VOICES UNHEARD: EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES OF STRAIGHT WHITE MALE STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Straight White males do not perceive themselves to be privileged because of their economic circumstances, lack of family support, and the stressors they face to cope with Western masculine norms. We conducted quantitative and detailed qualitative data analyses based on a survey of 32 male students at MacEwan University. Although our quantitative analysis did not reflect significant results, our qualitative data found that straight White males have a lower sense of belonging on campus, self-censor on campus, perceive being negatively depicted, and are impeded by unhealthy Western norms on masculinity to deal with the stressors of life. We conclude that support systems are required to instill a healthy sense of self-esteem within straight White male students and to validate them by role models and mentors.

KEYWORDS
straight White males; masculinity norms; campus support

INTRODUCTION

The demographic makeup of college and university campuses in North America has been traditionally dominated by White male students. However, immigration and progressive social advancements opened and diversified college campuses to include more women, people of color and members of the LGBTQ community. There exist today many avenues of support, both on and off campus, for these groups to openly embrace their identities in solidarity to build a sense of community. At MacEwan University, there are many on-campus initiatives on empowering traditionally marginalized groups. These include the Tie a Turban Day, Hijab Day, Islam Awareness Week, Black History Month, I Believe You campaign, and Pride Week among other initiatives that are aimed at empowering Sikhs, Muslims, Black individuals, women, and LGBTQ folks, respectively. Through the Sexual Violence Prevention and Education Committee (SVPEC), initiatives have also been undertaken to engage male students on issues around sexual violence.

Despite the expansion of a more welcoming atmosphere on campus to historically excluded groups, this process could be experienced as exclusionary by straight White males, who may be feeling isolated on campus. Indeed, the literature indicates that such men have frequently expressed frustration with diversity and social justice efforts, which they perceive as having excluded them (DiAngelo and Sensoy, 2014; Roper, 2004). Add on the increasing feeling of disconnectedness due to advancements in technology and social media, this creates a new demographic characterized by the desire for help and finding none. It is this disconnectedness and lack of support, especially for poorer straight White males, that can leave them feeling as if the world is progressing too fast or rather in the wrong direction, sowing the seeds of discontent among young White males. Some of them may seek out online groups that can fill the void left by the lack of any available support group, sowing the seeds of the rise of far-right movements among young White males. In short, it seems that the needs of straight White male students on campus must be addressed and not inadvertently ignored, based on the notion that they already enjoy privilege by virtue of their race, gender, and sexuality.

The objective of this study is therefore to investigate the concerns and apprehensions of straight White male students on campus and to figure out what support systems are required to address their needs. This is effectively achieved by listening to them and allowing them a platform where their voices are compassionately heard. The hypothesis in this paper is that straight White males do not perceive themselves to be privileged because of their economic circumstances, lack of family support, and the stressors they face to cope with Western masculine norms. In short, while intersectional analysts focus on the confluence of racial and socio-economic exclusion from the perspective of racialized individuals, single White males are primarily concerned with their own economic struggles, lack of family support, and ability to cope with stressors. Race, whether it be their own or of someone else, is irrelevant to

their concerns. To address this hypothesis, their thoughts are elicited through both Likert scale responses and open-ended qualitative questions. For comparison purposes, the questionnaire will also be given to people of colour (POC) students. Based on this feedback, the importance of reaching out to straight White males on campus and creating support systems for them is underscored.

Motivation

Intersectional analysis indicates that privilege in one aspect of one's life may be nullified by disadvantage in another aspect. However, the focus of much intersectional analysis is on the confluence of racial and socio-economic exclusion from the perspective of racialized individuals, and less so on straight White males experiencing socio-economic exclusion. Indeed, male privilege is compromised by marginalization based on other factors such as class (Coston and Kimmel, 2012). In the present context, this means that whatever unearned privilege is enjoyed by straight White males on account of their race, gender and sexuality may be compromised by severe disadvantage based on class and cultural factors that include independence from parental support at college age, not asking for help, and not showing healthy emotions to deal with the stressors of life. This means when straight White males show allyship for marginalized groups to address systemic racism, sexism, and homophobia, they too may need support based on their economic and cultural circumstances.

A second reason why support needs to be available for such youth is because of changing demographic trends. In 2009, the President of the University of Alberta, Dr. Indira Samarasekera, a woman and a person of colour (POC), expressed her desire to advocate for more boys to enroll in university, citing her concerns that across Canada, the average college campus is 60% female. Shortly after these remarks, she received backlash from the University student body and staff. One student spearheaded a protest campaign claiming that men don't need advocates because it is a White man's world (CBC News, 2011). However, Samarasekera's remarks were on the concern that lower rates of males graduating with university degrees, in an economy that demands high levels of education, will lead to the decline of male talent across the economy. Similarly, Dueck (2017) argues schools in North America showcase a system in which boys have lower test scores on average, are more likely to be removed from class for behavioural issues, and more likely to repeat a grade or drop out of school entirely. Therefore, lower test scores mean men are less likely to be accepted into university and even less likely to receive scholarships if they enroll in the first place (Luke, 2014). More recently, in an article for the *Wall Street Journal*, Belkin (2021) reports evidence that even though men "dominate top positions in industry, finance, politics and entertainment," women made up 59.5% of U.S. college students in 2020-21 (an all-time high), and while total college enrollment has been declining over the last five years, 71% of men account for that fall. This gender gap in college enrollment is expected to increase, and it holds regardless of race, geography, and economic background. Furthermore, "Enrollment rates for poor and working-class white men

are lower than those of young Black, Latino and Asian men from the same economic backgrounds." Males have stated in interviews that a college degree is not worth the time and expense to get one. Therefore, while white males are often cited for their "privilege" when compared to POCs and women, it appears that their dominance in terms of post-secondary enrollments is declining in the U.S.

A third reason for supporting straight White males on campus is based on the harsh judgment that is meted out to them in social media discourse. The social climate has become such where academic theory is being simplistically wielded by ideologues on social media. When by virtue of their race, gender, and sexuality, straight White males are informed that they are unintentionally complicit in a system that oppresses others, they end up self-censoring their thoughts both on social media and in class discussions. Thus, spaces which project narratives on systemic and infrastructural racism on the pain of humiliation lead them to stop sharing their ideas out of fear of being judged. This then creates an environment where straight White males on campus become fearful of engaging with ideas, as they are afraid of being labeled a racist or xenophobe. In other words, they perceive an unwelcome environment that creates less incentive to stay in university until graduation. In short, straight White males on campus also need support because of their economic situation and the harsh judgment on social media that pushes them towards self-censorship, stunts their intellectual growth and harms their emotional well-being.

LITERATURE REVIEW
There is work that shows racism or discrimination on Canadian university campuses, fostering an us-versus-them mentality and social climate on campus (Caxaj et al., 2018). However, the same study shows that international students and people of colour, or visible minorities, may only hear and accept views that are heard and agreed upon within their specific 'communities' and, thereby, miss or dismiss other existing perspectives regardless of their validity. Thus, while there is the issue of racism or discrimination, there is also a purposeful dismissal of valid views, which strengthens the us-versus-them mentality. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2020) indicate that due to misunderstandings and a sometimes-zealous desire to eliminate microaggressions and racism, it is possible that some students might intentionally angle to be in the position of the victim to gain an advantage, a tangible gain which may or may not be obvious at the time. Additionally, Robson et al. (2018) observed that those who saw themselves as White and those who identified as East Asian were not increasing their representation in Canadian universities, while all other students from mixed or other ethnicities were predicted to increase. If these predictions are true and this trend continues, it would mean greater misunderstandings and challenges. In short, the literature shows cursorily that straight White male students would struggle with challenges, but the focus remains generally on racism and discrimination. This means there exists a lacuna on addressing the needs of straight White male students.

Works like Svoboda and Vianden (2015) focus on how straight White males can change their behaviour to become better allies to others on campus and to better facilitate a more positive campus atmosphere. Vianden and Gruber (2020) focus on how straight White college-age men conceptualize their own privilege and how they view their responsibility as a privileged demographic to assist and engage in social change. Using the findings of this paper, the authors provide medical educators with the right approach in confronting male students about their privilege and oppressive behaviors to help them understand the effect their inaction has on minority groups who cannot thrive under an oppressive system. In more recent work, Lozano et al. (2021) continue to express the need for White college-age males to recognize the role they play in creating social change. By highlighting the experience of female students and the negative perception of them by male students, the authors invite male students to become aware of their own privilege and challenge themselves on their behaviour on campus. Similarly, Cabrera (2012) indicate that college educators must better engage male college students from privileged groups to see themselves as part of diversity work and social justice education. While such works offer noteworthy research, they focus on the behaviour and not straight White males themselves, that is, they do not focus on what straight White males struggle with or provide insight into what support system they require.

On the other hand, Reed (2018) critiques contemporary anti-racism, which involves reducing problems in the Black community to being a direct result of racism, something the author calls a "race-reductionist" argument. They see "generic white racism" as the *cause* of racially disparate outcomes (e.g., differences in unemployment rates, wealth, and health factors), with no concern about other factors that might be causing these outcomes, or how to solve them. They are only concerned with simply *recognizing* racism, and in doing so, they presume that any racist explanations that legitimately existed in the 18th and 19th centuries still exist now. The author also argues that these people are promoting neoliberalism (rather than leftism), as they criticize anyone who focuses on (socialist) economic approaches to dealing with inequalities, rather than simply resorting to racial (identity) politics. This relates to our hypothesis because it demonstrates why heterosexual Cis-gendered White male students might feel uncomfortable in a post-secondary setting, as they are made to feel like all problems are a direct result of them being racist, sexist, homophobic, etc., even if they do not know it. Furthermore, no matter how much one might try to be an "ally" with POCs, as long as there are inegalitarian outcomes, they are to blame for their (implicit) racism, even if they try to fight for socialist policies such as redistribution, free healthcare, and free education. This means White students feel unsafe to be honest about their feelings.

Feeling unsafe is not just restricted to students, for according to Karimi (2021), the socio-political climate on university and college campuses in Canada concerning free speech and academic freedom is such that even some faculty might feel the need to

censor themselves and not express what they believe. According to Smeltzer and Hearn (2016), in the post-2008 era, Universities and colleges in the U.S. and in Canada were suffering financially, which incentivized these institutions to act as businesses and see their students more as clients buying a service rather than people who were there to learn how to think critically. The authors indicate that many students are not able to engage in an intelligent debate that would broaden their worldview and suggest that university and college administrators need to be able to resist political and economic demands that can disempower the freedom of expression of students and faculty. All this strengthens the resolve to reach out to straight White male students and address their concerns.

Work that stands out as exploring the needs of White male youth comes from the field of counseling psychology. Specifically, Timlin-Scalera et al. (2003) use grounded theory methodology to identify the mental health stressors in the lives of White male high school youth and find that pressures of wealth success and high expectations create a gender-connected stigma around male help-seeking behaviours. Similarly, our goal is to gain a perspective of the reality of campus life for straight White male students to understand what their struggles are, or if they exist, and to then compare their concerns with those of our hypothesis that straight White males do not perceive themselves to be privileged because of their economic circumstances, lack of family support, and the stressors they face to cope with Western masculine norms. Should any trend of discomfort with campus life arise in our research, our objective is to then extract from their responses what support system would be required to alleviate this anxiety and create a more welcoming campus atmosphere for all.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES
1. To investigate the concerns of straight White male students on campus
2. To figure out what support systems are required to address their needs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Grounded theory applies inductive reasoning, generating data from surveys or interviews. It uses a flexible methodology for gathering the data to develop a theory that is systematically extracted from generated data, and then scientifically examined by performing a comparative analysis (Tie et al., 2019). For this paper, we will be considering a Glaser and Holton (2004) perspective, applying a group of interconnected conceptual hypotheses that were scientifically formed, creating a logical theory. More specifically, this study uses purposive sampling and surveys to conduct exploratory research and to test the hypothesis that straight White males do not perceive themselves to be privileged because of their economic circumstances, lack of family support, and the stressors they face to cope with Western masculine norms.

Specifically, our questionnaire targets both straight White male students and their counterpart people of color male students at MacEwan. The questionnaire, based on 29 questions eliciting binary, Likert scale and open-ended responses, was administered through an online survey site – Typeform. Student representatives at MacEwan University and some classes were emailed to complete the survey anonymously. The questions on whether the students have parental financial support, or live with parents, are meant to gauge the support systems present in the lives of White and POC male students. The question on GPA was included to discern if a lack of such support was associated with a lower GPA. Additionally, questions on having friends from diverse backgrounds, attending diversity programs on campus, and being at ease attending such programs, allow us to discover whether White and people of color, straight male students feel differently about diversity initiatives on campus. The Likert scale responses are numbered from 1 – 5, which allows for a numerical analysis of these responses. These include whether male students are comfortable showing emotion and how social media portrays straight White males. This allows to discern whether White male students feel overwhelmed or cornered by the social media narrative. Finally, open-ended questions on what support systems are available, what support is required, and whether there is freedom of expression on campus, are all aimed towards eliciting from student responses on what is required on campus to ensure a safe space for all students including straight White males. In short, while the binary and Likert scale responses are subjected to quantitative analysis, the open-ended questions complement that by facilitating qualitative analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS
Quantitative Analysis
Table 1: *Responses to the binary and Likert scale questions*

Variable	POC	White
Count	9	23
Age (18-25)	88.89%	82.61%
Tuition fee help	66.67%	72.73%
Rent free living	55.56%	52.17%
GPA	3.16	3.28
Diversity program participation	11.11%	13.04%
Diversity promotion perception	4.00	3.70
Belonging on campus	4.11	3.70
MacEwan racial belonging support	50.00%	76.47%
Safe on social media	2.67	3.61
White media portrayal	3.00	2.61
POC media portrayal	2.56	2.87
Comfort showing emotion	3.67	3.05

We received 32 responses to the online survey that was completed anonymously to allow students to freely express their thoughts. The number of participants is ideal for our inquiry, as data analysis is dependent on student comments, and typically, about 25 – 30 participants are recommended for qualitative analysis (Dworkin, 2012). While our emphasis is on qualitative data analysis, a basic quantitative analysis of the data is as follows. The participants were all Canadian citizens or permanent residents, all except one identified as straight, only one POC and one White student mentioned that they didn't have a friend from the other group, and only one POC and one White student expressed that they didn't have a loving upbringing. Additionally, there was no discernible pattern in their choice of degree program. This suggests that the survey was generally filled by a group of well-adjusted students that had a stable upbringing, who belong to the dominant sexual orientation and have friends from diverse backgrounds. The profile of these participants and the responses to their binary and Likert scale questions are summarized in Table 1.

General Profile
Table 1 indicates the survey was completed by 9 (28.13%) POC students and 23 (71.88%) White students, which was expected, as compared to larger universities, MacEwan university largely draws students from the local population. In terms of the profile and responses of these students, difference of means tests did not show any statistically significant difference between the two group of students at the 5% levels of significance. While this may be due to the sample size, a general pattern seems evident based on the summarized data in Table 1. First, a lower percentage of White students fall in the 18-25 age range (82.61% versus 88.89% for POC students). A relatively greater percentage of White students pursue their education at a higher age compared to POC students. This fact goes with the observation that a relatively greater percentage of White students require help with tuition fees (72.73% versus 66.67% for POC students) and that a relatively lower percentage of White students have access to rent-free accommodation with their parents (52.17% versus 55.56% for POC students), although the differences are not that stark. Additionally, White students have a greater average GPA (3.28 versus 3.16 for POC students). Overall, despite requiring assistance with tuition fees and without access to rent-free living with parents, White students are still able to obtain relatively better GPAs on the average.

Diversity Initiatives
In terms of diversity initiatives on campus, while a relatively larger percentage of White students (13.04% versus 11.11% for POC students) have participated in university diversity programs, they feel relatively more uncomfortable with diversity programs on campus (3.7 versus 4.0 for POC students on a 5-point Likert scale), and they also have a relatively lower sense of belonging on campus (3.70 versus 4.11 for POC students on a 5-point Likert scale). This is even though a greater percentage of White students expressed that MacEwan offers them the support to racially belong on campus (76.47% versus 50.00% for POC students).

Social Media
In terms of safety on social media, White students feel relatively more uncomfortable with the way White men are depicted on social media (2.61 versus 3.00 for POC students). Similarly, POC students feel relatively more uncomfortable with the way POC men are depicted on social media (2.56 versus 2.87 for White students). This suggests that each group is concerned about its portrayal on social media. Finally, a relatively greater percentage of White students feel discomfort in showing emotion (3.05 versus 3.67 for POC students).

To recapitulate the quantitative data analysis, while difference of means tests did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the two groups of students, a general pattern can nonetheless be observed. The findings indicate that despite requiring assistance with tuition fees and without access to rent-free living with parents, White students obtain relatively better GPAs on the average. However, despite expressing having support from the University on racial belonging and despite feeling safe on social media, White students still have a relatively lower sense of belonging on campus and express discomfort in showing emotion. This quantitative analysis lends support to the idea that the concerns of White students should be addressed along with the diversity initiatives on campus for POC, women, and LGBTQ individuals. To this end, a qualitative analysis is necessitated to delve into the issues raised by White students.

Qualitative Analysis
Freedom of Expression
The questionnaire includes eight open ended questions that focus on concerns including racial belonging, freedom of expression on campus, media portrayal of men, and Western norms for men. Out of 32 participants, 26 male students answered the question "In your opinion, is there freedom of speech around different views of racial belonging or exclusion on campus? Do you feel safe in such conversations on campus?". While several White students briefly expressed that they felt safe in such conversations, others expressed that they withheld their opinions out of fear of being ridiculed or out of concern of offending. A snapshot of their opinions is presented below, which confirms that White students are self-censoring on campus and which sheds light on the quantitative analysis result that White students have a relatively lower sense of belonging on campus (3.70 versus 4.11 for POC students).
"Not necessarily, these conversations can be a somewhat sensitive topic to certain individuals."
"Not very free. If your opinion is deemed offensive then you are not allowed to voice the opinion."
"No, and I do not have them on campus. Conversations may be had about a specific band of views, but outside of them they are forbidden."
"No. People take offense to much these days."
"I feel like I can talk about it, but I don't talk about that stuff because if I do, I'll

probably get ridiculed; because who am I to talk about such things? Sometimes, depending on the class I am in, I feel like I'll just be dismissed if I do talk about it because of my ethnic composition. Luckily, I haven't encountered it yet, and have had good conversations about it with people of various ethnicities (academics). However, if I were in gender studies and not economics, I would probably answer differently."

Expounding on the previous question further, 23/32 participants responded to the question, "Do you feel stifled on conversations on racial belonging on campus? Please share your lived experience?" While several White students briefly expressed that they didn't feel stifled in such conversations, others expressed that the message they received was that their voices do not matter or that they would face censure by peers for promoting the well-being of White people. A snapshot of these opinions is presented below, where one White student wrote a lengthy response on how he felt a loss of self-esteem from professors in a position of power, both POC and White alike, and how much it meant to him when another POC professor in a position of power acted as a mentor and helped him with self-esteem. This indicates that apart from diversity programs on campus for POC, women, and LGBTQ individuals, there needs to be support for straight white males to build a healthy sense of self-esteem and that how important it is for them to receive validation from role models and mentors.

"Yes, White males are often told that their voices do not matter in such discussion."
"Promoting white-wellbeing, that is, the wellness of people of western, European heritage, would simply be beyond the pale. If I were to mention the fact that many South-Africans face persecution by dint of being white, I would face persecution and censure by many of my peers."
"Yes, but only with people who are in my group. The only group of people who have made me feel happy and instilled a sense of belonging in me have been Asians (West, South, South East, and Eastern). For example, I had a South Asian professor who didn't make me feel wrong about my ethnicity but instead helped me develop a sense of healthy pride in being English and Scottish; he pointed to the great accomplishments of English people, such as the invention of the parliamentary system, and I joked that we also invented the suit. We had a good laugh. In return, I asked him questions about South Asia, and I learned quite a good deal.
However, in my first year, I had a South Asian professor who did make me feel wrong about my ethnicity; he was talking about the oppressive nature of my group, saying that I should feel bad for what I am (definitely a way to win hearts and minds, NOT). After that, I then had shitty self-esteem, feeling bad about what I am, until that previously mentioned South Asian professor came along and instilled some healthy pride into me. Since then, I have been feeling good about myself ever since. I am forever grateful to him.
In regards to White professors, the only ones who did talk about it took it as an opportunity to self-flagellate themselves. One of them was an ethnic Irishmen, who felt bad about White people's recent conquering history, but he conveniently forgot about

his people's oppression under the English. He, as well as others, group White people in one group, when in fact Europeans are many peoples. It all feels disingenuous to group Polish people with English people when they are very distinct from each other, in both genetics, culture, and history (this goes for all other European peoples too)."

Social Media Portrayal

The survey answer to the question, "How do you feel about the way that social media tends to portray White Western males", indicated that there was more a sense that White Western males were negatively portrayed on social media than positively portrayed (37.5% compared to 12.5%). Advancing this question, we asked "Is there a message that you would share with social media regarding how it portrays White Western males? If so, what is that message?". The students who felt that stereotyping was wrong believed that all stereotyping is wrong, not only is it unjust but it impedes one person from seeing the uniqueness and true personality of another. A snapshot of their thoughts is presented below, which indicates that the issues of White men are downplayed, that they are stereotyped as "oppressors", and that they are reduced to just being "White". One emphatically pushed back at social media stereotyping by stating that "some of us genuinely care and want to improve the lives of others." Thus, the comments shed light on the quantitative result found earlier that a relatively greater percentage of White students are uncomfortable with the way White men are depicted on social media (2.61 versus 3 for POC students).

"Usually the message is not very positive of white western Males with the general idea of our problems being viewed as insignificant to those of others"
"I think when you hyper focus so much on the negative everything around you feels negative."
"I think white men are grouped together as one big group of people who think the exact same way. Instead of how every other group of people is with diversity of opinions and experiences"
"Not all white western males are the crazed right-wing lunatics, some of us genuinely care and want to improve the lives of others regardless of status"
"Anytime I go on social media, I am told I am the oppressor, that I am guilty of the sins of my forefathers, even though every ethnicity on this planet has blood on their hands. I was born in 1999, I wasn't there for that conquest. I feel like I can do right by everyone by not repeating the sins of my ancestors, but I am not going to lambast myself for what I am. But I only find hostility on social media, and I can see why some men are pushed to the extreme; there is no empathy, but rather a sense of an eye for an eye. Does anyone remember how MLK Jr won the hearts and minds of White/Europeans in America? He didn't divide but said, "our white brothers and sisters have it wrong." He made progress through empathy and compassion, not division, insult, and echo chambers. Social media is not the way to minimize discrimination but instead will foster more hatred."

All 32 participants answered the question: "How do you feel about the way that social media tends to portray POC (people of colour) males?" We also asked "Is there a message that you would share with social media regarding how it portrays POC males? If so, what is that message?". The responses of White male students indicates that several of them are concerned about the unfair depiction of POC males in the media. The following snapshot of student comments when juxtaposed with the concerns on the portrayal of White males above suggests that an equitable treatment of both POC and White males is required instead of elevating one group over the other. This point is effectively captured by one student who mentioned that while some people are "racist towards" POC men, others put them "above White males." Thus, diversity, equity and inclusion go in either direction and the pendulum must remain balanced instead of being skewed too far in one direction.

"Stereotypes, even those made as in the context of a joke can lead to misleading and damaging preconceptions of what life is like for POC males"

"I don't know. I don't see a particular way that it portrays them. I see some lunatics either being racist towards them or putting them above White males. Either way, social media is far more reductive than constructive."

"To portray POC males as regular folk in articles depicting a crime. In articles focusing on white perpetrators the article is usually a clean photo of them and their family and the title talks about the tragedy of the crime and what lead them to commit it. When a POC male is portrayed, it is a photo of them with a gun in a "gangster" caricature. and the titles usually talk about how heinous the crime was and focus on race."

Western Norms on Masculinity
Finally, we asked, "How would you describe Western norms for males in terms of demonstrating emotion?" The 26 respondents to this question provided a sense that Western norms of males socialized to not express emotion still prevails to this day. Both POC and White male students expressed strong concerns, as both groups comprise Canadian citizens or permanent residents. A snapshot of POC male student comments is as follows.

"Very stiff. Males are not allowed to show emotion according to contemporary consensus in society."

"Shit. Men get told they aren't real men when showing emotion, and then shit on for not being able to show emotion."

Similarly, a snapshot of White male student comments is as follows. These comments are more detailed and shed light on the quantitative result found earlier that a relatively greater percentage of White students feel discomfort in showing emotion (3.05 versus 3.67 for POC students). This indicates that western norms on bottling up male emotions impedes the well-being of straight White males compared to their immigrant

POC counterparts.

"Society wants men to stop keeping all emotions inside themselves, while at the same time perpetuating the factors that make us want to do so"
"It's frowned upon. For the most part it's considered weird or abnormal to express sadness and threatening if you get frustrated. For the most part you have to be pretty calm, or happy, to not be singled out. I don't feel like theirs a lot of support for males that may be going through emotional turmoil."
"Western Norms expect men to not show emotions and if you show emotions, both men and women will ridicule you"
"Oh my goodness, I hate the norm that "males do not, or should not show emotion", and that those that do are effeminate or weak, they are damaging and the suppressing of emotion is incredibly unhealthy. Western norms of masculinity are unhealthy"

Overall, the qualitative data indicates that White students are self-censoring on campus out of fear of being ridiculed or out of concern of causing offense, that there is a perception that the issues of White men are downplayed, that they are stereotyped and reduced to just being "White", and that the added stressor of unhealthy western norms on not showing emotion (apart from the usual issues of paying tuition fees) impedes their well-being. Student comments suggest that there needs to be support for straight White males to build a healthy sense of self-esteem and how important it is for them to receive validation from role models and mentors. Additionally, some improvement may be needed when it comes to providing a social climate in which everyone believes that they are being supported and heard, and are free to express themselves, particularly men, and especially White males. Though college and university campuses across North America do their best in providing an environment in which freedom of speech exists in an educated, honest, transparent, respectful, fulfilling, and as accurate as possible manner, it seems that in the desire to correct for years of oppressing the voices of minorities we may have forgotten that when we quieten one voice, even to help raise others, we may still be feeding into greater divisiveness which can be harmful.

DISCUSSION
The hypothesis in this paper is that straight White males do not perceive themselves to be privileged because of their economic circumstances, lack of family support, and the stressors they face to cope with Western masculine norms. This hypothesis on privilege is tested through responses to questions on having a loving upbringing, access to rent-free living with parents, needing financial assistance with tuition fees, concerns on the portrayal of White men in social media, and concerns about Western norms on masculinity. For the purposes of qualitative data analysis, articles in the relevant literature indicate the sample size is ideal. For example, analyses conducted by Baker and Edwards (2012), Morse (2015), and Mason (2010) suggest that in terms

of saturation, it is more important to reach a point where conducting more interviews becomes counter-productive because nothing significantly new can be found by doing so. In other words, conducting more interviews would lead to little more than a repetition of ideas, so sample sizes as low as 15 interviews can be sufficient for saturation. However, the quantitative data analysis is limited by the small sample size, and difficulty connecting with students due to COVID. That said, a saturation of data does seem to be found, as many of the male students seem to be relaying the same message. Based on basic quantitative data analysis, it is found that despite the absence of a statistically significant difference between the two groups of students, a greater percentage of White students require assistance with tuition fees, do not have access to rent-free living with parents, have a lower sense of belonging on campus, and express discomfort in showing emotion. The detailed qualitative analysis based on student comments confirms that White students are self-censoring on campus out of fear of being ridiculed or out of concern of causing offense. Moreover, they perceive that the issues of White men are downplayed, that they are stereotyped and reduced to just being "White." Overall, even though White students have a relatively better GPA on average, the added stressor of unhealthy Western norms on masculinity (apart from the usual issues of paying tuition fees) impedes their well-being. These findings suggest that there needs to be support for straight White males to build a healthy sense of self-esteem and that how important it is for them to receive validation from role models and mentors in positions of power (Lozano et al., 2021).

These findings also suggest that whatever unearned privilege is enjoyed by straight White males on account of their race, gender and sexuality is compromised by disadvantage based on factors that include independence from parental support and not showing healthy emotions to deal with the stressors of life. Moreover, when straight White males on campus become fearful of engaging with ideas, when they feel unsafe being honest about their feelings, and when they perceive a negative portrayal of White men on social media, all contribute towards their withdrawing towards self-censorship, which stunts their intellectual growth and harms their emotional well-being. As highlighted by Karimi (2021), there needs to be a balance between supporting diversity and inclusion, the views and voices that come with them, and people's freedom of speech.

In addition, while Spanierman and Smith (2017) and Lozano et al. (2021) correctly note White allies need to listen and learn from those they are supporting, women and people of colour also need to learn about how to support the learning of their White allies; one cannot do so without mutual trust and two-way communication. Moreover, as Vianden and Gruber (2020) acknowledge, White male allies may want to express support for their allies with their other White peers, but they also feel it is difficult to do so, not only because they are White, but also because they might feel they could lose the connections of friends and family members in the process. This study also stressed the importance of men exploring their emotions and engaging in meaningful

relationships in which men can discuss feelings with each other. Additionally, White males who want to, or who are asked to engage in diversity work may not do so if they do not have the informational and, most importantly, emotional support they feel they need to generate knowledge with respect to diversity (Svoboda and Vianden, 2015).

Overall, when straight White males show allyship for marginalized groups to address systemic racism, sexism, and homophobia, they too need support based on their economic and cultural circumstances. This is important because, as one can imagine, without the informational and emotional support present White men may feel socially isolated and they do not belong, which might lead to strong feelings of conflict in an us vs. them fashion. Therefore, such support systems must be in place to instill a healthy sense of self-esteem within them, and to validate them by role models and mentors would go a long way to create a welcoming campus atmosphere for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The co-authors of this paper are all concerned about the intellectual growth and emotional well-being of straight White male students in an environment where they perceive negative depictions of White men on social media and when they feel a push towards self-censorship out of fear of receiving ridicule or causing offense. This is unhealthy for the development of socially responsible, stable, and strong young men who have much to contribute towards the betterment of society and a wide array of social, economic, and political issues. In some sense, they withdraw to a closet, which is as unhealthy for LGBTQ individuals as it is for any other group that must hide their identity and opinions. Indeed, true diversity is not about tokenization but about acknowledging and respecting differing worldviews and thought orientations. The findings of this paper highlight that a greater percentage of straight White male students require assistance with tuition fees, do not have access to rent-free living with parents, have a lower sense of belonging on campus, self-censor on campus out of fear of causing offense or inviting ridicule, perceive being negatively depicted, and face unhealthy Western norms on masculinity, which dissuade them from expressing healthy emotions to deal with the stressors of life. As such, this paper offers a modest push towards support systems that are required to instill a healthy sense of self-esteem within straight White male students and to validate them by role models and mentors.

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