

**Spaces of Racism II: Racism at Trent University and in Peterborough,
Ontario**

Includes:
Final Report

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Completed for:
Community and Race Relations Committee
Supervising Professor: Prof. Paula Butler, Trent University
Trent Centre for Community-Based Education

Department: Women's Studies
Course Code: WMST 483H
Course Name:
Term: Fall/Winter 2008
Date of Project Submission: April, 2008

Project ID: 841

Call Number:

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Believe in you. Believe in your community.





Produced in spring 2008 for the **Community and Race Relations Committee**
in collaboration with the Trent Centre for Community Based Education

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Section One: INTRODUCTION

Historically, it is well known that Canada has had its share of unfair laws and practices. For example, if we look back in time we can see that Canada's history includes: slavery in Upper Canada, The Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese internment, head tax policy, laws prohibiting Asians to own land, Residential schools, denial of Jews entrance to Canada, etc. In present day Canada, we also learn of prejudice and discrimination through the reporting of such acts as: local attacks on Asian anglers, defamation of synagogues and mosques, desecration of tombs and cemeteries, denial of service, hate speech, etc. This year alone, the Ontario Human Rights Commission received over 50,000 calls.

We know there was racism in the past, but it is commonly assumed that and we assume that racism no longer really exists today. It is believed that we are now a tolerant and multicultural society that is accepting of the over 5 million foreign-born Canadians. But we also know there are daily incidents of racism in our society. But are there statistical studies that look into the presence of these attitudes and practices? Are there any empirical studies that track and analyze the experience of discrimination and racism in our society? In the context of Peterborough, The Community and Race Relations Committee (CRRC) has undertaken this very study in our research project entitled: *Spaces of Racism II*. Through the use of surveys and questionnaires our research project statistically investigates the local manifestations of prejudice and discrimination based on race.

In 2007, the first research report, *Spaces of Racism* was produced. Under CRRC supervision, the report raised both concern and awareness in the community regarding racism; however, the results were inconclusive. In an effort to find out more, CRRC commissioned a second study. The current 2008 report, *Spaces of Racism II*, is the fruit of this second research project. The research project was designed and implemented to compile empirical evidence documenting Trent University students' experiences and observations concerning racial and gender discrimination in Peterborough.¹

¹ The current study is both a continuation and expansion of the original research project. The current study refines the original methodology employed in order to collect more comprehensive results and to re-examine the concerns first raised. The current research includes important changes to the method employed in collecting quantitative data. This adjustment allows the research project to analyze the results in a more comprehensive way, giving a clearer view of students' experiences of both racism and sexism in Peterborough and at Trent University. The current study also more consciously incorporates qualitative data analysis through the inclusion of interviews. This practice allows the study to dig deeper and convey—in more detail—some of the incidents of racism experienced by the students who were surveyed. The study also expands the research scope by including questions regarding sexism and gender discrimination. This inclusion allows the study to look



This research project is one of the first of its kind in Peterborough and the Kawarthas. It looks at the everyday experiences of first year university students as they encounter racist and sexist discrimination in their daily lives. It is in these everyday interactions between people that racism and sexism play out in both subtle and overt ways. Popular understandings of discrimination depict it only in its most extreme manifestations, but racist and sexist attitudes and actions exist in multiple forms and play out frequently in everyday interactions. The daily ongoing acts of racism and sexism must be acknowledged and taken seriously by both Trent University and the greater Peterborough community.

at the parallels and overlaps between these forms of oppression that are understood to be connected and overlapping factors in discrimination. Although the study tried to expand the research parameters to include the experiences of Sir Sanford Fleming College students, the college was not able to accommodate the research project and timetable. Other modifications and changes to the survey were also made. These changes and an explanation of how the data was compiled are further explained in the Methodology section. The explanation of the refinement and adjustment in methodology helps lay the groundwork for readers to better understand the significance of the findings revealed in the Analysis section.



Section Two: METHODOLOGY

The Survey

Spaces of Racism is a research project that combines quantitative and qualitative methods to document the occurrences of racism and sexism/gender discrimination at Trent University and in Peterborough. The study identifies and selects specific spaces used by first year Trent University students in their daily lives and it reports on the experiences of racism or sexism/gender discrimination that occur in these spaces. The research project designed a quantitative survey to both collect these experiences and to demonstrate their prevalence. Some students were selected for further interview so as to enable the study to better reflect these experiences of racism and sexism/gender discrimination. The interviews provided the study with greater understanding of the impact and meaning that these incidents had on individual respondents.

The survey was composed of 8 questions, which were formatted as follows:

Figure 1.0 – Survey format

Which of the following have you observed or heard of in (space)?										
a)	Refusal to cooperate with racialized individuals or groups, How many times?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Other:									
b)	Racial comments, ridicule or abuse (Verbal), How many times?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Other:									
c)	Racial comments, ridicule or abuse (Written), How many times?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Other:									
d)	Racially discriminatory policies and procedures, How many times?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Other:									
e)	Physical assault or harassment due to racism, How many times?									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Other:									
f)	Nothing or Not Applicable									
Please provide examples:										



The main question states: “Which of the following have you observed or heard of in (space)?”. That same question was repeated throughout the survey with only changes made for the specific space. The spaces included in this survey were:

Figure 1.1 – The specific spaces used in the survey

On-Campus	On and Off-Campus	Off-Campus
Residence Trent Bathrooms Library	Bus	Downtown Bars Public Spaces Shopping Areas

As seen in Figure 1.0, after defining the space, the survey questions focused on different forms of racism listed below. These questions were then repeated for that same space regarding sexism/ gender discrimination:

- refusal to cooperate;
- comments, ridicule or abuse (verbal);
- comments, ridicule or abuse (written);
- discriminatory policies and procedures;
- and physical assault or harassment.

These acts were not defined in the survey and it was up to the respondents to define them and to report how many such incidents they recall seeing in a specific space.

By modifying the survey tool from last year, the current study included a choice of 1 to 10 incidents for each type of discrimination, with the option of “Other” for numbers that are not covered in this scale. There was also the option of an overall response of “Nothing or Not Applicable.” During the survey collecting process, it was understood that an important distinction had to be made between “Nothing” and “Not Applicable”. Following this understanding, respondents were encouraged to clearly distinguish which they meant. During the processing of the surveys, our researchers also investigated whether those respondents—who had circled the “Nothing or Not Applicable” option—meant one or the other. This determination was made by cross-checking to see if the respondent had indicated whether that particular space was applicable to them by reporting incidents in that space for the other questions to which it applied (either the race or sex/gender portion). If it was not clear whether a respondent meant to indicate “Nothing” or “Not Applicable”, the study assumes that they meant “Nothing”. This assumption was made so as not to superficially increase the results of reported incidents in the survey calculations. The survey assumes every space was applicable to the respondents unless they clearly indicated otherwise.



Even though the questions in the survey were not open-ended, the survey provided space in each question so that students could add any examples they wished. This gave the research project a small but detailed glimpse of the kinds of discrimination being reported by students, as well as giving the study possible topics to be expanded upon in follow up interview—if that respondent volunteered to do one. At the end of the survey (question 19) the questionnaire provides a large space for further details and comment in the event that respondents may want to volunteer more information or elaborate on specific issues.

The final question on the survey was the statement: “Discrimination, prejudice and racism are no longer problems in Peterborough” with the options of “Agree” or “Disagree”. This “yes” or “no” question helped the study to gauge the general feeling of respondents regarding discrimination in Peterborough.

The Objects of Study (Sample)

Our survey sample was limited to Trent University first year undergraduate students, including part-time and full-time students from the five Trent colleges and it includes both students who live on and off-campus. We chose this sample group because first year students are usually not from Peterborough, thus have a limited set of experiences in the city. At the time the survey was conducted, i.e. January-February, most first year students had only been in the city for six months. Hence, the data compiled would reflect instances of racial and gender discrimination that occurred within this time period.

The students were volunteers from random first year courses and were also randomly chosen around campus. Although the study drew heavily from one specific introductory first year class, the demographics of the class reflects the multiplicity of the university as a whole. The total number of participants was 64 first year Trent University students. Their ages varied between 17 and 24 years of age, with an average age of 19.2 years. There were 5 male and 59 female respondents. This weighting may have influenced the sexism/gender discrimination aspects of the survey; however, gender differentiated sample sizes are not significant with regards to the reporting of the incidents of racial discrimination. Out of the 64 students surveyed, 15 identified themselves as people of colour. This group is more significant in regards to our results, as they were more apt to report incidents of racism (this will be discussed further in the Analysis section entitled “Results from respondents of



colour"). This ratio of 15 to 64 of students of colour to white students is comparable to the overall demographics of the University student body.

Interviews

This research project also includes 8 interviews. The students selected for the interview process had provided their e-mail addresses on the survey form and were contacted by the researchers. Five were female and three were male. The interviews were conversational and respondents were asked to elaborate on the details provided in the survey. Important anecdotal accounts were collected from these interviews and the study has used them to support the quantitative data collected. Throughout the report the names of the interviewees have been changed in order to protect their privacy and confidentiality.



Section Three: ANALYSIS

The report uses three frameworks for analysis. First, the report discusses the research findings with regards to racism. Second, the report discusses sexism and gender discrimination as it relates to the findings on racism. Thirdly, these results are compared and cross-referenced with the data from the 2007 survey.

Since first year Trent University students were selected for this survey, many of the students surveyed and interviewed are new to the Peterborough area—having moved here in September to attend school. This means that, in many cases, students had been in town for only 5 to 6 months prior to the survey. It can be inferred that the vast majority of the incidents reported in this survey have all occurred and transpired during this time frame.

Racism

Reports of Racism

In seven out of eight spaces included on the survey more than 50% of respondents reported seeing at least one incident of racism (see table 1.0 and chart 1.0). Significantly, no space was without racial incidence, as racism was reported in every space listed on the survey. Additionally, there was no space on the survey where respondents did not report as having been the site of each of the 5 different types of racial discrimination listed by the survey questionnaire (for details on these types of racial discrimination, see Methodology section page 8).

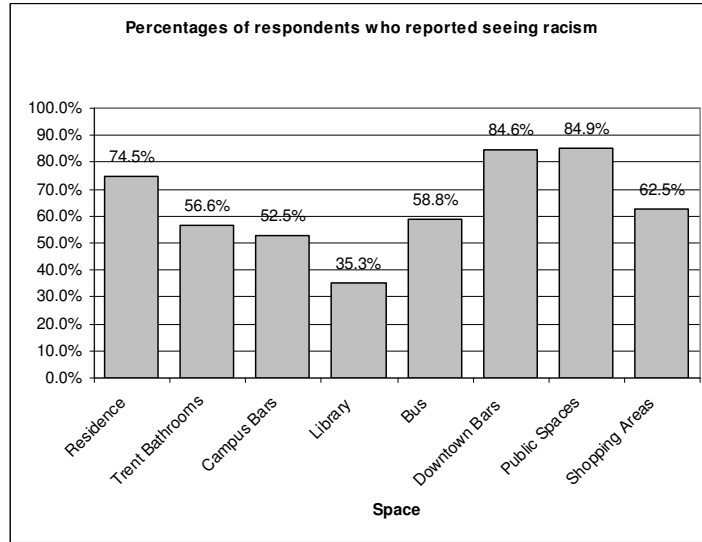
Table 1.0 – Percentage of people who reported an incident of racism

Space	Respondents who reported racism (x)	Total applicable respondents (y)	Percentage who have seen racism (x/y)*100
Residence	35	47	74.5%
Trent Bathrooms	30	53	56.6%
Campus Bars	21	40	52.5%
Library	18	51	35.3%
Bus	30	51	58.8%
Downtown Bars	33	39	84.6%
Public Spaces	45	53	84.9%
Shopping Areas	30	48	62.5%

Note: 'Total applicable respondents' refers to those who did not check off "Not Applicable" in regards to a specific space on the survey.



Chart 1.0 – Percentages of respondents who reported seeing racism



Re-incidence

The re-incidence figure for each space indicates the amount of racist incidents reported on average by each respondent. The study calculates two different re-incidence figures which are included in this report. It is important to include these figures because it is worth noting that while some people may not notice or remember racism and so report nothing, others report multiple incidents in those same spaces on the survey. The first re-incidence figure is calculated by the “total applicable respondents” figure (see table 1.1) and is a general overall figure of the average incidents of racism seen by each person who indicated that a space is applicable to them. The second re-incidence figure is calculated by the number of “affirmative respondents.” We define **affirmative respondents** as those who report seeing racism in a specific space. This second re-incidence number indicates the average number of incidents reported by affirmative respondents. It tells us the average number of incidents that respondents who did report racism experienced.

Table 1.1 – Re-incidence per respondents (all and those who reported racism)

Space	Total incidents (x)	Total applicable respondents (y)	Re-incidence (x/y)	Total affirmative respondents (m)	Re-incidence (x/m)
Residence	344	47	7.32	35	9.83
Trent Bathrooms	202	53	3.81	30	6.73
Campus Bars	241	40	6.03	21	11.48
Library	183	51	3.59	18	10.17
Bus	223	51	4.37	30	7.43
Downtown Bars	498	39	12.77	33	15.09
Public Spaces	517.5	53	9.76	45	11.50
Shopping Areas	323	48	6.73	30	10.77



In many cases the second re-incidence figure is markedly higher. For instance, in the case of the library, out of the total applicable respondents there was an average of 3.59 incidents per person. But when only counting the 18 affirmative respondents, we see that those who reported racism did so at a rate of 10.17 incidents each (see table 1.1). These numbers may indicate that although fewer respondents witnessed or experienced racism in the library, this may simply be a function of lower attendance, as those who did report racism did so at a high rate. It may also be a result of the different ways of using the library space. For example, some students may spend more time in the computer areas, others in the quiet study areas, and others in the group study areas – each of these areas are subject to different kinds of interactions between the people using the space. The second re-incidence number, in this case 10.17, gives us a clearer picture of what those 18 affirmative respondent's experiences have been in those spaces.

It is important to include both figures and to take the differences between them into account. While the first reveals the overall average, the second indicates the average of those who did report an incident, which in many cases is a notably higher amount. We will refer to the re-incidence numbers (all shown on table 1.1) as first the general re-incidence number, and then the second re-incidence number referring to the affirmative respondents in parentheses.

Reports of racism in various spaces

The results for reported incidents of racism varied across the 8 spaces on the survey, with results varying between 35.3% of respondents reporting racism in the library and 84.9% reporting racism in public spaces.

Peterborough public spaces were the highest reported site of racism, with 84.9% (see table 1.0) of respondents reporting a total of 517.5 racist incidents at an average of 9.76 (or 11.5) incidents per person (see table 1.1). Examples given for public spaces included written graffiti, bullying, racist comments and jokes and racially based police interrogation.

This was closely followed by **downtown bars**, where 84.6% of respondents reported seeing racism. They reported a total of 498 incidents, with an average of 12.77 (or 15.09) incidents each. **Trent University residences** also proved to have more reports of racism than most spaces, with 74.5% of respondents witnessing an average of 7.32 (or 9.83) incidents each.

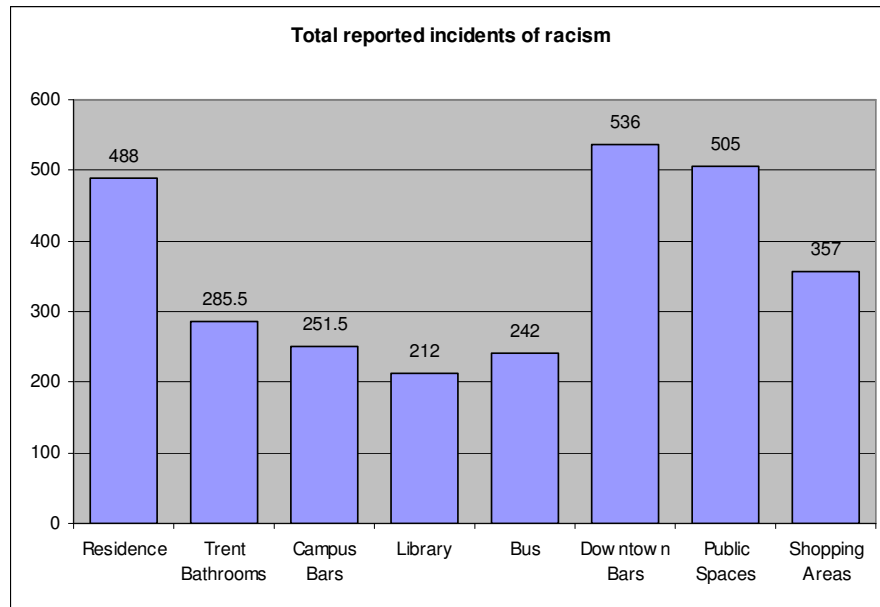


Verbal and Physical Harassment Downtown Peterborough

A first year Trent University student was attacked at the beginning of the first semester in downtown Peterborough. The incident occurred during the day in a public space. After harassing the victim because of his Muslim background, the offenders threw objects at the victim and attacked him. This attack was officially reported to the Peterborough Police and the President of Trent University issued a letter of concern.

For **Trent University campus bars**, 52.5% of respondents reported racism. Of the 21 affirmative respondents, there was an average of 11.48 incidents each (compared to 6.03 for the overall average). Again, this higher re-incidence figure indicates that while half of respondents had seen or experienced racism in campus bars (and therefore the other half had reported nothing), those who did report racism saw or experienced many incidents of it. For campus bars this may again be a function of infrequent use and it may also be a function of certain people being more aware, or more likely the targets of racist incidents than others (see Reports from Respondents of Colour section, page 21).

Chart 1.1 – Total reported incidents of racism



Out of 64 surveys, the total report of racist incidents ranged from 212 in the **Trent University Library** to 536 in **downtown bars** (see table 1.1 and chart 1.0). The study does not determine which instances of reporting may be reporting the same incidents, as multiple people may report the same incident. However, it is important to note two issues: (i) the trends that emerge from these figures, (ii) that no space



listed was free of racist incidents. Even the lowest reported space, the Trent University Library, was the site of a considerable amount of racist incidents. Given that our respondents (first year students) were present in Peterborough for a period of 6 months, the average rate of incidence is 35 incidents per month.

When asked to respond to the statement: "Discrimination, prejudice and racism are no longer problems in Peterborough", 85.93% of respondents disagreed. This number may actually be higher, as a number of the respondents who did agree with this statement (indicating that they believe discrimination is not a problem) had reported large numbers of incidents on their surveys. The negative phrasing of the question may have been misleading for some respondents. Even so, with 85.93% of respondents indicating that discrimination is an issue, it is clear that the students surveyed are of the opinion that racism, sexism and gender discrimination are ongoing problems in Peterborough.

Different Types of Racism

The various types of incidents and their rate of reporting varied depending on the space. This is a reflection of how different spaces are used for different activities. Since some spaces are spaces that lend to less social interaction (e.g. the library) or more interaction (e.g. bars), our study shows that higher rates of reported discrimination may only be found in specific locales or places. For example, a library is a quiet space of contemplation where a structure of study is both tacitly understood and vigorously patrolled. This is in strong contrast with bars, for instance, where alcohol is present and the loud social environment lends to a very different style of social interaction. Despite these differences, *the study reports every type of racial discrimination in every space*. Even for spaces such as the library there were reports of physical abuse and harassment. The most common forms of racial discrimination reported were verbal, written and physical, all of which we will highlight below.

Verbal

Verbal abuse, comments or ridicule were the most commonly reported type of racist incident overall. The most common space reported for these incidents was **downtown bars**, where 79.5% of respondents reported seeing a total 151 incidents. Some examples given by survey respondents included anti-Semitic, anti-Arab, anti-Latin and anti-black comments made by other patrons in bars.



Verbal Abuse in a Downtown Peterborough Bars

According to Peter, one of our interviewees, fights are common in downtown bars. He says, "I always find at least one fight the night I go out with my friends. I don't know about other people but, because of the way I look there have been at least four or five times I've been pushed and called discriminative names".

Public spaces were reported to be the next most common sites of verbal abuse, with 75.5% of people reporting a total of 166 incidents. One survey respondent writes: "I have actually had people drive by me yelling racist comments on several occasions, words like 'Paki', 'Dune Coon' and 'Jew Bug' have been used". **Trent University residences** were also high, with 74.5% of respondents reporting a total of 160 incidents. Many respondents gave examples of racist jokes and slurs in residence.

Jokes in Residence

A first year female student living on-campus reported that once her roommate and friends made a joke to her, which she could not see as being funny but instead found very offensive. She states, "I felt like I wanted to cry, I was just so mad. My roommate asked me if we all Chinese could see in high definition. First of all she knows for a fact that I am not even Asian. Second, I didn't find it funny, it was very offensive and there was nothing I could say or do."

Written

Written incidents of racism were most commonly reported in **Peterborough public spaces**, where 58.5% of respondents reported seeing written racial comments, ridicule or abuse. There were a total of 127 incidents reported, such as racist graffiti. **Downtown bars** were the next highest space, with 51.3% reporting a total of 99 cases. **Trent University Bathrooms** were another high space, with 45.3% reporting seeing written racism such as racist jokes or comments written on the bathroom stalls.

Physical Assault or Harassment

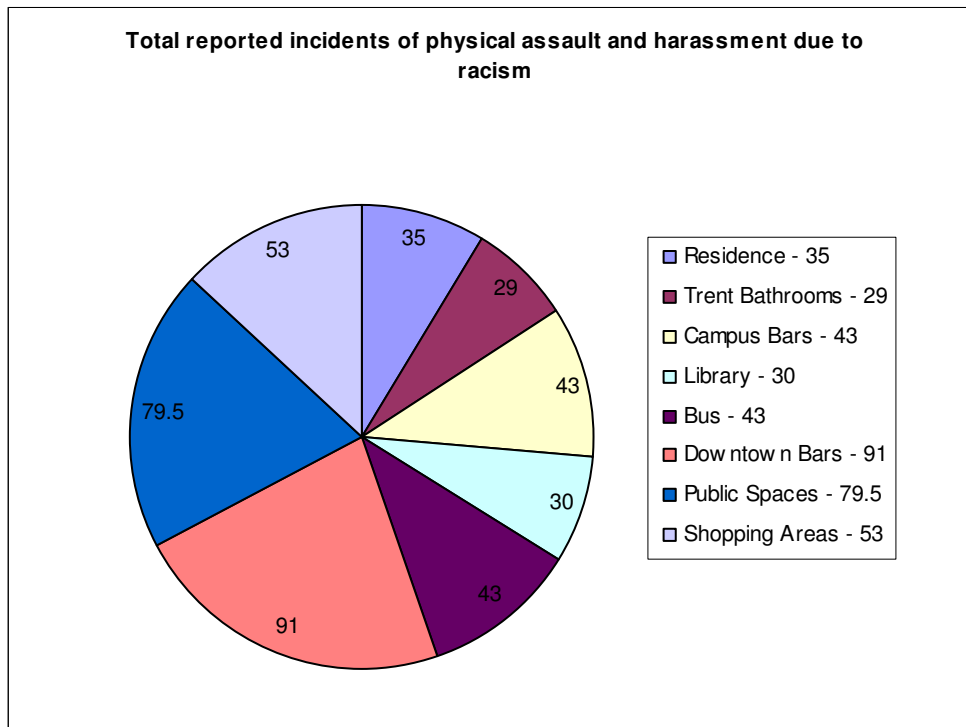
Physical assault and harassment are the forms of racism most commonly acknowledged as significant issues. Our surveys showed that these incidents most often take place in **downtown bars**, where 59% of respondents reported seeing an incident of physical assault or harassment due to racism. They reported a total of 91 incidents, including aggression aimed at black men if they dance with the 'wrong women', resulting in fights. This was also reported in **campus pubs**, where one



respondent wrote that fights or disagreements have happened when black men have danced with white women. In **public spaces**, 41.5% of respondents reported seeing a total of 79.5 incidents of assault or harassment based on racism.

The total reported incidents of physical assault or harassment varied dramatically across the 8 spaces, with the highest incidents occurring in the Peterborough spaces. In downtown bars there were 91 reported incidents, as well as 79.5 reported incidents of physical assault and harassment in public spaces and 53 in shopping areas (see chart 1.2).

Chart 1.2 – Total incidents of physical assault and harassment due to racism



Physical Assault and Complacency of the Peterborough Police

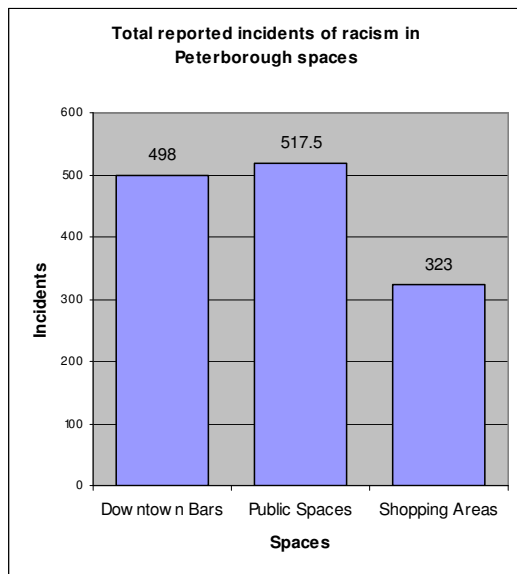
Probably one of the most striking incidents we had reported to us was in an interview with Tom, a Trent University student who was verbally and physically harassed in front of the Police. Tom informed our researchers: "I was coming out of a club with my friends, and yes we were a bit drunk but not as much as the other guys. We were walking through the corner of George and Simcoe, and some white guys started calling us wetbacks, Latin trash, and any other racist thing, then they pushed us to provoke us. I immediately called the police, who arrived immediately. As the other guys were leaving they kept on shouting racist things and the police did nothing, they just asked us to go home."



Peterborough Spaces

The three non-university spaces included on the survey were downtown bars, public spaces and shopping areas. The average number of respondents who reported racism in these three non-university spaces was 77.34%, as compared with an average of 55.54% for the 5 Trent University Spaces². This is a difference of more than 20%. For total reported incidents, from the 64 surveys received, our study reports 498 incidents in **downtown bars**, 517.5 incidents in **public spaces** and 323 reported incidents in **shopping areas** (see chart 1.3). The combined average of incidents reported for all of the Peterborough spaces is 446.2. Some examples given include racist graffiti, racially-based fights, racially-based interrogation by the police and people making racist comments.

Chart 1.3 – Total reported incidents of racism in Peterborough spaces



The profiles of what kinds of racism were most common in the Peterborough spaces vary. In **downtown bars**, verbal racism was most common with 151 total reported incidents. This was followed by 105 reported incidents of refusal to cooperate, which could include refusal to be served based on race or general rudeness and hostility based on race (see chart 1.4). One survey respondent, who self-identified as a woman of colour, reported being kicked out of a bar for alleged intoxication –she contends that she was not. Written and physical racism were reported at 99 and 91 incidents, accounting for graffiti and racially-based attacks and fights.

² The Bus has been included as a University space in this calculation. Although it is a space that may apply to both the downtown and university, most students who take the bus primarily take Trent buses and most of their experiences on the bus will be with other students.



Chart 1.4 – Total reported incidents of racism in downtown bars

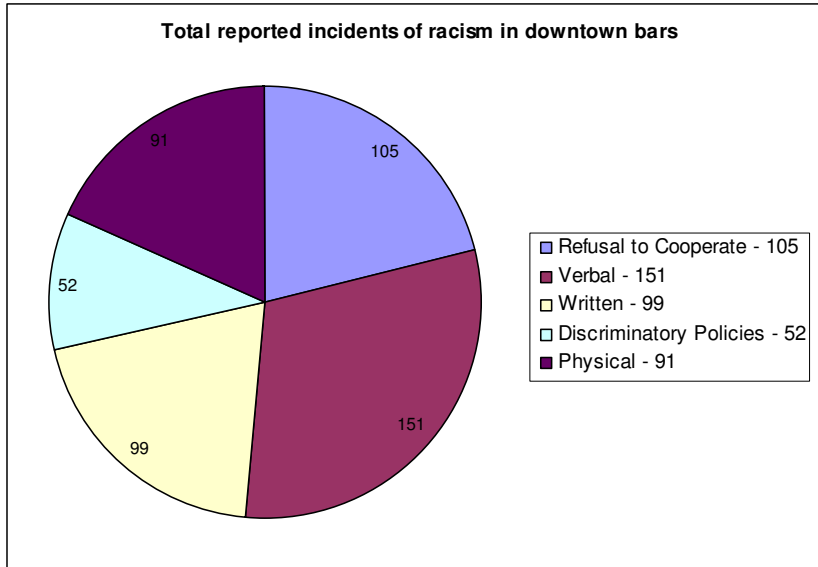
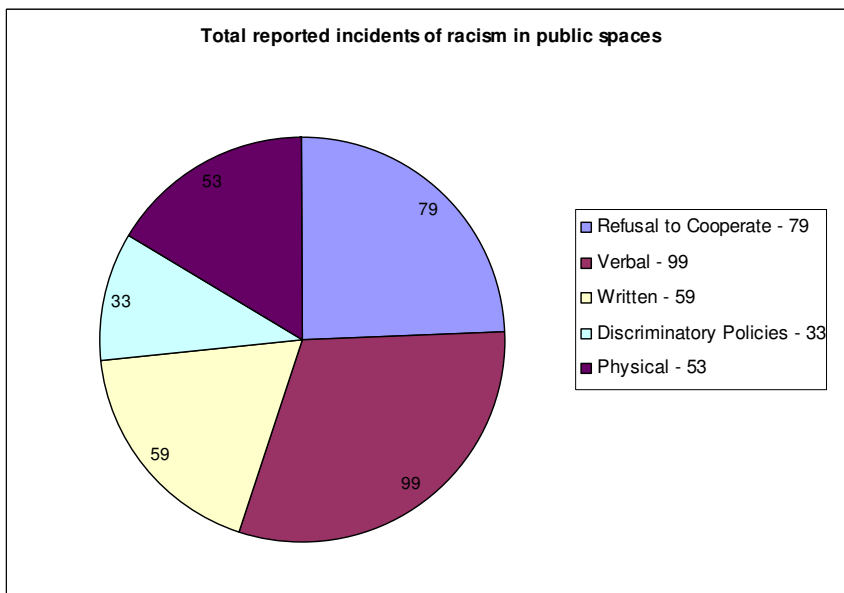


Chart 1.5 – Total reported incidents of racism in public spaces



Although slightly more people overall reported racism in public spaces (84.9%) than in downtown bars (84.6%) (see table 1.0, page 12), the number of incidents reported in downtown bars was much higher. For example, in downtown bars there were 151 incidents of verbal racism and 91 incidents of physical assault, compared to 99 and 53 respectively in public spaces (see charts 1.4 and 1.5, above). It is of interest to note that the ratios of incidents in these two spaces were nearly identical, with verbal incidents being the most common, followed by refusal to cooperate, written, physical and finally discriminatory policies. These figures indicate that the way racism

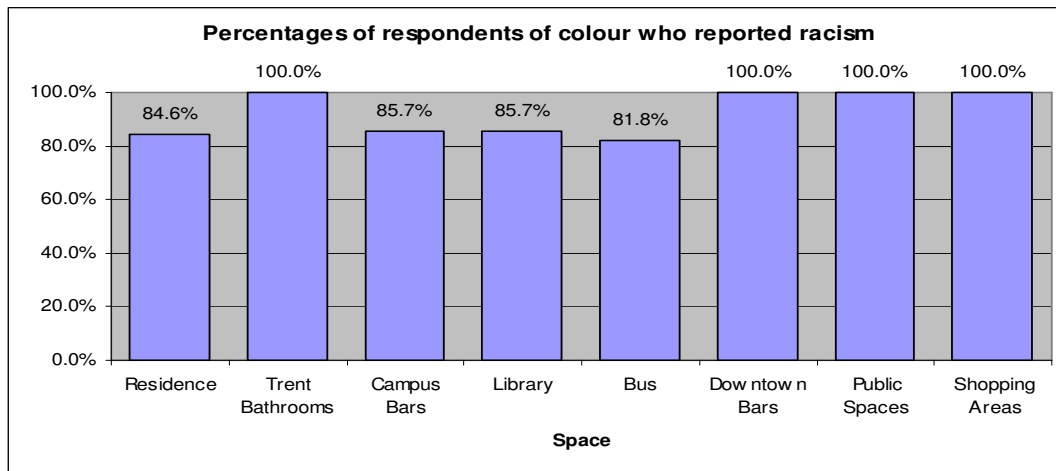


occurs in these different spaces are similar in kind. Despite the fact that racism is more prevalent in downtown bars, which may be linked to alcoholic consumption giving rise to higher rates of overt racism, the ratio of incidents are similar.

Results from Respondents of Colour

On the survey, 15 respondents out of 64 identified themselves as people of colour. In this case, we define people of colour as those who identified themselves as any racial identity other than white or Caucasian. By looking at the results from these respondents, we see even stronger evidence of racism at Trent and in Peterborough. In 4 of the 8 spaces, 100% of respondents reported seeing racism (see chart 1.6).

Chart 1.6 – Percentage of respondents of colour who reported racism



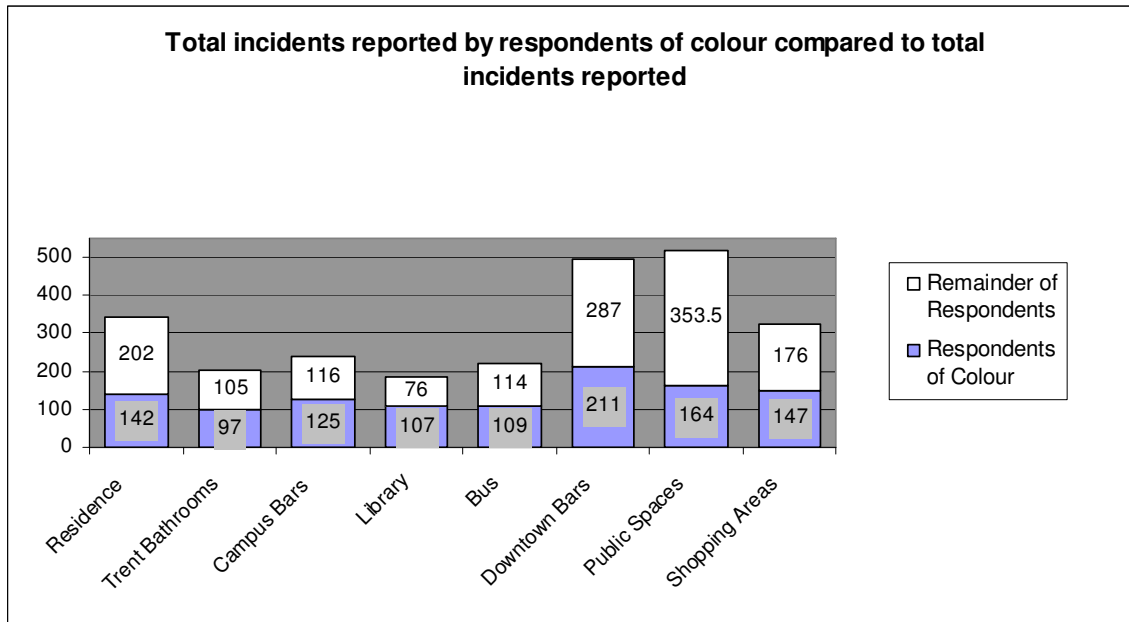
Similarly, the number of incidents reported by each respondent of colour was also higher. Respondents of colour each reported more incidents, with a re-incidence amongst affirmative respondents (those who reported racism) of 20.83 incidents each in campus bars, 19.8 incidents each in downtown bars, 18.38 incidents each in shopping areas, and 18.22 incidents each in public spaces (see table 1.2, page 22). These re-incidence numbers are much higher than those for all respondents (see table 1.1, page 13). This suggests that respondents of colour were more sensitized to racism and/or more subject to racist commentary or actions. For instance, the re-incidence number for all affirmative respondents for campus bars was 11.48, compared to 20.83 incidents reported by each affirmative respondent of colour.



Table 1.2 – Re-incidence per respondent of colour

Space	Total incidents (x)	Affirmative respondents (m)	Re-incidence (x/m)
Residence	142	11	12.91
Trent Bathrooms	97	8	12.13
Campus Bars	125	6	20.83
Library	107	6	17.83
Bus	109	9	12.11
Downtown Bars	211	11	19.18
Public Spaces	164	9	18.22
Shopping Areas	147	8	18.38

Chart 1.7 – Total incidents reported by respondents of colour compared to overall incidents reported



In comparing the numbers of incidents reported by respondents of colour to the incidents reported overall, we again see that respondents of colour were far more attuned to racism. Those who identified themselves as people of colour, accounting for only 23.4% of respondents, in some cases reported between 41% and 58% of racist incidents in specific spaces. For example, in the case of campus bars, we see that respondents of colour reported more incidents of racism than all the other respondents combined (see chart 1.7). In total, the 15 respondents of colour reported 1102 incidents of racism, resulting in an average of 73.5 incidents each in the six month period that most of them have been in Peterborough.



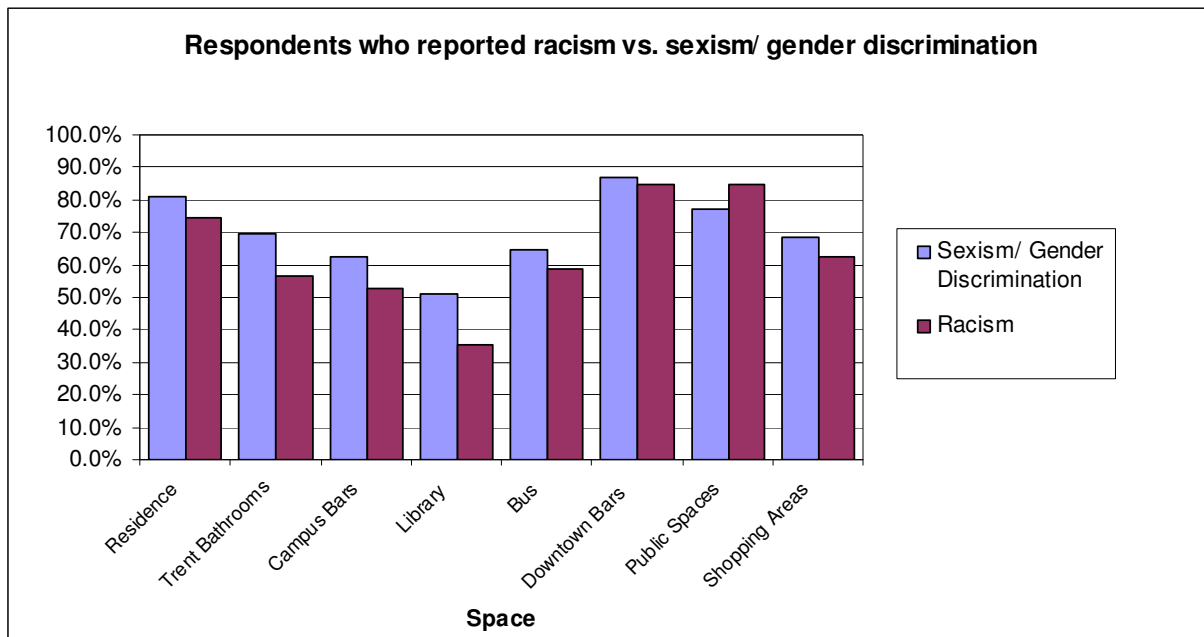
People of colour are not automatically more critical of issues of racism, just as not all women are automatically critical of sexism. However, as people of colour are often the targets of racism they are also more likely to report it, as we have seen in these results. It is clear that for respondents of colour, racism at Trent University and in Peterborough is a pervasive and consistent reality.

Sexism and gender discrimination as compared to racism

Sexism and gender discrimination are two interwoven forms of discrimination. However, it is up to respondents to interpret what these terms meant to them as they complete the surveys. Some respondents spoke exclusively of discrimination against women while others included discrimination against men, queer people or transsexual and transgendered people as well.

Our results for reports of sexism and gender discrimination are remarkably similar to those of racism. All respondents reported sexism or gender discrimination in some form, with more than 50% of respondents reporting sexism in every space.

Chart 1.8 – Respondents who reported racism vs. sexism/ gender discrimination



The percentages of respondents who reported both sexism and gender discrimination were very similar to the numbers of those who reported racism (see chart 1.8). Statistically, more respondents reported sexism than racism, and similarly there were higher amounts of sexist incidents reported, with a total of 2877 compared to a total of 2531.5 reported incidents of racism. This is an average



difference of an additional 5.4 reported incidents of sexism/ gender discrimination per respondent.

However, these results must also be considered by taking into account the general demographics of those who took the survey; only 15 respondents identified themselves as people of colour. As we noted, people of colour consistently reported higher incidents of racism. It is highly probable that if our survey sample had included more people of colour this would have changed our results by increasing the reports of incidents of racism.

Downtown Spaces

The results for the percentage of respondents who reported sexism and gender discrimination in Peterborough spaces were nearly identical to those of racism. Overall 77.76% of respondents reported sexism and gender discrimination in downtown bars, public spaces and shopping areas, as compared to 77.34% for racism.

In **downtown bars**, 87.18% of respondents reported incidents of sexism and gender discrimination. The reports of the various types of sexism and gender discrimination resulted in: 192 reported incidents of verbal discrimination, followed by 98 incidents of refusal to cooperate and written discrimination (see chart 1.9, page 25). These results compare very closely to the results for racism in downtown bars, with the results for written discrimination, discriminatory policies, refusal to cooperate and physical abuse being nearly identical (see also chart 1.4, page 20). The results of reported incidents for verbal comments, ridicule or abuse related to racism compared to sexism/ gender discrimination varied the most between the two. There were 192 reported incidents of verbal discrimination for sexism and gender discrimination compared to 151 for racism. There may be numerous reasons for this, including the sexual nature of bars which pressures men and women to more closely conform to certain gendered roles.

One of our interviewees reveals how men and women interact in these limited scripts in downtown bars. Further, we can clearly see how race and gender are interlocked:

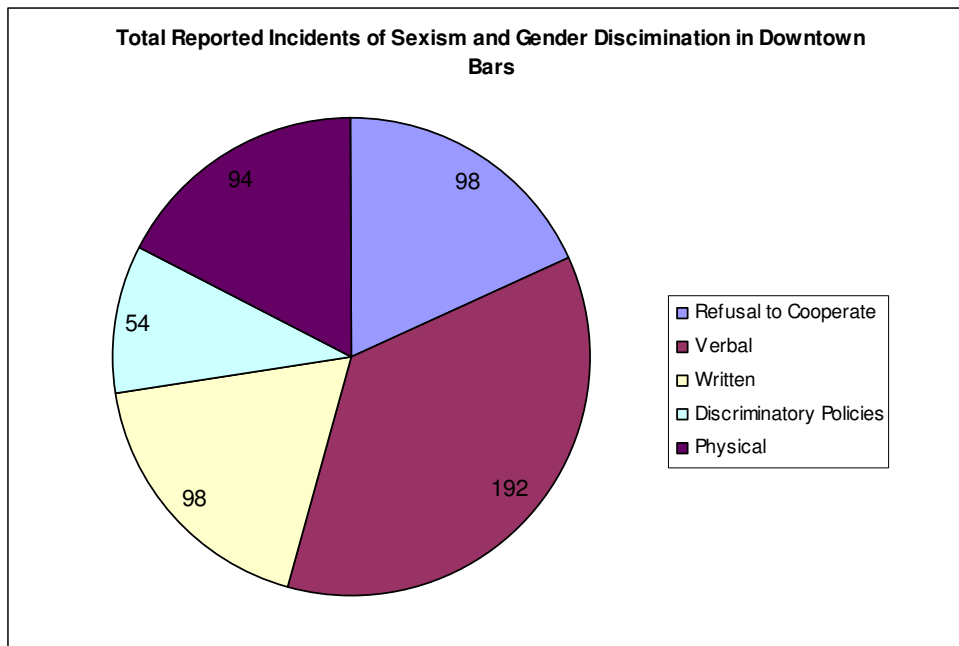


Being a Woman of Colour in a Bar

For some reason every time I come into a bar I feel everyone watches me, not because I am dressing sexy or anything like that, but because I am different (...) I love to dance, and I go there to enjoy myself. Men always tend to come and try to dance with me, they even think they are allowed to touch me and the bouncers never do anything. Other times I've been told things to my ear that make me want to throw up. One time a guy came to me and told me that he had never been with a girl of my race, and he was willing to experience [it] (...)

We see in this example how race and sex are intertwined in the way this interviewee is treated in bars. The sense of ownership exercised over her by men is linked to her sex; as a woman she is expected to welcome aggressive sexual attention. The figures of authority, in this case the bouncers, tacitly permit such demeaning behaviour by not acting to prohibit or prevent it. But race is also a factor in how she is perceived and treated. Because she is a woman of colour, she is treated as a general example and representative of her race, rather than an individual deserving of respect. In the situation she describes, the behaviour of the men—who exotify her—also produce a racialization of her that is unwanted.

Chart 1.9 – Total reported incidents of sexism and gender discrimination in downtown bars



The similarities between the results for sexism/gender discrimination and racism were strikingly similar in many different respects. The research indicates that differing forms of discrimination are in fact interconnected. Racism and sexism are not separate practices, but rather, are part of social practice that privilege white heterosexual men. Spaces that are more racist are also often more sexist. They tend to be spaces of discrimination where people can act out learned discriminatory values and beliefs. That is, since the data set shows us a higher prevalence of both racism and sexism/gender discrimination in downtown spaces it can be inferred that people interact in those spaces in manners that are more likely discriminatory or prejudice.

Despite being lower, the prevalence of racism and sexism in university spaces by no means indicates that the numbers reported of each type of incident are not relevant. Although the university setting is sometimes framed as an enlightened space where racism or sexism/gender discrimination would be less prevalent, the data shows that many forms of discrimination are actively practiced on campus.

Comparison to Last Year's Results

This year, the study made some key changes to the survey that altered the kinds of information gathered. For example, the newly revised survey model asked respondents for specific numbers of occurrences in each space. The added data enabled the survey to provide a clearer picture of discrimination by gathering more data from each respondent than the previous study. The increased data set allowed for greater statistical breakdown and analysis (see the Methodology section for the new survey format, page 8).

The results this year for respondents who reported seeing at least one type of racism in a specific space significantly increased. This is most likely due to the refinement of the study, where a more accurate method of collecting and analyzing data was developed. For example, the study was able to take into account those who reported "Not Applicable" for a specific space. By not including those who indicated that a space did not apply to them, the study was able to obtain results that were more accurate and representative of the experiences of those who did identify specific spaces.



Table 1.3 – Percentage of affirmative respondents for racism in 2007 vs. 2008

Space	2007 – Racism			2008 – Racism		
	Affirmative respondents	Total respondents	Percentage of affirmative respondents	Affirmative respondents	Total applicable respondents	Percentage of affirmative respondents
Residences	27	69	39.13%	35	47	74.5%
Trent Bathrooms	17	69	24.64%	30	53	56.6%
Campus Bars	11	69	15.94%	21	40	52.5%
Library	10	69	14.49%	18	51	35.3%
Bus	21	69	30.43%	30	51	58.8%
Downtown Bars	27	69	39.19%	33	39	84.6%
Public Spaces	30	69	43.48%	45	53	84.9%
Shopping Areas	27	69	39.13%	30	48	62.5%

This year's results can be compared with last year's on table 1.3. In every space the percentage of affirmative respondents increased significantly. By not including those who indicated "not applicable" we can see, for example, that in downtown bars, of the 64 students surveyed many indicated that they do not spend time in that space. Discounting respondents who did not attend bars allowed the study to focus on the 39 people who did report bar attendance. Of those 39 people, 33 responded affirmatively to having seen racism in that space. With this adjustment, our study shows that 84.6% of those who have been to bars have witnessed at least one incident of racism (see table 1.3). By discounting those who registered "not applicable" the results become a more accurate statistical snapshot of each space. Although the percentage may seem dramatically higher this year than last, this is only due to the discounting of those who precluded themselves with responses of "not applicable."



Section Four: CONCLUSION

Racism and discrimination are often practices that have been integrated and normalized into our everyday behaviour. This invisible integration occurs to such an extent that such practices are perceived to be either non-existent or unremarkable. Often, prejudice is passed off as a matter of personal choice or opinion to which people are entitled. The Community and Race Relations Committee is working to reveal discriminatory practices and prejudice for what they are. We know that prejudice and discrimination are common occurrences—as evidenced by this study—and socially destructive. It must be named and challenged in our communities. Through the joint responsibility of institutions, groups and individuals we can work to ensure that all people live life free from prejudice and discrimination. Only by working together as a community can this be possible.

Racist, sexist and gender discriminatory messages commonly circulate in society via the media and through our families, schools, and other institutions. In this manner, it is widely accepted that prejudice and discrimination are deeply rooted social problems. While the CRRC understands that people are products of their society, we also strongly believe that individuals must be held responsible for their actions. Although racism and gender discrimination may be wide-ranging and systematic problems for civil society to tackle, it is also true that individuals make independent choices and they have the opportunity *to choose* to challenge racism in society. We encourage such individual challenges. At the same time, we also have to hold accountable our institutions and authorities for the security and integrity of all community members regardless of race, language, culture or religious belief. In this regard, we are troubled by respondents' reports of racial profiling as practiced by police services. Such practice indicates a misguided use of authority. As well, respondents' reports of police indifference to racist harassment indicate a neglect of responsibility by those in positions of power. It is these people who should be on the forefront of challenging racism and they too must be held accountable for their actions.

In the last six months, 2531.5 instances of racism were observed by our survey respondents. These acts, though primarily verbal in nature, are still significantly damaging to individuals who experience them. Reports of physical assault and harassment due to racism are also significant, with a total of 403.5 cases reported, averaging 67.25 incidents per month. This includes 91 reported incidents in downtown bars and 79.5 in public spaces—with these two spaces alone accounting for 42% of all reports of physical assault and harassment.

The study also shows that the issues of prejudice and discrimination are not limited to downtown Peterborough but can also be found in the university setting. It may be



thought that racism or sexism are limited practices at university because of the learned academic environment, but this was not borne out in the data. A total of 488 incidents of racial discrimination were reported in Trent University residences within the last six months, resulting in an average of 81 cases each month. This includes 35 reports of physical assault or harassment. There were also 43 reported cases of physical assault or harassment on the bus and 43 in campus bars. In the context of highly regulated institutional spaces (e.g. university classrooms) discrimination and prejudice were less likely to be overt or present. However, in spaces where students interact more freely our research demonstrates that they may do so in discriminatory ways varying from racist jokes or statements to racist acts of physical violence. This study's findings suggest that higher levels of formal education cannot be assumed to correspond to an absence of racism or sexism.

The study has also shown that discriminatory practices tend to work in concert with one another. In the context of sexism and gender discrimination, we found that different discriminations do not occur in isolation. Although racism is a serious issue in Peterborough it is paralleled by discrimination based on sex and gender. Their coincidence should be kept in mind when we, as a community, discuss ways to combat racism.

The literature on oppression and discrimination tells us that the various forms of oppression are interconnected. If we are to engage seriously with a project to eradicate racism, then it would serve us well to understand the interconnection of these issues and to convey it to different members of our community. The CRRC believe this kind of training is very important, even for those who already actively work to be non-racist and non-sexist in their lives. This is because discriminatory ideas cannot simply be unlearned all at once. We must continue to challenge them in ongoing ways in both ourselves and others.

We strongly encourage the development of projects to reduce discrimination in both the Peterborough area and at Trent University. This educational effort is needed in all areas of Peterborough, including bars, municipal organizations, the Peterborough police and Trent University. This is especially important in light of Trent University's new marketing strategy to depict itself as a multi-racial space safe for people of colour and international students. There needs to be an acknowledgment, on the part of the University, that racism continually shapes experiences of both Trent and Peterborough for students of colour. Trent University has a responsibility to work to ensure the safety of its students. If it is going to continue to work to attract more students of colour, then it must also work to provide these students with a safe learning and living environment.

We need to talk openly in Peterborough and in the Trent University community about our issues concerning discrimination and prejudice. In denying that we have these issues we cannot move forward and challenge these corrosive ideas and practices.



We believe in actively working towards a just and equitable society where people are not prejudged or stereotyped based on race or sex. We cannot work towards these goals if we cannot admit that racism and sexism are issues with which Trent University and Peterborough must contend.



Section Five: RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey was designed to be adapted to any space and any type or act of discrimination. This research tool is strongly quantitative, but also has a qualitative aspect allowing for respondents to offer examples and further elaboration. By conducting interviews following the survey, the research provided extra detail regarding an individual's experience of prejudice and discrimination. The quantitative and qualitative methods have allowed the study to fully reflect and recognize the severity and impact of prejudice and discrimination in our community. There are, however, improvements that can be made to improve the study for future use. Please see Appendix One for the revised survey model. In the revised questionnaire, the survey instrument now includes the separation of physical assault from harassment, greater clarity and separation between the categories of "Nothing" and "Not Applicable," better number scaling, and more detail regarding the enrolment year of the student.

We strongly recommend the application of this survey in specific public spaces such as the bus terminal, downtown bars, downtown businesses and public service organizations. The more information that can be collected using this survey tool, the clearer will be our picture of discriminatory practices and prejudice in Peterborough. As well, sustained local research into prejudice and discrimination will let us know if the numbers of racist incidents are increasing or decreasing. It will also allow us to gauge if public initiatives, which have been put in place to challenge racism, are having an effect.

At the same time, this initiative should be supported not only by the CRRC but other organizations that are dedicated to the well-being of members of the Peterborough community. This includes The City Council, Trent University, Fleming College, public schools, social services, and community organizations. We need to bring awareness to this systemic problem, which goes well beyond the opinions of individuals and into the ways that people are continually labelled and treated in various different spaces, settings, and institutions in our community. It is unquestionably the responsibility of our public and private institutions, as well as individuals, to work to challenge racism in all its forms. This survey is one tool that can be used to raise the necessary awareness around the prevalence of racism in our community and we hope to see it further refined and used in the future.



Appendixes

Appendix One: Revised Survey Tool

Which of the following have you observed or heard of in (space)?

a) Refusal to cooperate with racialized individuals or groups. How many times?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other (please indicate specific number):

b) Verbal racial comments, ridicule or abuse. How many times?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other (please indicate specific number):

c) Written racial comments, ridicule or abuse. How many times?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other (please indicate specific number):

d) Racially discriminatory policies and procedures. How many times?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other (please indicate specific number):

e) Physical assault due to racism. How many times?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other (please indicate specific number):

f) Harassment due to racism. How many times?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other (please indicate specific number):

g) Nothing (I have seen nothing in this space)

h) Not Applicable (I do not spend time in this space)

End questions:

x) Discrimination, prejudice and racism are problems in Peterborough.

Agree

Disagree

x) Please provide us your e-mail address if you would be interested in an interview to further discuss your responses:



x) Please describe incidents of racial discrimination that you have observed or heard of in any other space at Trent University or in Peterborough, or share any additional comments you may have with us:

x) Personal Information

Name (optional):

Gender:

Age:

College:

Nationality:

Racial identity:

Major (intended):

Number of Years in University:

Live on or off campus:

Comments:

This new survey tool has a number of key changes. We have added a “0” to the number scale, so that respondents can more easily indicate when they’ve seen nothing. We’ve also tried to make it clearer that for “Other” we require a specific number, since some respondents would write for instance “10+” or “dozens”, in which cases during analysis we would have to assume they were indicating only “11” or “24” – the lowest numbers possible for what they had written.

We have separated physical assault from harassment, for more clarity of response.

Most importantly we have clearly separated “Nothing” and “Not Applicable”, so that during data analysis researchers can more clearly distinguish between these two very different answers.

We have also rephrased the question about discrimination in Peterborough by changing the question into a positive proposition and, in so doing, making it clearer.

Finally, we have added the question of what year they are in University, since even in first year classes there may be some upper year students. We have also added the question of living on or off campus for more clarity.



Appendix Two:
2008 Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

Part A:

Research on the "Spaces of racial and gendered discrimination at Trent University Peterborough"

This research project focuses on finding key spaces of racism, sexism and gender discrimination at **Trent University/Peterborough** through interviews and surveys of first year students. This research is being conducted by two undergraduate students. It will result in a final report created with the Community Race Relations Committee and will be the basis for future research. At the same time the project will raise anti-racism and anti-sexism/gender discrimination awareness.

The general interpretive framework of this research is that of feminist critical race theory, and specifically in this case, a theoretical understanding of Canada as a nation where white supremacy and white privilege are routine and normalized. This research expects to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data. Limitations in interpreting meanings of quantitative data (e.g. numbers of incidents of racism of various kinds) obtained will be acknowledged.

If you have any questions please contact the researchers of this project: Linzy Bonham 705-748-0469 and Andres Salazar 705-927-2264. This research project is under the supervision of Professor Paula Butler (Women's Studies Department, Trent University).

This form asks for your permission to use information that you are providing in the **survey** attached. In most cases, the survey will take approximately 30 minutes.

If you agree to give consent to our use of this information, you are guaranteed the following rights:

- You may withdraw your participation at any time, or choose not to answer certain questions
- You have the right to confidentiality of personal information and anonymity. Unless you wish otherwise, neither your name nor identifying information will be used in our research publications
- You do not have to answer any questions that you do not feel comfortable answering.
- There is no deception or risk to you or other participants involved in this exercise.
- If you wish to receive a copy of your survey, should you choose to do one, please provide your address on the back of this page.





Once the survey is completed, we will compile the results for our exclusive use in password protected computer files. The information will be stored until 8 months after the final report is presented to the Community Race Relations Committee, thereafter the files will be destroyed.

PART B: By signing below I understand my rights as stated here and agree to participate in this research study and understand that information I provide may be cited anonymously.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

PART C: I further agree that information I provide may be cited using my name in the researchers' publications. In this case, I understand that I will be consulted in order to review and approve the use of this information in context before it is published.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

PART D: A copy of this consent form has been made available to me.

Date: _____ Signature: _____

PLEASE DO NOT SIGN BELOW – For researchers' use only.

Researcher's Acknowledgement and Approval.

Date: _____ Signatures: _____

Please sign, and keep pages 1 and 2 for your records.

Please sign page 4 and return to interviewer.

