover their voice and express their selves. Hip-hop music, for instance, embodies features of African culture (e.g., oral story-telling) and has been used as a form of protest against racial injustices (Remes, 1991).

Conclusion

This phenomenological study is the first to examine responses to experiences with racial microaggressions among low-income Black Canadian and Indigenous individuals' who did not pursue or complete college education. The two samples employed strategies that were both similar and novel as compared to previous samples. Of particular interest, findings elucidate: (1) participants' use of social support to access resources and confront racial microaggressions; (2) participants' use of culturally-grounded strategies, including spirituality and interconnectedness, and cultural rituals; (3) participants' multi-faceted use of humour to confront and to minimize racial microaggressions; and, (4) the strategic use of avoidance in addition to confrontation among women participants. Social interventions could collaborate with community members to

bolster pre-existing strengths, such as cultural preservation and culturally-organized organizations. Community based participatory research methods might be used to explore such interventions. Further, practitioners in the helping professions could use strength-based interventions, including creativity, to empower Black Canadian and Indigenous individuals in their practice.

Table 1

Demographic Information

Name	Ethnicity	Gender	Income	Occupation	Highest Educational Degree	Years in Canada
Crab	Trinidadian	M	23,999 or below	Volunteer/ Pensioner	some high school	35
Madlene	Caribbean	F	24,000 - 29,999	Cashier/ Student	high school diploma or equivalent	30
Amanda	Vincentian	F	23,999 or below	Stay at home mom	some high school	15
Annel	Caribbean	F	30,000 - 36,999	Stay at home mom	some high school	14
Midnight	Black Canadian	M	30,000 - 36,999	Director of centre	some college	55
Ijinginut Naalatti	Inuit	M	23,999 or below	Unemployed/ Artist	some high school	40
Parsa Humour	Inuit	F	24,000 - 29,999	Outreach worker	some high school	56
Ojibeq	Ojibwa	M	23,999 or below	Artist	some CEGEP	38
Annie	Inuit	F	23,999 or below	Stay at home mom	some CEGEP	37
Sara	Ojibwa	F	23,999 or below	Server	some CEGEP	38

Note. CEGEP (College d'enseignement general et professionnel) is a publicly funded pre-university college in Quebec's education system. Income is reported in Canadian Dollars.

Table 2

Resilient Responses to Racial Microaggressions

Theme	Definition
Calling out perpetrators	Participants described confronting insulting comments and looks targeted at their racial identity by naming the behaviour and at times, using education to explain their response.
Seeking support	Participants stated that they turn to others for advocacy, resources, and emotional support.
Choosing a positive outlook	Participants reported choosing to be positive in response to racial microaggressions through spirituality and cognitive reframing.
Empowering self and others	Participants described empowering their selves and others by asserting pride and using education in order to resist the negative messages communicated by racial microaggressions.
Choosing to not engage	Participants reported choosing to avoid and disengage from racial microaggressions as a form of self-protection.
Using humour	Participants described using laughter in response to experiences with racial microaggressions by responding to perpetrators with sarcasm, and joking about experiences with racial microaggressions among friends, family and at times, the interviewer.
Taking care of self	At times, participants reported using creative expression and comforting activities to mitigate tension.

Chapter VI

General Discussion

General Discussion

This dissertation addressed two research questions: (1) How do individuals who experience racial microaggressions respond to or cope with these incidents? and, (2) What effects if any, do intersecting social group identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, and social class) have on individuals' responses to racial microaggressions? I used two different qualitative approaches to examine such responses. In the first study, I employed a consensual qualitative approach applied to focus group data among racialized students ($n = 32$) at one predominantly White institution of higher education; whereas, in the second, I used an interpretive phenomenological approach to understand responses among Black Canadian ($n = 5$) and Indigenous ($n = 5$) community members who had not pursued college education.

Interpretation is critical to an intersectional qualitative approach (Bowleg, 2008). Hence, I, the researcher, used a critical theory lens to interpret texts and transcripts. Particularly, I interpreted participants' experiences with careful consideration of structural oppression, the sociohistorical realities of historically marginalized groups and interdisciplinary understandings of the processes of racialization and marginalization, including equity studies.

Across both studies, findings demonstrated that participants used a range of collective, protective, and resistant strategies in response to experiences with racial microaggressions. At times, participants' strategies differed based on intersecting social group identities (e.g., gender, social class, and race). Other times, participants' concerns about power and the context of their relationship with perpetrators influenced their response strategies. For example among high-status perpetrators, participants often used protective and collective strategies (e.g., avoidance, seeking social support). The response categories were not mutually exclusive or sequential, and sometimes, participants used them in combination. Individuals used a multifaceted and nuanced

process to promote strength and respond to adversity. These complex response styles may reflect the covert and ambiguous nature of microaggressions. Below, I synthesize the findings highlighting how responses manifested differently across contexts and social group identities. First, resistant strategies were most often used among Black Canadian and Indigenous student participants. Among Black Canadian and Indigenous community members, the same trend was apparent. This trend may be linked to racial and ethnic identity development and pride among these participants. Second, racialized women were more likely to report using disengagement strategies, such as choosing to walk away from perpetrators. Hence, I will discuss this trend and possible related factors. Third, I explore nuanced expressions of humour as a response strategy. Finally, I conclude with directions for future research and theory, as well as implications for practice.

Synthesis of Findings

Elaborated below, in response to experiences with racial microaggressions, four themes were common across both studies while three themes were exclusive to community participants. Students and community members alike *used humour*, directed toward themselves and others in multidimensional ways. Further, students and community members *sought community and solidarity for support*. Among community members, social networks provided participants with access to resources, such as housing or diapers. At times, community and student participants *chose not to engage* with perpetrators of racial microaggressions. Finally, student and community participants *confronted perpetrators and challenged stereotypes*. Community participants reported three additional themes: *choosing a positive outlook, empowering self and others*, and, *taking care of self*.

Because of important differences between Black Canadian and Indigenous community and student participants (i.e., age, education, and setting), I expected low-income community members who did not pursue college education would use different strategies. Participants in the community sample were older, often were caregivers to dependents, and had not completed college education. Understandably, participants' experiences reflect a combination of class-based and racial microaggressions. Drawing upon the broader research on coping with racism, Noh and Kaspar's (2003) contextual hypothesis posits that racialized individuals belonging to lower socioeconomic status brackets may lack the social resources required to use resistant strategies and consequently employ problem-focused strategies less frequently. Yet, in the community sample, all but one participant used confrontation in response experiences with to racial microaggressions. Even among high-status perpetrators (e.g., employer), with careful consideration and support, community participants confronted racial microaggressions. While other factors might explain this finding (e.g., difference in age between community and student participants), it is notable that resistant strategies were commonly used among community members. Across studies, participants demonstrated found sources of resilience, employing individual and community-level factors, to combat social adversity and assert positive self-identities (for research on factors of resilience in response to sexual orientation microaggressions, see Nadal et al., 2011).

The Influence of Racial and Ethnic Identity on Resistance

Black Canadian and Indigenous participants found strength in their self-reported racial and ethnic identities, such as Black Canadian or Ojibwa, and asserted these identities in response to experiences with racial microaggressions. Racial identity is "a sense of group or collective identity based on one's perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a

particular racial group” (Helms, 1990, p. 3). Racial identity represents a dynamic interplay of different attitudes, behaviours and emotions about one’s self, members of one’s racial identity, and members of other racial identities. Relatedly, ethnic identity is conceptualized as identification and association with other members of one’s ethnic group, who share cultural values and beliefs. Ethnic identity encompasses acts of searching for one’s ethnic background (i.e., ethnic exploration) and ethnic belonging (i.e., attachment and pride; Phinney, 1992).

Participants’ attachment to their ethnic and racial identities emerged as a potential adaptive response to experiences with racial microaggressions. Indigenous participants relied upon their ethnic identity. They demonstrated ethnic exploration by re-learning Indigenous languages and telling the stories of their ancestors. Further, they demonstrated ethnic belonging by providing self-definitions (e.g., as Metis), using sculpting to connect to cultural roots, and educating perpetrators about their unique ethnic backgrounds. For Black Canadian individuals, both racial and ethnic identity was prominent. Black Canadian individuals told stories about their ancestors and educated perpetrators about their unique ethnic backgrounds. They connected with their racial identity by reading Black scholarship. Participants emphasized their ethnic and racial identities in response to deficit-oriented social narratives concerning their ethnic backgrounds.

Notably, connectedness to other members of one’s ethnic and racial identity served an integral role in responding to racial microaggressions. Participants in the community sample relied on their communities to seek advocacy and access basic resources (e.g., employment or diapers) in different ways than middle- to upper-class undergraduate students or professional community members. Further, in the student sample, among Indigenous students, three participants’ parents had not completed college education and were employed in trades or the

client care industry (e.g., as customer representatives). Like community members, Indigenous students also reported that their connection to the First Peoples' House offered a supportive space to find a sense of community and also to access resources (e.g., to Elders, to housing, to cultural events). Linked to Noh and Kaspar's (2003) contextual hypothesis, it is possible that specialized organizations and racial/ethnic social connectedness was a key vehicle in community members' confrontation of racial microaggressions, by way of offering resources to racialized individuals with lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Further, Black Canadian and Indigenous community participants relied on their attachment to racial and ethnic identity to empower children and youth. In previous research, Allen (2010) documented that middle-class Black American parents directly instructed their children on how to address racial microaggressions. Using less direct tactics, low-income parents in the community study also taught children to be proud of their racial identity in order to empower children and youth to assert their racial identity when confronted with racial microaggressions. These procedures were less direct in comparison to middle-class Black American parents.

Deliberate Strategies of Disengagement as a Form of Resistance

At times, participants used deliberate strategies of disengagement, such as walking away from the perpetrator in response to racial microaggressions. Participants' use of disengagement often was associated with the situation (e.g., the perpetrator's status as a professor or employer) and careful consideration of the potential for backlash. In particular, women were more likely to use disengaging strategies in comparison to men in both studies. Consistent with Lewis et al (2013), women were aware of the ways in which directly challenging racial microaggressions might reinforce stereotypes. This unique gendered response emerged with deliberation of the

ways in which confronting microaggressions might have potential costs. For example, a Black woman who confronts racial microaggressions perpetrated by a police officer may risk a criminal charge. Alternatively, directly confronting these stressors may result in additional emotional turmoil.

Racialized women anticipated racial microaggressions and used different strategies to prevent them. For example, South Asian women reported dressing formally to avoid being characterized as “FOBs⁴,” while East Asian women described over-compensating for stereotypes of the “docile Asian woman” by being assertive and social (Poolokasingham et al., 2014; Sue, Bucceri et al., 2007). Indigenous women hid their indigenous identity at times to protect against racial microaggressions.

Though these strategies may appear avoidant, the reasoning behind the women’s responses suggests they are deliberate and perhaps even resistant. For example, if a sales associate in an expensive store was following her, a Black woman chose to walk out. In this way, the woman both disengages from the situation to protect herself, while also choosing to deny her business to the store, an act of resistance (Burstow, 1992). Extant racial microaggressions coping literature has distinguished between three categories of response: resistant, protective and collective (Lewis et al., 2013). However, feminist scholars argue that resistance encompasses both direct and indirect strategies, such as detachment (hooks, 1990; Robinson & Ward, 2011; Wade, 1997). Among racialized women, protective strategies often had resistant elements and at times, also were used among others (e.g., using humour among trusted others, described below).

⁴ The acronym FOB (i.e., Fresh off the Boat) denotes the assumption that South Asian Canadian students do not fit into Canadian society (see Poolokasingham et al., 2014).

Using Humour: Directionality and Context

Participants often described using humour as a resistant, collective, and protective strategy. This strategy emerged in both studies and served different functions depending on the context. Among trusted others, humour offered a collective strategy. A body of extant literature has discussed the use of humour among Indigenous Australians. Hence, humour may hold cultural relevance among certain Indigenous populations. For example, among Indigenous Australians, Garde (2008) articulated that laughing about experiences of racism among peers could indicate kinship. At times, it could be a strategy to exercise control by challenging one's perception of experiences with racial microaggressions and altering their meaning (Mellor, 2004). Notably, in the present study, it is possible that participants laughed about their experiences with the interviewer a to mitigate negative feelings, establish intimacy, or potentially, to demonstrate self-efficacy.

In response to perpetrators or White peers, humour was resistant and protective. Community members often relied on sarcasm to confront demeaning stereotypes and slurs. Hernandez et al. (2010) similarly documented that racialized mental health professionals in the United States and Canada confronted racial microaggressions with sarcasm. The authors conceptualized this practice as a from of calling out perpetrators. In the current dissertation, using humour was multifaceted. Occasionally, students anticipated racial microaggressions, regardless of whether they were discriminated against, and made racial jokes before they were made at their expense.

Findings suggest that among dominant group members, self-directed humour may reflect internalized racism. On predominantly White college campuses, where racial microaggressions manifested as seemingly benign jokes, East Asian Canadian students used self-deprecating forms

of humour to facilitate their integration into the campus environment. Throughout the focus group, students reflected upon the internalization of racist stereotypes and discussed the ways in which self-deprecating humour can serve to perpetuate racism. In previous research, Yosso, Smith, Ceja, and Solórzano (2009) found that Latino American students who were the target of racist jokes on campus reported that these events hindered their sense of belonging. Although the use of humour can appear innocuous, self-directed humour among dominant group peers could also indicate internalized forms of oppression.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Different interview methods elicited different types of data in this dissertation. Focus groups facilitated shared, consensual understandings among participants, while individual interviews were conducive to richness and depth. It is possible that three additional themes (i.e., *choosing a positive outlook*, *empowering self and others*, and, *taking care of self*) emerged in the community sample because of the interview methodology. The trend in qualitative racial microaggressions research leans toward focus group data (e.g., Clark et al., 2014; Lewis et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2007) while a smaller subsample has employed individual interviews (e.g., Constantine & Sue, 2007; Nnawulezi & Sullivan, 2013). Because of the opportunity for deeper understanding using individual interviews, future research might consider triangulating findings by using both approaches. For example, a number of individual interviews could be conducted with certain participants while others participate in a focus group. Alternatively, researchers could conduct individual interviews with participants first and then bring the same interviewee participants together in a focus group.

Another limitation of this dissertation might be the exclusive focus on racial microaggressions. Researchers are encouraged to build on this dissertation by examining

individuals' experiences with other intersectional forms of microaggressions (e.g., gendered racial microaggressions, see Lewis et al., 2013). Using the framework of intersectionality (Bowleg, 2008; Cole, 2009; Collins, 1990; Crenshaw, 1993), recent research on these incidents has placed greater focus on individuals' experiences of multiple systems of oppression; thus, an intersectional approach is intended to address one's entire identity, as opposed to distinct segments that make it up. Further, ethnic differences (e.g., among Indigenous individuals) could be explored to avoid "ethnic gloss" (i.e., overgeneralization of different ethnicities based on racial categories; Trimble & Dickson, 2005). In this dissertation, I strived to be transparent about the unique identity of each participant and asked for his or her self-definitions. Future research might use an approach of intersectionality to explore responses among different ethnic groups by soliciting participants' experiences with other forms of microaggressions. This line of intersectional research with attention to within group differences may also elucidate certain cultural patterns. For example, Black Canadian and Aboriginal students were more likely to directly confront racial microaggressions than their East Asian and South Asian Canadian counterparts. Similarly, among the community sample, Black Canadian and Indigenous participants directly and frequently called out perpetrators of microaggressions.

This dissertation may be limited by the post-positivist underpinnings of the CQR methodology and the ways in which this approach might conflict with critical theory. Although I used team discussions to gain a nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, CQR's emphasis on consensus and commonality suggest one, proximal version of reality. Moreover, postpositivist philosophical assumptions are at odds with an intersectional approach (Bowleg, 2008). Given that microaggression scholars frequently employ the CQR method, future research might consider alternative qualitative approaches that align more closely with an approach of

intersectionality, which allows researchers to examine the ways in which diverse identities and context influence the expression of racial microaggressions and responses to these incidents.

Additional research is necessary to better understand how different response strategies affect one's health. Participants mentioned physical and mental health ailments, such as headaches and anxiety. Future research could use probing questions to address the physical and mental health outcomes of racialized participants who experience racial microaggressions.

Extending Current Theoretical Conceptualizations

Indicated by their intuitive and multi-dimensional responses to everyday inequities, it is apparent participants demonstrated tremendous capacity for resilience. Framing participants' strategies as "coping styles" may dismiss racialized individuals' strengths, and ignore the ways in which structures and institutions are accountable for maintaining and perpetuating racial microaggressions. I suggest that future researchers also consider their language in this line of research.

Racial microaggressions have the capacity to reinforce internalized racism among racialized individuals, as seen in forms of self-deprecating humour and behavioral strategies to hide identity among participants in this study. Counselling psychology's focus on prevention fits well with the knowledge that racial microaggressions must be challenged and confronted at the societal level, so that racialized individuals do not accept and internalize their underlying negative messages and come to feel shame associated with their racial and cultural uniqueness (Speight, 2007; Vera & Speight, 2003; Watts-Jones, 2002).

The present dissertation demonstrated that resistant, protective, and collective strategies interacted and intersected with other factors. For example, disengagement served as resistant and protective, depending on the function of the response. In this way, resilience did not exist

discretely in a sequential process as suggested by prior research (Lewis et al., 2013). Among women, protective and resistant strategies often were linked and at times, also were collective. It is likely that future research needs to develop the taxonomy of coping and resistance strategies to account for differences depending on social identities (e.g., gender) and context (e.g., relationship to perpetrator).

Implications for Helping Professionals and University Personnel

Linked to seeking support, racialized participants relied on specialized services within their environments to access a place of belonging, advocacy, and resources; hence, these organizations should be bolstered. Consistent with extant literature on coping with racial microaggressions, social support was a key resource among racialized individuals who experienced racial microaggressions. Notably, this dissertation demonstrates that racialized individuals often sought social support from specialized services, such as the Young Women's Christian Association, First Peoples' House, Black Students' Network, Friendship Centers, or Women on the Rise, a community organization serving racialized women. Such organizations addressed the unique needs of individuals belonging to historically underrepresented groups. Helping professionals, community agents and university personnel can leverage their social status to bolster culturally specific organizations and connect racialized individuals to them.

Another key resource for responding to racial microaggressions, pride and belonging to one's racial and ethnic identity group could be used to inform culturally relevant models of helping and university administration. It is important to preserve the values and histories of marginalized racialized communities, including the Indigenous populations, within the settings that university personnel and helping professionals have influence. Culturally-relevant approaches need to tap into community and individual factors of resilience, including

disengagement from racial microaggressions, spirituality, and historical language, as well as into the external realities of racialized individuals' lives.

Anecdotally, in the first author's experience of conducting focus groups on racial microaggressions, participants tended to appreciate and benefit from discussing these incidents among others in a suitable, respectful setting. The research on the use of adaptive collective coping (e.g., Salazar, 2009; Solórzano et al., 2000) suggests that group work, whether in the form of peer support, psychoeducation, or counselling groups, could be a preferred mode of providing services to individuals who have experienced or continue to experience various forms of racial microaggressions. Group interventions are well established, provide support for a wide range of purposes, and are relevant for clients with collectivist values. In a group, members can validate each other's experiences and exchange information and empowerment strategies. The group can serve to facilitate racial and ethnic identity development among group members while bolstering coping resources.

Because of the potential for internalized racism and the perpetuation of racial microaggressions, race-based humour among students appears to be notable and to warrant the attention of university personnel and helping professionals. In the East Asian focus group, as students discussed self-deprecating jokes, they gained awareness of the implied meanings of such jokes and their social and psychological outcomes. It is possible that students will recount these jokes in counselling settings; thus, university counsellors could help students explore their meanings in individual or group formats. Further, university personnel could address race-based jokes in residence halls.

Conclusion

While cultural norms and federal policies may mask the expression of overt racism in Canada, racialized individuals' described encountering racial microaggressions that required the mobilization of response resources. This dissertation addressed two research questions: (1) How do individuals who experience racial microaggressions respond to or cope with these incidents? and, (2) What effects if any, do intersecting social group identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, and social class) have on individuals' responses to racial microaggressions? I conducted two qualitative studies with racialized students and low-income community members. Across both studies, findings demonstrated that participants used a range of collective, protective, and resistant strategies in response to experiences with racial microaggressions. Participants demonstrated resilience in different ways, depending on individual and contextual factors. At times, participants' strategies differed based on intersecting social group identities (e.g., ethnicity, gender, social class). Other times, strategies differed based on setting (e.g., relationship to perpetrator, use of strategy among racialized peers or dominant group members). In this chapter, I discussed response strategies using three areas: racial/ethnic identity, the role of disengagement, and the complex role of using humour. I identified implications that flow directly from these three over-arching areas. Finally, I offered directions for future research, re-conceptualization of responses to racial microaggressions, and practice.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Initial Recruitment Notice (Study 1)

<Insert Date>

Dear Students:

My name is Lisa Spanierman, and I am an associate professor in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology at McGill University. My research team and I are interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the racial climate at McGill.

To this end, we are inviting you to participate in a focus group discussion about your unique experiences with racial discrimination on campus.

It is our hope that your input will help us to gain a richer and more nuanced understanding of the racial climate at McGill so that we can make our educational institution a more inclusive and positive space for all students. Your perspective as an undergraduate student is invaluable for helping us achieve this goal.

We will compensate participants \$20 for their time (90 minutes) and also will provide pizza and refreshments. At this time, we wish to interview students who self-identify as Aboriginal, Black, East Asian, South Asian, and Arab. If you identify with one of the following groups and are interested in participating, please e-mail us at: mcgilldiversitystudy@gmail.com

Sincerely,



Lisa Spanierman, PhD
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology
Principal Investigator: The McGill University Diversity & Equity Research Team

Appendix B

Follow-Up Email to Interested Students (Study 1)

<Insert Date>

Dear <Insert Participant Name>,

Thank you for your interest in our study on *Undergraduate Experiences of Discrimination at McGill*.

Please click on the link below to complete a very brief intake questionnaire and availability timesheet.

<Insert URL>

A member of the research team will contact you within two weeks of your submission. Please feel free to contact us via email (mcgilldiversitystudy@gmail.com) with any questions and concerns you may have.

We look forward to your participation!

Sincerely,



Lisa Spanierman, PhD
Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology
Principal Investigator: The McGill University Diversity & Equity Research Team

Appendix C

Screening Form for Interested Participants (Study 1)

Directions. Please tell us about yourself by responding to the requested information as completely as possible.

Name (First & Last): _____

E-mail: _____ Tel: _____

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. What is your racial or pan-ethnic identification?
 - a. Black / Black Canadian
 - b. East Asian / East Asian Canadian
 - c. South Asian / South Asian Canadian
 - d. Latin / Hispanic
 - e. Arab / Arab Canadian
 - f. White / European Canadian
 - g. Other (please specify _____)
4. What is your primary ethnic background (e.g., African Canadian, Filipino, Chinese, Taiwanese, French, Mexican Canadian, Italian, Haitian, English, Cuban, etc.)?

5. Are you a Canadian Citizen? Yes No
6. How many years have you lived in Canada? _____
7. Are you enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at McGill University? Yes No
8. If you answered "Yes" to number 7 above, what is your student status?
 - h. Full-Time
 - i. Part-Time
 - j. Other (Specify _____)

AVAILABILITY

Directions. Please indicate the times you will be able to take part in a focus group in the table presented below. The focus groups will last approximately 60-90 minutes. Please note that you may only indicate availability within a 4:00 PM to 11:00 PM time frame.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Mar 5-11 4:00 PM – 11:00 PM							
Mar 12-18 4:00 PM – 11:00 PM							

Appendix D

Informed Consent (Study 1)

Researcher Copy: Please Sign and Return to the Researcher

Description and Purpose of the Research

The principal investigator of the research study is Dr. Lisa Spanierman of the McGill Diversity & Equity Research Lab; she is an associate professor in the Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology. Graduate research assistants will serve as co-investigators; they will conduct focus groups to explore undergraduate students' experiences at McGill.

The general purpose of this research is to learn more about how undergraduate students from different groups perceive the racial climate at McGill University. Specifically, we would like to learn more about Aboriginal, Arab, Black, East Asian, and South Asian undergraduate students' experiences with racial discrimination on campus.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to partake in a 60-90 minute focus group discussion with 5-7 other undergraduate students. Two trained facilitators will lead the focus group discussions. A separate focus group will be conducted for each racialized group.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

Participation in this research is completely voluntary and you will not suffer any negative consequences if you choose not to participate. You may withdraw from this study at any time or you may refuse to answer any question. To participate you must be at least 18 years of age, currently enrolled at McGill University, and a Canadian citizen.

Confidentiality

Focus group facilitators will ask all participants to keep what was said in the group confidential. You should know, however, that there is a slight chance that others may share things that should remain confidential. The focus group will be audio taped to ensure accuracy of the content of the interview; however, your name will not be spoken on the tape. Instead, you will select a pseudonym to be used during the focus group discussion. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet accessible only to the principal investigator and her research assistants. To further maintain confidentiality, no records will be created or retained that could link your identity to personal descriptions, paraphrases, or quotations. Things that you say may be presented without specific reference to you, referenced only by pseudonym, or combined anonymously in aggregate form with the actions and words of other participants. The results of this study will be used only for the purposes of students' theses, government grant applications, professional presentations, and journal publications. All audio-recordings will be destroyed after the completion of the study.

Risks and Benefits

Your participation in this project should not involve risks beyond those of ordinary life. As compensation for your participation, you will receive \$20 and dinner during the focus group. It is possible that you will benefit from this study by gaining increased self-knowledge as a result

of your participation. It is hoped that the results may inform the McGill University community about the experiences of their undergraduate students to create a more welcoming and inclusive campus for all students.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact the Principal Investigator:

Dr. Lisa Spanierman
McGill Diversity & Equity Research Lab
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology
3700 McTavish Street, Room 614
Montreal, QC H3A 1Y2
514-398-3449
lisa.spanierman@mcgill.ca

or the McGill University Research Ethics Board Office:

Deanna Collin
Ethics Review Administrator – Human Subjects
James Administration Building, Room 429
Montreal, QC H3A 2T5
514-398-6193
deanna.collin@mcgill.ca

Consent Statement

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understood the forgoing description of this research project, including information about the risks and benefits of your voluntary participation. The researchers may contact you via email at a later time to ask if you would like to review the focus group transcript or preliminary results of the study. Your signature below will indicate (a) that you understand the limits to confidentiality and (b) that you provide consent to the audio-recording of this focus group.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Appendix E

Demographic Questionnaire at Onset of Focus Group (Study 1)

Directions. Please tell us about yourself by circling or completing the following information.

1. Pseudonym: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. Are you enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at McGill University? Yes No
5. If you answered "Yes" to number 4 above, what is your major? _____
6. How many years have you been at McGill? _____
7. Please indicate your sexual orientation: _____
8. What is your racial identification (please circle all that apply)?
 - k. Aboriginal (please specify _____)
 - l. Black / Black Canadian
 - m. East Asian / East Asian Canadian
 - n. South Asian / South Asian Canadian
 - o. Arab / Arab Canadian
 - p. White / European Canadian
 - q. Other (please specify _____)
9. What is your primary ethnic background (e.g., Mohawk, Cree Nation, Filipino, Chinese, Indian, French, Lebanese, Haitian, etc.)?

10. In what country were you born? _____
11. Are you a Canadian citizen? Yes No
12. How many years have you lived in Canada? _____
13. Which religion or spiritual beliefs do you identify with?

14. Please indicate the highest education level of your parents or guardians
Parent/Guardian #1
 - r. some high school
 - s. high school diploma or equivalent
 - t. some college/university
 - u. college (bachelor's) degree

- v. master's degree
- w. doctoral or professional degree (e.g., MD, PhD)
- x. other _____

Parent/Guardian #2

- a. some high school
- b. high school diploma or equivalent
- c. some college/university
- d. college (bachelor's) degree
- e. master's degree
- f. doctoral or professional degree (e.g., MD, PhD)
- g. other _____

Additional Parent/Guardian

15. Please provide us with the name of each of your parent/guardian's occupation when you were growing up (e.g., sales manager at retail store, secretary at university, bank manager, etc.)

Parent/Guardian #1 _____

Parent/Guardian #2 _____

Additional Parent/Guardian

Appendix F

Focus Group Interview Guide⁵ (Study 1)

- How would you characterize your experience at McGill thus far?
 - Do you feel a sense of belonging?
 - Are there particular places on campus where you feel like you fit in?
 - Are there places where you feel that you don't belong or fit in?
- Think of some of the stereotypes that exist about your racial group. Have others on campus ever expressed their stereotypical beliefs about you?
 - Tell me more...
 - Follow-up prompts will differ depending on racial group.
- Thinking about your daily experiences at McGill, could any of you describe a situation in which you were discriminated against because of your race?
 - These instances might be subtle or overt; intentional or unintentional.
 - Perhaps you were made to feel uncomfortable, insulted, or disrespected because of your race?
 - In what ways, if any, have others at McGill made you feel “put down” because of your cultural values or communication style?
 - Have people suggested that you do not belong at McGill because of your race? (e.g., students, administrative staff, and professors)
- Has anybody on campus done or said anything to invalidate your experiences of being discriminated against? How has this made you feel?
- Some of you have described experiencing racial discrimination on campus. What are some of the ways that you have coped?
 - What's been helpful? What hasn't?
 - Have any of you responded to the perpetrator?
 - Do you share these experiences with others in your life? What is this like?
 - What do you do in order to relieve any tension/stress that has resulted from these experiences?
 - Have there been places or spaces on campus where you feel safe, validated, or affirmed?
 - What campus support resources have been helpful for you?
- What do you think the overall impact of your experiences has been on your lives? On your overall undergraduate university experience?
- What has it been like talking about these experiences today?
- Is there anything else that you would like to add that we did not address?

⁵ Second-level bullet points represent potential follow-up probes

Appendix G

Initial Recruitment Notice (Study 2)

<Insert Date>

Hello:

My name is Sara Houshmand, and I am a graduate student in the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology at McGill University. For my dissertation, I am interested in understanding how people respond to ethnic and racial discrimination.

To this end, if you are a person who has experienced ethnic and racial discrimination, I am inviting you to participate in an interview discussion about your unique experiences with ethnic and racial discrimination in Canada.

The interview will last about 90 minutes and your name will be entered into a draw to win one of four \$30 gift certificates to a grocery store in your neighbourhood.

I wish to interview community members who self-identify as First Nations, Black, East Asian, South Asian, or Arab. If you identify with one of the following groups, are a Canadian citizen, and wish to participate, please e-mail me at sara.houshmand@mail.mcgill.ca or call 514-589-6769.

Sincerely,

Sara Houshmand, M. A.

The faculty supervisor of this research is:

Dr Jack De Stefano
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology
3700 McTavish Street, Room 614
Montreal, QC H3A 1Y2
(514) 398-2514
jack.destefano@mcgill.ca

Appendix H

Follow-Up Email to Interested Individuals (Study 2)

<Insert Date>

Dear <Insert Participant Name>,

Thank you for your interest in my study on your unique experiences of responding to racial and ethnic discrimination.

Please follow the link below to complete a brief questionnaire and indicate your availability.

<< insert URL >>

Alternatively, you may call me at 514 589 6769 to complete the questionnaire and provide your availability over the telephone. Once you have given me your preferences, I will contact you within one week. Please feel free to contact me via email (sara.houshmand@mail.mcgill.ca) or phone (514 589 6769) with any questions and concerns you may have.

I look forward to your participation!

Sincerely,

Sara Houshmand, M. A.

Appendix I

Screening Form for Interested Participants (Study 2)

Directions. Please tell me about yourself by responding as completely as possible.

Name (First & Last): _____

E-mail: _____ Tel: _____

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. What is your racial identification (please circle all that apply)?
 - a. Aboriginal (please specify _____)
 - b. Black / Black Canadian
 - c. East Asian / East Asian Canadian
 - d. South Asian / South Asian Canadian
 - e. Arab / Arab Canadian
 - f. White / European Canadian
 - g. Other (please specify _____)
4. Are you a Canadian citizen? Yes No
5. What is your highest educational degree obtained?
 - a. some high school
 - b. high school diploma or equivalent
 - c. some college/university (e.g., CEGEP)
 - d. university (Bachelor's) degree
 - e. Master's degree
 - f. doctoral or professional degree (e.g., MD, PhD)
 - g. other _____
6. Please indicate your current occupation: _____
7. Please indicate how you perceive your social class status:
 - a. working-class
 - b. middle-class
 - c. upper-middle-class
 - d. upper-class
 - e. other _____

AVAILABILITY

Directions. Please indicate the times you will be able to take part in an individual interview in the table presented below. If possible, I will conduct the interview at your preferred location. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM							
10:00 AM – 11:00 AM							
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM							
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM							
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM							
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM							
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM							
6:00 PM – 7:00 PM							
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM							
8:00 PM – 9:00 PM							

Where would you prefer to meet?: _____

Appendix J

Informed Consent (Study 2)

Resilient Responses: Coping with Subtle Forms of Racism

Description and Purpose of the Research

The principal investigator of the research study is Sara Houshmand; she is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Educational & Counselling Psychology at McGill University. She is conducting this study for her doctoral dissertation research. The research project is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Beth Spanierman (associate professor of counselling and counselling psychology at Arizona State University) and Dr. Jack De Stefano (program director of Counselling Psychology at McGill University). Dr. Jack De Stefano can be reached at jack.destefano@mcgill.ca. This research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

The goal of this investigation is to examine individuals' responses to racial and ethnic discrimination. Specifically, I seek to learn about your unique experiences with racial and ethnic discrimination and how you have responded to these instances.

If you decide to participate, you will take part in a 90-minute interview. The researcher, Sara Houshmand, has experience conducting interviews about ethnic and racial discrimination.

Voluntary Nature of Participation

Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you will not suffer any negative consequences if you choose not to participate. You may withdraw from this study at any time or you may refuse to answer any question without penalty.

Confidentiality

The interview will be audio-recorded to ensure accuracy of the content of the interview. However, your name will not be spoken on the tape. Instead, you will select a fictitious name (pseudonym) to be used during the interview discussion. **Please print your fictional name at the bottom of this form.** All data will be stored on a password-protected computer accessible only to Sara Houshmand and to be shared only with persons directly connected to the research. To further maintain your confidentiality, no records will be created or retained that could link your identity to personal descriptions, paraphrases, or verbatim quotations. Things that you say may be presented without specific reference to you, referenced only by pseudonym, or combined anonymously with the actions and words of other participants. The results of this study will be used only for the purposes of the principal investigator's doctoral dissertation, government grant applications, professional presentations, and journal publications. All audio-recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

Risks and Benefits

Your participation in this project does not involve any foreseeable risks. We will be discussing a sensitive topic and you may have different feelings throughout the interview as you recall your experiences. If at any point, you need to take a pause or stop the interview, please let the

interviewer know. It is hoped that the benefits of this interview outweigh the risks. It is possible that you will benefit from this study by gaining self-understanding as a result of your participation. Further, your participation may assist in the development of community-based interventions and programs to better support and meet the needs of your community. As compensation for your participation, you will be entered into a draw to win one of three \$30 gift certificates to a grocery store in your neighbourhood.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact the Principal Investigator:

Sara Houshmand
Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology
3700 McTavish Street, Room 614
Montreal, QC H3A 1Y2
514-589-6769
sara.houshmand@mail.mcgill.ca

or the McGill University Research Ethics Board Office:

Deanna Collin
Ethics Review Administrator – Human Subjects
James Administration Building, Room 429
Montreal, QC H3A 2T5
514-398-6193
deanna.collin@mcgill.ca

Consent Statement

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and understood the forgoing description of this research project, including information about the risks and benefits of your voluntary participation.

Your signature below will indicate that you

(a) freely consent and voluntarily agree to participate in this research project and

(b) that you provide consent to the audio-recording of this interview.

Signature

Date

Fictional name for interview (pseudonym): _____

Appendix K

Verbal Follow-Up to Informed Consent (Study 2)

Thank you for reading through this form. Do you have any questions?

Now, I would like to ask you a few questions to make sure I communicated the critical details of the study clearly in the form you just read.

- Do you have any questions about the purpose of the study?
 - It is possible that the interview process will be beneficial. Do you recall any benefits of participating?
 - Do you see any risks to participating in the interview?
 - Do any of these risks concern you?
- Finally, if you no longer want to continue the interview at any point, please let me know and we will stop.

Appendix L

Demographics Questionnaire at Onset of Interview (Study 2)

Directions. Please tell us about yourself by circling or completing the following information.

1. Pseudonym: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Gender: _____
4. What is your racial identification (please circle all that apply)?
 - a. Aboriginal (please specify _____)
 - b. Black / Black Canadian
 - c. East Asian / East Asian Canadian
 - d. South Asian / South Asian Canadian
 - e. Arab / Arab Canadian
 - f. White / European Canadian
 - g. Other (please specify _____)
5. What is your primary ethnic background (e.g., Mohawk, Cree Nation, Filipino, Chinese, Indian, French, Lebanese, Haitian, etc.)?

6. In what country were you born? _____
7. Are you a Canadian citizen? Yes No
8. What is your relationship status?
 - a. married
 - b. single
 - c. partnered
 - d. common law
 - e. divorced/separated
 - f. widowed/widower
 - g. other _____
9. What is your highest educational degree obtained?
 - a. some high school
 - b. high school diploma or equivalent
 - c. some college/university (e.g., CEGEP)
 - d. college (Bachelor's) degree
 - e. Master's degree

- f. Doctoral or professional degree (e.g., MD, PhD)
 - g. other _____
10. Please indicate your current occupation: _____
11. What is your employment status?
- a. full-time (35 hours or more per week)
 - b. part-time (less than 35 hours per week)
 - c. unemployed
 - d. other _____
12. Please indicate how many people are in your household: _____
13. What was your **family's** sum annual pre-tax income last year?
- a. 23,999 or below
 - b. 24,000 – 29,999
 - c. 30,000 – 36,999
 - d. 37,000 – 44,999
 - e. 45,000 – 49,999
 - f. 50,000 – 54,999
 - g. 55,000 – 59,999
 - h. 60,000 – 64,999
 - i. Greater than 65,000
14. Please indicate how many people rely on your income: _____ Please indicate how you perceive your social class:
- f. working-class
 - g. middle-class
 - h. upper-middle-class
 - i. upper-class
 - j. other _____
15. Please indicate your sexual orientation (e.g., heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual):

16. How many years have you lived in Canada? _____
17. Which religion or spiritual beliefs do you identify with?

Appendix M

Interview Protocol (Study 2)

Introduction

- Before we begin the interview, do you have any questions or concerns about this process?
- What was it like completing the demographic questionnaire?

Interview Questions⁶

- Could you describe what it is like being _____⁷ here in Montreal?
 - Settings:
 - Work
 - Grocery store
 - Public transportation
 - Could you describe your relationships with White Canadians?
- What is your experience of racial discrimination here in Montreal?
 - These instances might be subtle or obvious; intentional or unintentional.
 - You may have been unsure of whether the situation was actually because of your race.
 - As I am sure that you know, sometimes discrimination is very subtle and we are not even sure if it is happening. Can you think of any examples of this kind of subtle racial discrimination in your experience/life/etc.?
 - Could you give a more detailed description of what happened?
 - What is the impact of these experiences?
 - How often would you say this happens?
 - On this form [the demographics questionnaire] you listed that you're _____² do any of these factors play into your experience of racial discrimination in Canada?
- When you encounter these experiences with discrimination, how do you respond?
 - How did you respond to the perpetrator?
 - Who knows about the incident(s)?
 - Did you tell others about the incident(s)?
 - What's been helpful? What hasn't?
 - Did you turn to anyone for help?
 - How did they respond?
 - What did their assistance do?
 - If you did not seek help from others, could you explain why?
 - Do you typically talk about these experiences with others in your life? What is this like?

⁶ Second-level bullet points represent potential follow-up probes

⁷ Participant self-identification in demographic questionnaire will be inserted into interview (e.g., Black Canadian)

- Did you receive support?
 - What was that support?
 - Was that support helpful?
 - If you don't share these experiences with others, could you explain why?
- How do you feel about your ability to deal with the experiences of racial and ethnic discrimination that you mentioned?
- Where do you go to feel welcome, understood, or at home?
- What support resources (e.g., community centers, churches) have been helpful for you?
- You described using a range of responses (e.g., _____), how do you choose between them?
- What has it been like talking about these experiences today?
 - What parts of the discussion did you enjoy? What parts of the discussion were not enjoyable?
 - What was helpful about the discussion? What was not?
 - Was anything missing from the discussion?
 - Is there anything else about your experience of dealing with racism that you think would be important for me to know?

Appendix N

Before Interview Script (Study 2)

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my interview study. As a graduate student at McGill, I have been exploring racial and ethnic discrimination in Canada. Today, I am interested in your experiences of dealing with such discrimination. I want to understand how people cope in their day-to-day experiences.

I expect that the interview will last approximately 90 minutes. This interview will allow me, as a researcher, to better understand how individuals in the community deal with forms of racial and ethnic discrimination. I hope to be able to spread this knowledge, inform practices for service providers, and influence social interventions designed to support racial and ethnic minorities.

The questions I will ask relate to you and your experiences with racial and ethnic discrimination in Canada. So, as we are talking, certain questions or topics might trigger certain feelings. Should this happen, please let me know. I will do my best to create a comfortable setting. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. We can stop for a break at any point and you can leave this study at any point.

Further, I'd like to remind you that everything you say will be confidential. Your name and personal information will never be linked to the information you share with me here today. May I refer to you as [pseudonym], as you wrote on your questionnaire for the duration of the study?

Appendix O

Resource List (Study 2)

Montreal:

1. Your Neighbourhood Health and Social Service Centres (CSSS): 514-842-5141
2. Tel-Aide 24/7 Hotline: 514-935-1101
3. McGill University Psychoeducational and Counselling Clinic: 514-398-4641
4. Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
5. First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Line: 1-855-242-3310