

# MIRRORING SOCIETY? TRACING THE LOGIC OF DIVERSITY IN THE *CANADIAN JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*

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## Abstract

Diversity and equity have become central themes of institutional planning in Canadian post-secondary institutions. The complexity and variance of such activities, and their disconnect from individual experiences, are inherently related to the social norms established by the dominant cultural group. This article argues that published research articles play an important role in reflecting how organizational norms are understood and institutionalized. To trace the normative shifts in how diversity has been addressed in research articles, a systematic analysis of over 186 peer-reviewed articles published in the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* between 1971 and 2020 was performed. The findings demonstrate that the concept of diversity has evolved from being examined in narrow binary categories of socio-economic, language, and gender diversity to a more recent focus on intersectionality. The shift from diversity being an issue of individual concern to diversity being a core institutional responsibility closely related to student learning is apparent. The article ends with recommendations for future areas of research with specific calls made to increased uptake of critical approaches to diversity for more nuanced perspectives of our accepted social norms in Canadian higher education.

**Keywords:** diversity, equity, norms, research articles, CJHE

## Résumé

La diversité et l'équité sont devenues des thèmes centraux de la planification institutionnelle des établissements postsecondaires canadiens. La complexité et la variance de ces activités, ainsi que leur déconnexion des expériences individuelles, sont intrinsèquement liées aux normes sociales établies par le groupe culturel dominant. Cet article soutient que les études publiées jouent un rôle de représentation important, reflétant la manière dont les normes organisationnelles sont comprises et institutionnalisées. Afin de retracer les changements normatifs dans la façon dont la diversité a été abordée dans des travaux de recherche, une analyse systématique de plus de 186 articles publiés dans la *Revue canadienne d'enseignement supérieur* entre 1971 et 2020 a été réalisée. Les résultats montrent que le concept de diversité a évolué d'un examen des catégories binaires étroites de diversité socio-économique, linguistique et de genre à un accent plus récent sur l'intersectionnalité. Le passage de la diversité comme question d'intérêt individuel à la diversité comme responsabilité institutionnelle fondamentale, étroitement liée à l'apprentissage des étudiants et étudiantes, est évident. Cet article se termine avec des recommandations pour de futurs domaines de recherche, avec des appels particuliers pour une adoption accrue des approches critiques de la diversité afin d'avoir des perspectives plus nuancées des normes sociales acceptées dans l'enseignement supérieur canadien.

**Mots-clés :** diversité, équité, normes, travaux de recherche, RCES

## Introduction

Diversity and equity have become central themes of institutional planning in Canadian post-secondary insti-

tutions. The need to adapt to changing demographics, immigration trends, internationalization, and the training of skilled labour has forced universities to actively respond and engage with issues around diversity (Smith,

2020; Vos et al., 2016). Furthermore, continuous calls to address systemic inequities and historical injustices that prevail in higher education institutions in Canada have added additional pressure for universities to change (Henry et al., 2016; Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016). As a response, universities are increasingly prioritizing diversity initiatives to the point where practices of “diversity management” (Klein, 2016, p. 147) and “performativity, based on indicators” (Bhopal & Pitkin, 2020, p. 532) have been documented. Subsequently, diversity has become a buzzword often reduced to the recruitment of students from minority groups to increase visible heterogeneity on campus (Mayuzumi et al., 2007). Scholars have noted that the intentions of universities to create sustainable change and establish conditions under which diversity would work have yielded mixed results across the various regions of the world (Bailey, 2016; Barrow & Grant, 2019; Bhopal & Pitkin, 2020). Learning how to move beyond the discourse of “managing” diversity and create truly diverse communities in our educational institutions has become a pressing administrative puzzle.

In order to make informed decisions, administrators are prone to paying attention to research literature to understand how diversity is framed, what the core issues are, and where the implementation gaps are. The literature on research informing practice states that there are four main ways in which research can have an impact on decisions—instrumental, conceptual, political, and symbolic use of research knowledge (Farley-Ripple, 2012; Nutley et al., 2007). Nutley et al. (2007) argued that research seldom influences administrative practices instrumentally, that is, directly. Rather, research has a tendency for a deeper, more profound impact by informing and altering our attitudes in a subtle way over longer periods of time. Research has the power to shape our normative understandings conceptually, informing what is an accepted approach to complex social issues. Therefore, the focus of this article is on *conceptual* features of research use whereby accumulation of knowledge contributes to large-scale shifts in shaping our social norms and values, shifting dominant currents of thought (Farley-Ripple, 2012; Nutley et al., 2007; Weiss & Bucuvalas, 1980). Research itself is not static, and the knowledge produced and arguments presented evolve and shift over time. In order to understand how these broader conceptual shifts may evolve, a systematic inquiry into several decades of published research articles

in a journal would be meaningful. Focusing on a logic of diversity, a systematic analysis would help to unpack and examine the dynamics of this process and analyze how understandings around diversity have evolved over time in Canadian higher education literature. The research questions that guide this article are: How has the concept of diversity shifted over the decades in the *Canadian Journal of Higher Education*? What implications may those shifts have for administrative practice?

The *Canadian Journal of Higher Education* (CJHE) is the only Canadian peer-reviewed journal publishing research on Canadian higher education. Established in 1970, initially under the name of *Stoa* (Pascal, 2011), CJHE has been an instrument of reporting changes within the Canadian system of higher education for 50 years. Pascal (2011) noted that, by the late 1980s, the journal had established itself as a strong national voice and the most important legacy of the Canadian Society for the Study of Higher Education (CSSHE). The early goal for the journal was to stimulate research and scholarship in the field of higher education (Archer, 2000), and this focus has not changed. Over the years, the journal has published more than 1,000 articles and other contributions (editorials, book reviews), which mainly have dealt with various aspects of higher education in Canada. The editors have claimed that CJHE draws parallels with the surrounding environment, stating that the journal is “mirroring the society” (Pascal, 2011, p. iv) and that it resembles “the prototypical institution of higher education, the university” (Kirkness, 1987, p. 80). As such, CJHE is an important platform for examining knowledge shifts around diversity in the Canadian higher education realm, while drawing parallels with the general trends occurring in the broader society.

## Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical lens for this analysis was drawn from the perspective of institutional theory, whereby diversity is understood as a socially constructed norm, the meaning of which shifts and develops over time as a result of various social interactions (Bicchieri, 2016; March & Olsen, 1996; Scott, 2005). Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) defined norm as a “standard or appropriate behavior for actors within a given identity” (p. 891). A social norm is what people in a group believe to be normal, that is, what they believe to be a typical and/or appropriate action

(Klotz, 1995; Paluck et al., 2010). A social norm is held in place by the reciprocal expectations of the people within a reference group. Because of the interdependence of expectation and action, social norms can be stiffly resistant to change. Lapinski and Rimal (2005) differentiated between collective and perceived norms. Collective norms operate at the societal level or at the level of the social network, whereas perceived norms operate at the individual level. This differentiation is important because individuals' perceptions about the collective norms in their community may be at odds with the actual collective norms. An example of such difference is in institutional diversity initiatives. Institutional policies and administrative practices may create the perception of a strong commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion agendas while the actual organizational practices continue to ignore the existence of institutional discrimination. This is where research plays an important role in exposing such disconnects and facilitating the robust exchange of ideas.

Research publications are part of the social process that shapes discourses, problematizes widely accepted views, and clarifies assumptions. An example of a clarification is a standard definition of diversity, which typically includes a list of various categories (e.g., race, gender, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, and ability) (Michalski et al., 2017; Riley et al., 2016), with some categories more salient than others. Yet, more critical research has suggested that one must use an intersectional lens when talking about diversity, as individuals have multiple and layered identities, often invisible, that intersect and create unique conditions for diversity (Crenshaw et al., 2015; Nichols & Stahl, 2019; Smith, 2020). Gender as a concept has been at the forefront of diversity debates examining initially the intersections between race and gender. Psychological essentialism, grounded in the belief that members of a group share deep, underlying commonalities, has given rise to surface understanding of differences (Demoulin et al., 2006). Gender essentialism suggests that differences between males and females are stable, unchanging, and fixed at birth, overlooking environmental or contextual factors. This approach has led into thinking that there are shared experiences, grounded in gender, leading to raceless, classless "essential woman" (Grillo, 1995, p. 20). The critics argue for more nuanced perspectives on intersectionality, noting that gender or race cannot be

the only markers of identity and that it is the intersection of race, class, age, sexual orientation, occupation, and other categories that create various multiple diverse identities and experiences (Liu, 2018).

The work around intersectionality emerged in critical sociology, driven by Black, Mestiza, post-colonial, queer, and Indigenous feminists of the 1970s, pushing academia to recognize previously ignored multiple and intersecting perspectives around identities (e.g., Collins, 2012; Davis, 1981; hooks, 1981). Intersectionality, as a term, is grounded in critical legal literature (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991), showing how disadvantage is conditioned by multiple interacting systems of oppression. Crenshaw (1991) notes that women of colour stand at the intersection of the categories of race and gender, and those experiences are not simply racial oppression plus gender oppression. Organizational studies that often influence higher education literature, have seen an uptake of intersectionality only recently. Intersectionality has been applied in studies examining career progression, leadership opportunities, diversity management (Acker, 2012; Kamenou & Fearfull, 2006; Klein, 2016). Liu (2018) notes that organizational studies have had a tendency to engage with intersectionality superficially; showcasing multiple identities like gender, class, and race, but overlooking processes of differentiation and systems of domination minimizing the commitment to the social justice aims. In that sense, narrow interpretation of intersectionality can obscure more explicit challenges to the interlocking systems of imperialism, white supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy in our cultures (hooks, 2004). Tillapaugh (2012) argues that sexual orientation and gender identity within the frame of intersectionality becomes an important lens that allows us to examine how individuals have identities that are both privileged and oppressed within society. Increased understanding of diversity through scholarly research helps to expose power relations in society and create awareness of the multiple forms of difference, (dis)advantage, and inequality an individual may experience (Klein, 2016).

Critical scholars have pointed out that this shared understanding of accepted norms and normative thinking is defined by the dominant cultural group (Bhopal & Pitkin, 2020; Iverson, 2005). Organizational practices then reflect the norms created and institutionalized by the majority members within the organization. Stevens et al. (2008) stated that organizational normative

beliefs determine the reasons to diversify and the value that cultural diversity brings to work processes. For example, Bhopal and Pitkin (2020, p. 542) indicated that the white experience is a dominant institutional norm that does not specifically address structural frameworks that disadvantage equity-seeking groups in higher education institutions. Iverson (2007) cautioned to be especially mindful of norms in university diversity policies that appear to be neutral, as those can hide power and privilege of some groups over others while concealing this practice. Clearly, research influences our conceptual thinking and problem framing, suggesting ways in which to interpret behaviour and providing the foundation upon which to base institutional practices. Changing social norms involves changing preferences, beliefs, and social expectations, a process in which research plays a role. Research can minimize or amplify narratives of racially marginalized students, documenting their exclusion or making it invisible, challenge prevailing notions of norms around diversity, and illuminate neutrality in norm creation.

## Methodology

In order to understand how the concept of diversity has been taken up and operationalized close to 50 years of research work published in CJHE, a critical content analysis approach (Drisko & Maschi, 2016; Booth et al., 2016; Krippendorff, 2013) was employed. The focus of this approach is to summarize and describe meanings in an interpretive manner by paying attention to full context. There was a total of 961 publicly accessible articles published in CJHE between 1971 and 2020 in the three categories of editorials, articles, and special issues (see Table 1). Articles were included in the analysis based on the following criteria: (1) language, (2) content, and (3) outcomes. Only texts published in English were included ( $n = 837$ ). While French texts would have added a unique layer to the findings, those articles formed only 13% ( $n = 124$ ) of the total number of articles. Only articles making a direct reference to the concept of “diversity” or any of its categories were included. Recommendations or discussion points included comments about diversity or any of its categories and suggestions for institutional change. Based on these criteria, 186 articles from the initial pool of 837 articles were included for further analysis and synthesis. Coding was done by inductively gen-

erating code lists based on emerging themes. The data was first organized by categories, counting the frequency of the diversity categories represented (see Table 2). In the course of the analysis, the following diversity categories emerged: socio-economic/social class, gender, race, age, (dis)ability, language, intercultural/ethnic issues, international students, LGBTQ+, and institutional diversity. In counting frequency, it was taken into consideration that one article may have addressed several of the categories. Second step involved examining the contexts around the categories, interpreting the surrounding narratives, by looking at the interests of the authors and analyzing messages (Ahuvia, 2001) by which “diversity” was framed in the articles. The following research protocol was developed for interpretative analysis: (1) general subject identification and type (diversity addressed directly or indirectly); (2) connections authors(s) made with the concept (topics discussed, actors involved, language used); (3) tone in assessing the concept (critical, neutral, balanced); (4) authors’ interpretations made of diversity and higher education (findings, results, unique statements); and (5) broader impact of research on the diversity discourse (reinforcing or reshaping). While frequency allowed us to analyze the representation and presence of various diversity categories across research articles, interpretations allowed us to track the shifts in narratives. The work was guided by Ahuvia’s (2001) parameters for interpretive content analysis that emphasizes independent replicability of interpretations over objectivity.

Indigenous topics were included as a separate theme based on Canada’s unique historical context, and were counted separately from the race or ethnic category. LGBTQ+ topics were assessed separately from gender, as the articles on gender tended to examine the gender binary and did not discuss the more complex issues related to gender diversity. International students were also included in a category of their own, even if their issues were regularly discussed in relation to intercultural competence or ethnic diversity.

## Findings: Looking Back

In this section, an analysis of the findings is presented and emerging themes are discussed in four separate decades of published articles from 1971 to 2020.

**Table 1**

*Overall Count of the CJHE Articles Published between 1971 and 2020*

Year	Editorials		Articles		Special Features		English Total	French Total
	English	French	English	French	English	French		
1971–1979	9	0	101	32	13	15	123	47
1980–1989	14	4	115	21	34	1	163	26
1990–1999	4	0	134	19	7	0	145	19
2000–2009	3	0	131	15	5	0	139	15
2010–2020	13	0	242	16	12	1	267	17
Total	36	4	723	103	71	17	837	124

**Table 2**

*Overview of the Frequency in Diversity Categories Represented in Journal Articles*

Diversity category	1971–1979	1980–1989	1990–1999	2000–2009	2010–2020
socio-economic	14	8	8	6	4
gender	2	14	17	13	13
race	0	0	1	5	3
age	0	7	2	0	1
language	1	6	0	0	2
Aboriginal/ Indigenous	0	2	1	1	10
(dis)ability	0	0	2	5	1
intercultural ethnic	1	2	2	5	9
international students	0	2	1	4	20
LGBTQ+	0	0	0	0	2
institutional diversity (types)	1	4	3	4	9
Total number of articles reviewed	16	36	33	34	67

*Note:* In cases where there were several categories discussed or an intersectionality approach was applied, one article was counted in more than one category, with further clarification and analytic discussion included in the Findings section.



## 1971–1979: Diversity, An Issue of Institutional Finance

In the scholarly articles published in this decade, diversity was not a concept that was directly addressed but was raised implicitly in relation to the financial concerns of higher education institutions in Canada. Articles tended to focus on analyzing federal funding for post-secondary education, measuring the quality of higher education, and examining student enrolment numbers. This focus for research articles mirrored and reported on the policy developments in the higher education sector, whereby the federal government decided to get rid of direct federal grants to the universities and instead started to make annual fiscal transfers to the provincial governments for the operating costs of post-secondary education (Stager, 1972). These installments were made based on the population in the province, and were transferred from the provincial governments to higher education institutions based on the reported student numbers. Tracing the number of students who came to live in the province and who took up studies in a full- or part-time manner became essential for predicting institutional finances. Consequently, differentiation was made in research articles between full- and part-time students (Hartle, 1973; Oliver, 1973; Parr, 1973; Ross, 1973). Students' or their parents' socio-economic background was discussed in relation to their ability to afford access to higher education (Cameron, 1972; Dennison, 1974; Mehmet, 1979). For example, Cameron (1972, p. 9) analyzed student inter-provincial mobility and noted that "more sophisticated students and richer students" were likely to leave their province for a better quality of higher education, leading to discrepancies in institutional funding.

Students were primarily treated as a standardized homogeneous category, bodies without race or gender, with authors referring to them as a "student body," "trained people," "skilled talent," and "manpower." Some diversity markers were used indirectly such as "adult/mature students," "veterans," and "Francophone students," where language and age became a diversity indicator. Veterans as a unique group requiring financial support were identified and discussed in relation to supplementary federal grants allocated to higher education institutions (Stager, 1972). Additional demand for federal assistance was justified on the basis of the professional manpower required for national interests (Nicholson, 1973). Distinctions were also made based on individual

ability by using categories such as "average student" or "high-ability student." While relevance of the programs was suggested as a potential cause for student dropout, the general agreement was that dropouts would always be part of the educational scene and should not be viewed as a problem (Black, 1972). This approach indicates that academic progress and retention were perceived to be individual rather than systemic concern.

Access to post-secondary education was framed as an issue that may affect institutional budgets rather than focusing on underlying causes. In the articles, a brief mention of diversity categories, by primarily listing those, was made, but a deeper level analysis was absent. For example, Ross (1973, p. 87) published a critique of a Ministerial report on the Ontario Post-Secondary Commission, pointing to systemic inequities that "now exist in the post-secondary system in respect of women, native people, Franco-Ontarians"; however, deeper level elaboration didn't follow. This is an example where a research article responded to government policy, pointing out critical areas of immediate attention yet analysis itself stayed short. Similarly, Denis (1975) addressed the issue of accessibility in the context of CEGEP programs in Quebec. She noted that the field of specialisations remained strongly sex-linked (sex used as a biological marker), as women constituted a significant proportion of the graduates. While she observed that distinctive social classes led to inequities among the student population, the variation in terms of ethnicity based on language, was reported to be relatively unimportant. She made an interesting observation, recognizing "the necessity of internalizing middle class 'Anglo-Saxon' norms if one is to succeed in the educational system" (Denis, 1975, p. 54). The author accepted that there are established institutional norms, which must be followed by erasing individual diversity, in order to succeed. Mehmet (1979) took a critical approach to the purpose of university, pointing out that equity in access should align with equity in income streams after graduation. Viewing diversity through the lens of finance, he argued that the system favoured graduates who were already benefitting from their previous socio-economic status. In this decade the logic of diversity followed institutional financial need, recognizing but accepting the inequality of benefits gained by some individuals over others.

## 1980–1989: Diversity, Institutionalized Through Binaries

Articles published in this decade are an example of how binary-based approaches were normalized and institutionalized through research. While the articles predominantly addressed areas of socio-economic difference and social class, what stands out in this decade is how diversity was presented and examined in binaries discussing gender (male vs. female) (e.g., Alexander, 1985; Guppy & Pendakur, 1989), students' age (older/mature vs. younger students) (e.g., Devlin & Gallagher, 1982), and geography (urban vs. rural; city vs. small town or farm) (e.g., O'Neil, 1981). Authors in this decade used sex as a biological marker in binary ways (e.g., "both sexes," "members of female/male sex"). Even cultural differences were discussed in narrow binary terms distinguishing between French and English language (Ahmed, 1981). Foucault (1980) suggested that using a dichotomous approach normalizes and reinforces binary ways of thinking. Such practices can serve as an effective means of social control as people internalize these ways of understanding the social world as a norm, accepting some and excluding others (Foucault, 1980).

In 1989 there was an attempt made to normalize bilingualism among Canadian higher education research through a special issue. This may have occurred as a result of the passing of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* in 1988, whereby research further contributed to raising awareness and strengthening the importance of implementing the principles introduced in the Act through practice. Race in the articles of this decade was completely invisible. For the first time, "aboriginal people" were being discussed as a group with unique needs and "a special case" in an editorial that focused on higher education participation rates, describing challenges of dispersed populations in Northern Manitoba experiencing isolation (Ferris, 1989, p. 1-2). The author challenged the normalized perspective of higher education administration, stating that institutional programmes and policies were based on "southern imperatives" that do not work in the North but rather create dissonance and failure (Ferris, 1989, p. 1). Here the dichotomy approach (North-South) was also applied, but Ferris applied a strength-based attitude in relation to Indigenous groups.

It is noteworthy that several articles in this decade discussed diversity in terms of institutional diversity, distinguishing between universities (meant for research)

and colleges (meant to serve diverse populations). Articles pointed to the increased need for community colleges to respond to the societal needs of diverse student groups (Dennison & Levin, 1988; Levin & Dennison, 1989). The conversation about institutional difference was framed around individual choice rather than barriers of access or relevance of the programs offered by the higher education institutions. In a way, the published research aligned and reinforced the dominant power relations in society. Even though alternative understandings might have existed, they were not readily apparent or frequently taken up to create new narratives.

## 1990–1999: Diversity, an Issue of Fairness to Genders

This decade saw a rise in framing diversity from the perspective of fairness. Articles published in this decade continued to institutionalize binary perspectives but focused largely on gender issues. A switch in terminology also happened in the mid-1990s, whereby the use of the word "sex" was replaced by "gender" in article titles and content; however, the lens of intersectionality remained absent and gender was viewed mostly in binary terms. While the authors addressed the subject in a dichotomous manner, there was an increase among articles taking a critical stance analyzing gender discrepancies and pushing for more fair and equitable treatment of female faculty and students (Andres & Krahn, 1999; Hughes & Lowe, 1993; Looker, 1993; Rees, 1999). Several articles addressed the issue from the perspective of employment fairness in regard to hiring, promotion, and salaries (Dagg, 1993; Dean & Clifton, 1994; Swartzman et al., 1992). There might have been an indirect influence between research and policy developments, as around the same time the Canadian federal government was discussing (Government of Canada, 1992) and eventually revised its *Employment Equity Act* (1986, revised in 1996). Williams (1990) made a point about female students' limited participation in classroom discussions and suggested that additional institutional supports were needed for female students (Epp, 1994; Thacker & Novak, 1991). Sexual assault and date rape as an institutional issue was examined and discussed (Rajacick et al., 1992).

Overall, it is important to note that the discussion around what is fair and equitable treatment in the higher

education sector evolved within the parameters of one dominant racial category. Fairness to Black and/or Indigenous individuals was not raised. However, these critical articles played an important role in shaping and normalizing the perspective of fair and equitable treatment as an important institutional principle. Race was addressed in only one article, where the author pointed out that Canadian universities were characterized by increased ethnic and racial diversity and postulated that there had been no systematic studies of race in relation to Canadian campuses (Grayson, 1995). The author suggested that there was a considerable degree of racial inequality in academic outcomes, the reasons for which could be traced to limited classroom experiences, contacts with faculty, and overall academic engagement.

The articles in this decade were gradually shifting the narrative about individual learning experiences from being a matter of individual choice to an issue for institutional programs. Several scholars raised the issue of student dropouts and retention in regard to curriculum insufficiencies that could result in limited social integration and engagement of students (Dietsche, 1990; Donaldson & Dixon, 1995; Johnson & Buck, 1995; Mahaffey et al., 1991; Stewart, 1990). This sentiment was supported by articles addressing limited learning experiences or access for students and faculty with disabilities (Hill, 1992; Hollingsworth, 1992). As a response, a theme of pro-active approaches to inclusion and equity practices emerged. For example, Bruno-Jofre and Young (1999) reported on findings in their MEd educational administration curriculum. They described changes in policy and syllabi, a pre-occupation with hiring women, a tacit inclusion of gender issues, and more openness toward inclusivity. They reported that, in July 1999, their department hired its first woman in the area of educational administration, reinforcing the perspective of gender equality being predominant in the research of this decade.

## 2000–2009: Diversity, an Institutional Issue of Inclusion

As the previous decade focused on the fair treatment of female and male individuals, this decade saw a logical broadening of the concept of equity across diverse groups of people, including racialized groups (Samuel & Burney, 2003; Spafford et al., 2006). Increasing numbers of international students and Indigenous students

further contributed to the focus on examining diversity from cultural perspectives (Aly & Gowing, 2001; Guo & Jamal, 2007; Hampton & Roy, 2002). These explorations brought a more nuanced examination of diversity, whereby scholars started to apply intersectionality as a lens to understand diversity (Lang & Lang, 2002; Spafford et al., 2006). Research articles increasingly brought up the issue of limited institutional responses when it came to practices of inclusion in the Canadian higher education system, with specific recommendations made on how to include diverse cultural perspectives in mainstream programmatic design to support student success (Guo & Jamal, 2007; Hampton & Roy, 2002; Schuerholz-Lehr et al., 2007).

An increased presence of critically grounded qualitative research articles was evident, as researchers confronted and problematized institutional inclusion efforts. For example, Spafford et al. (2006) used anti-racist critical theory to point out that the increasing presence of racially minoritized academics might serve institutional purposes of portraying a mission of diversity rather than actually achieving a mission of equity. They argued that racialization as an institutional norm was ingrained in the Canadian academy and that needed to be challenged. Samuel and Burney (2003) addressed the issue of racial bias and racism between students and faculty, examining how discourses of racism were categorically produced and performed through power relations, notions of ethnicity, negative images, and stereotypes grounded in higher education institutions. The lack of role models from diverse cultures caused the authors to advocate for hiring a critical mass of professors from visible minority and designated groups to address these negative perceptions, leading to a more wholesome academic experience. Articles advocating for adopting a learner-centred curriculum also emerged, calling for the inclusion of content appropriate to the characteristics of a changing society (Emes & Cleveland-Innes, 2003).

Interestingly, while the presence of racism in academia was raised by several critical research articles, only one of those articles directly dealt with Indigenous students and their learning experiences (Hampton & Roy, 2002). The article focused on an aspect of instructional diversity the authors called for in order to support ethnically diverse learners. The authors pointed out that college instructors could help facilitate better learning experiences for First Nations students by using cultural



perspectives and increased racial consciousness when it came to student success. Overall, the articles from this era supported the perspective that the dominant institutional culture needs to make room to accommodate diverse student needs. The idea of cultural inclusion was framed as benefitting the higher education system, whereby it could better serve the increased ethnic and racial student populations that had resulted from an emphasis on institutional internationalization. The critical perspectives calling for a normative shift away from White Eurocentric institutional standards were emerging, yet those were not strong enough to push for a more foundational shift through analytic research.

### **2010–2020: Diversity, an Issue of Labour Market Needs**

This decade was characterized by approaching diversity through the lens of internationalization and immigration. Diversity was considered as a topic of importance because increased international student numbers were linked to access to the Canadian labour market, and post-secondary education institutions were responsible for providing relevant training and education. Policy developments at the national level, particularly the launch of Canada's International Education Strategy (2014), fueled scholarly attention to aggressive recruitment and marketing strategies in Canada (e.g., Garson, 2016; Trilokekar & Kizilbash, 2013; Viczko & Tascon, 2016).

In these debates, the gradual shift from institutional perspectives toward student-centred perspectives was apparent. Scholars were concerned with meeting the needs of various student groups and providing quality learning experiences to students. There was a recognition that enhanced cultural diversity among student groups had increased the pressure to internationalize academic programs (Boman, 2013; Marshall et al., 2012; Nerad, 2010) and brought forward the need to diversify student support services (Dietsche, 2012; Robertson et al., 2015; Seifert & Burrow, 2013). Trilokekar and Kizilbash (2013) noted that most international students found university programs and environments that were primarily monolingual, largely Westernized, and Eurocentric. Issues around ethnic and cultural diversity were often discussed in relation to socio-economic disadvantages. For example, a study focusing on the experiences of immigrant students and their parents concluded that,

in families with two foreign-born parents, children have relatively high levels of achievement but their parents' lower incomes and less-settled housing arrangements make tuition savings difficult (Sweet et al., 2010). Girard (2010) also found that lack of foreign credential recognition led to socio-economic disadvantage in the new immigrant group. A critical stream of research among the articles raised the need to recognize and respond to the diversity within the group of international students and to problematize the binary categories of domestic vs. international students (Kenyon et al., 2012). The argument was made that administrative categories marking diversity are often limiting and may lead to overlooking the diverse needs of international students. Scholars argued that cultural diversity is often associated with negative deficit-based views leading to the marginalization of student groups (Larsen, 2015; Marshall et al., 2012).

For the first time the term "intersectionality" entered the discussion in academic articles. The intersectionality approach was used to examine issues around student safety (Dylan, 2012), meaning-making around fluid identities of sexual minorities (Tillapaugh, 2016), and experiences of under-represented students (Robson et al., 2018). Articles focusing on students with LGBTQ+ identities were extremely limited (only two). Racial bias or race in general as an area of research emerges in this decade (Marom, 2016; Kipang & Zuberi, 2018; Robson et al., 2018), but not prominently. There is a shift occurring in this decade in the use of terminology associated with race. Authors abandoned the phrase "visible minority" around 2017 and instead are starting to use "racialized people," "racialized groups," or "underrepresented students." Stein et al. (2019) raised the issue of ethics associated with internationalization and makes generalized comments on how racialized regimes have created inequality and colonial practices in international education.

Systemic racism as a critical issue of attention in higher education institutions was raised in articles addressing the needs of Indigenous students (Pidgeon et al., 2014; Ragoonaden & Mueller, 2017). The political developments on the national scale around Indigenous issues, including the Idle No More movement (2012) and the report on the legacy of residential schools by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), invigorated scholarly works on Indigenous topics. The terminology also changed in regard to using "Aboriginal" vs.

"Indigenous" students. Articles published in or before 2016 tended to use the word "Aboriginal" (see Gallop & Bastien, 2016; Pidgeon et al., 2014). Starting in 2017 the language has changed to "Indigenous" in relation to students and curriculum (Attas, 2019; Parent, 2017). Continuous with the theme of this decade, Indigenous student support was related to increased institutional recruitment initiatives leading to diversity among students (see Pidgeon et al., 2014; Robertson et al., 2015). Pidgeon et al. (2014) described how limited institutional activities have led to the creation of "pockets of presence" (p. 1) for Indigenous individuals on campus. Similarly, Montsion (2018) examined how service delivery for Indigenous and international students differ. The article concluded that, whereas Indigenous student services are organized in a way to create a separate space for Indigeneity on campuses, services for international students take the form of rapid integration into the mainstream. Parent (2017) also provided one of the first studies where the author emphasized the need for accepting diversity in research methodologies by using Indigenous research designs.

## Conclusion and Discussion: Looking Forward

This article aimed to demonstrate how the logic around diversity has developed, shifted, and changed in research articles published in one Canadian journal. From the analysis, it is apparent that diversity as a concept has not been a focal area of research among published articles. Ironically, there has been more interest in examining diversity from the perspective of institutional type (university vs. college) and finance than there have been articles on the experiences of racialized students or faculty in Canadian post-secondary education contexts. The topic of individual diversity, drawing on the lens of intersectionality, has been addressed in passing, mostly published in the recent decade. Very few articles ground their work in critical perspectives on systematic change required in Canadian post-secondary institutions. The overall sentiment has been that diversity concerns are the problem of an individual caused by their own choices, not an institutional or administrative issue that needs attention through policy and practice.

When tracing the logic of diversity in the 1970s, it becomes clear that the topic was almost invisible. Stu-

dents were treated as homogeneous bodies that might negatively impact the operational funds of institutions. The primary diversity categories were social class, age, and sex, mostly discussed in relation to access and financial implications to higher education. The logic here was that different students were linked to different financial supports (from parents or from federal assistance programs) that directly impacted institutional operational funds. Research articles adhered to the idea that established Anglo-Saxon norms needed to be followed in order to succeed in the Canadian higher education realm. The logic of diversity in the 1980s supported the idea that diversity emerged within the dominant sociocultural class. The approach to diversity happened through normalizing binaries of gender, age, geographical location, or language. Diversity was discussed in relation to employment equity, which aligns with the literature stating how equity issues in Canadian higher education research have been primarily concerned with hiring and employment (Henry et al., 2016; Kipang & Zuberi, 2018; Osborne, 2012). The 1990s continued to see growth in research articles that highlighted the issue of gender equity and fairness within higher education in Canada. The importance of this decade lay in raising issues of fairness as a concern, which then allowed for a broader uptake and application of fairness as a guiding principle beyond one dominant cultural group. As a response, the first decade of the 2000s focused on addressing the issue of diversity through inclusive practices within Canadian higher education institutions. There was a gradual acceptance that addressing the needs of diverse individuals was an institutional responsibility, and inclusive institutional practices were featured as a new norm for higher education institutions. With the societal concerns over an aging population and the pressing need for skilled labour, increased internationalization numbers, and the issue of higher education institutions being relevant to society, diversity was viewed as a core institutional concern in 2000s. The logic of diversity in the 2010s revolved around accommodating the needs of international students, who were seen as a useful group for labour market needs. As a response to the ethnic diversity resulting from internationalization, more critical approaches to race and systemic racism within Canadian higher education institutions have appeared. Such articles added more nuanced and critical perspectives to the institutional diversity approaches and overall

norm-shaping around diversity. Overall, focused attention around race, gender diversity, application of intersectionality as a frame to examine the role of higher education institutions in creating social change has been weak.

Although the articles examined in this study, which were published only in CJHE, may not be representative of the overall breadth and depth of all research articles published on Canadian higher education, the findings still seem to be relevant to and reflective of the broader societal trends associated with diversity—racial diversity being still relatively invisible compared to employment or gender diversity discourses. The shifts in terminology—from sex to gender, from Aboriginal to Indigenous, from visible minority to racialized groups—are still recent developments. In a way, CJHE provides an intriguing mini-version of Canadian society, mirroring and reflecting the general trends over the decades, albeit at a smaller scale and in a more contained scope. Throughout the articles there was a clear representation of the norms associated with the dominant cultural group that have shaped the values and norms in educational research. As a background throughout all four decades, there was an only an occasional attempt to focus more strategically on institutional responses to the needs and experiences of Indigenous or racialized individuals, the intensity of these voices slightly growing the closer one gets to 2020.

How can scholarship move forward? As they mirror society, articles tend to assert norms already occurring in a society. There seems to be a gap between a reactionary research approach and a proactive approach that can take the initiative and inform policy and practice in an evidence-based manner. There is an opportunity through CJHE special issues to bring more of a critical lens to the discussions. As the authors of the CJHE articles seem to have predominantly represented the dominant cultural group, there needs to be an intentional effort made to give voice to racialized and ethnically diverse individuals whose research focuses on their experiences. Such focused volumes would help to see beyond the accepted normative categories and use research publications to push our thinking and broader societal norms around diversity.

The analysis showed that diversity has generally been paired up with the concepts of equity, fairness, and inclusion. Ahmed and Swan (2006) pointed out that

engaging primarily with such vocabulary institutionalizes the norms associated with diversity, yet overlooks other connections such as equal opportunities, colonialism, social justice, and anti-racism vs. multiculturalism. When these connections disappear from institutional policy talk or research spaces, a concern emerges that complex histories, associated with such terms and grounded in different political movements, may also disappear. Researchers have pointed out that, in the next generation of diversity work, higher education institutions need to go beyond the narrow discourse of providing student-centred supports and start examining how structural, systemic change can be achieved in their institutions in regard to diversity (Henry et al., 2017; Pidgeon, 2016; Smith, 2020). The societal pressure and momentum illuminated through the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement have highlighted the criticality around racial equity issues and put pressure on researchers to respond. As research norms become gradually accepted behaviours, hopefully CJHE will re-assert its status as a national platform for leading and stimulating critical research and scholarship around diversity in Canadian higher education institutions.

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