

Mount Saint Vincent University

Faculty of Education

Nova Scotia Provincial School Boards

and

Effective Structures and Supports

for

Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights

Policy Implementation: The Nuanced Dance

by

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To my children, Darrick, Raschael and Thomas,
and my grandchildren, Marcus, Aden, Karmella and Caleb
and the expected bundle of joy arriving in 2011,
with all my love.

ABSTRACT

Mount Saint Vincent University
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Nova Scotia Provincial School Boards
and
Effective Structures and Supports
for
Race Relations, Cross Cultural Understanding and Human Rights
Policy Implementation: The Nuanced Dance

The establishment and implementation of policies designed to address the inequities faced by marginalized people are first and foremost meant to meet the needs of those communities and the broader community. While many who lead policy implementation are representative of racial diversity, they often lack autonomy and real access to positional power.

In this study I address this research question: *What structures and supports are in place for Black/African Nova Scotian/Canadian women in leadership positions at provincial and school board levels to sustain their work in race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation.* I explore the structure and supports needed and available to support them and their work in regard to the implementation of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies.

Through the research Black/African Nova Scotian/Canadian women, henceforth, referred to as Black Nova Scotian women are able to tell their stories and provide advice to leadership at the school board level as to what is needed to effectively champion the work of policy implementation that is guided by Black/African Nova Scotian/ Canadian women.

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Finally, I want to extend a loving hug and kiss to my daughter, Raschael. Raschael, I thank you for editing my drafts and for introducing me to some very helpful pieces of technology. I especially want to thank you for being my unwavering cheerleader throughout this journey.

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CHAPTER I: AN INTRODUCTION AND MY STORY

Introduction

This thesis study looks at the complexity of the intersection of race and gender, and the structures and supports available to develop and implement policies meant to address the issues of discrimination and racism within the provincial and school board educational systems. In this research, I respond to the question: *What structures and supports are in place for Black/African Nova Scotian/Canadian women in leadership positions at provincial and school board levels to sustain their work in race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation?* The impetus to address race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights issues from a provincial perspective that arose in the winter of 1989. Since the first snowball was thrown, igniting a fight between Black students and White students, in the school yard at Cole Harbour High School (a public school in the Cole Harbour area just east of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia operated by the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB), in the winter of 1989, the Nova Scotia education system was drawn into the realm of policy and race relations.

There are many policy types. An overview of pertinent policy types which exist will be discussed later. The following definition of policy is spotlighted as it speaks to the direction undertaken by the Department of Education in response to the incident that sparked the voicing of community unrest:

Policy – course of action: a program of actions adopted by a person, group or government, or the set of principles on which they are based; prudence: shrewdness or prudence, especially in the pursuit of a course of action.

(Encarta, Dictionary Online, p.1)

Indeed the government of the day, with shrewdness, adopted a course of action to quiet the Black communities by taking actions to respond to their frustration and anger. Their frustration and anger had been fed over many years of mistreatment at many societal levels, education being prominent. I was born in 1957, three years after *Brown vs Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark case on desegregation in the United States whose ripples were felt all the way to Nova Scotia and three years before the last reference to race was dropped from legislation pertaining to education in Nova Scotia (BLAC 1994, Vol. 2, p.25), and three years before the Nova Scotian “Conservative Premier Robert Stanfield took the first steps to dismantle segregated schools by successfully moving the abolishment of three segregated schools...” (BLAC 1994 Vol. 2, 1994, p.26).

The pressure pot of discontent was primed to erupt. It was the promise of the development of a policy, as a course of action, which served as the release valve on a pressure cooker, effectively managing the release of the steam which was emanating from the discontent of the Nova Scotian Black communities. The Black community leadership took steps to “defuse the immediate civil unrest of the day by initiating a meeting with the Minister of Education” (BLAC, 1994, p.57). From this meeting and subsequent negotiations, the Black Learners Advisory Committee was established. The Report resulting from this committee’s work will be discussed in chapter II.

The then Department of Education and Culture having been privy to recent research-generated information, such as a the Marshall Report, 1989, (see Hickman, Poitras & Evans, 1989) knew there were systemic issues in the education system and were intrigued by the potential learning that could be gleaned by doing research in the Black communities of Nova Scotia. This approach, seeking evidence to inform policy,

would respond to the call from perceived moderates and those embarking on the road of civil disobedience. Certainly information gathering with an implied commitment for policy change was something tangible for the Black communities.

Additional to the definition of policy noted earlier, the following definitions of policy and policy archetype are included to assist the reader with the subsequent discussion related to policy and the archetype of policy in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights.

Policy - 1 a: prudence or wisdom in the management of affairs; b: management or procedure based primarily on material interest; 2 a: a definite course or method of action selected from among alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and determine present and future decisions; b: a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body (Merriam Webster Dictionary Online p.1)

Policy- Governmental: (1) Basic principles by which a government is guided.; (2) Declared objectives which a government seeks to achieve and preserve in the interest of national community. (Business Dictionary Online p.1)

Archetype – 1. the original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are based, a model or first form, prototype; 2. (in Jungian psychology) a collectively inherited unconscious idea, pattern of thought, image, etc., universally present in individual psyches (Dictionary.com p.1)

Paul Brown of Dalhousie University is a noted expert in the area of policy development. In the materials he presented as part of a course designed for management-

level provincial government employees, he describes public policy as architecture. In this presentation he stated that great architecture must be structurally sound (*firmitas*), have a practical function (*utilitas*) and be beautiful (*venustas*) (Brown, 2005). The first demand of public policy is that it meets societal needs. The direction and content of the policy must be traceable to an informed source and defensible of its purpose. At a minimum it must be seen to be responding to a problem and/or an issue and have benefited from some level of consultation. This aspect speaks to the practical function of policy. The optics of policy is important. It must be pleasing to the eye and contribute to the generation of public supports. “Public policy gives a convincing demonstration of the government’s progress or effectiveness, helps government to pass the litmus test of accountability and gives a sense of direction while galvanizing efforts into a well performing organization. Modern public policy is strategic, outcome focused, joined – up, inclusive, flexible, innovative and robust” (Notes from a presentation, Brown, 2005).

The development of policy demonstrates how a government policy may aptly say to its population that progress is being made. The question that arises is, “Progress for whom?” In the case of the development of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights the assumption is progress for those who would come under the umbrella of those terms. Gillborn challenges us to rethink that assumption. “The significance of social [government] policy in general and education policy in particular, is a highly complex matter. Policy changes do not automatically lead to any particular outcome in the daily realities of schooling” (Gillborn, 2008, p.71). This research explores the degree and quality of impact that dominant majoritarian discourse has on a specific group, namely Black Nova Scotia women who work as Race relations, Cross

cultural understanding and Human rights positions in Nova Scotian school boards and implementers of policies related to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights.

I have been involved, indirectly and directly with policy development and implementation as related to education for approximately 18 years. I have worked at the school board and provincial levels in this capacity. I have worked with many skilled and committed Black Nova Scotian women who have had lead responsibility for the work of implementing race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies in the school boards across Nova Scotia. In discussions with these individuals on both a professional and personal level, I hear their frustration about the challenges they encounter and the minimal change they perceive they are able to affect.

Their and my own stories have sparked my interest in researching the experiences of Black Nova Scotians who work as implementers of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies. Specifically I address the following research question: ***What structures and supports are in place for Black/African Nova Scotian/Canadian women in leadership positions at provincial and school board levels to sustain their work in race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation?*** Structure refers to such things as location on an organizational chart, level of access to budgets, office space and so on. Supports refer to concrete demonstrations in the areas of human resources (e.g. administrative/ secretarial, access to professional and personal development) and social and emotional engagement activities (e.g. actively welcomed into meet and greets, effectively integrated into the office relations).

All the race relations, cross cultural understanding, and human rights policies that exist at the provincial and board level include a section that focuses on community relations. This is worth highlighting because as previously stated, government policy is subject to societal pressure. Society is comprised of individuals who are members of a multitude of communities: race, gender, geographic, age and so on. The community voices that are privileged to be heard can impact the content and direction of any given policy. As one seeks to further define the Nova Scotian race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy archetype, we find that along with the community component, curriculum, instructional practices and assessment are standard components that round out the policy model. Thus the predominant archetype of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies has the components of community relations, curriculum, instructional practices and assessment. Lopes and Thomas (2006) suggest that one of the key components necessary for organizational change are community voice, the acknowledgement and address of critical components of the education system (curriculum, instructional practices and assessment) and the representation of a person in leadership who has the shared lived experiences with the racialized and marginalized communities. These key components are reflected in the policy model utilized in Nova Scotia at the provincial and board levels. This suggests optimism for the realization of sustained organizational change which positively impacts the racialized and marginalized communities as well as the majority communities. This resulting organizational change is sustained, in part, by people from the Black community who hold race relation, cross cultural understanding and human rights positions. What

these women need to sustain them and their work is explored through the research participants' response gathered during the one to one interviews.

The work of the Black Nova Scotian women responsible for race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies within the school boards is about policy implementation. This work feeds into a larger overall mission and that is to support the success of students, particularly students of African descent and others who have been marginalized by institutions and systems. School boards do profess to have student success at the heart of all they do and therefore their policies and practices should manifest "collective efficacy" (Ginwright, 2007, p.407) and thus advance the components of fostering a critical consciousness, building a strong racial identity and developing political optimism and expectations about community change (Ginwright, 2007).

Ginwright (2007) asserts that "critical social consciousness is embedded in neighborhood based networks of collective interests, collective identities, mutual trust, and people's shared capacity to act for the common good". I believe critical social consciousness can be achievable in a school board structure as well. The components ascribed to critical social consciousness, which align with ideology of social policy, developed into a measurement tool, could serve as a useful evidenced-informed approach for policy analysis.

Lopes and Thomas (2006), in their book *Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations*, have developed a series of organizational checklists for an analysis of the depth of integration of racial equity in organizations. The checklists were developed based on an analysis of the components of the change process and information gathered during focus group sessions they held with employees engaged in racial equity

work. The checklists incorporate analytical questions for 8 key areas: (i) racial equity policy and plan, (ii) employment systems, (iii) management practices, (iv) complaint process, (v) communicating in the organization, (vi) programs and work with communities, (vii) education and professional development, and (viii) monitoring and accountability (pp. 246-253). In the context of my research question, the category areas one through six and eight, inclusive, would come under the heading of structure while number seven would come under the heading of support. Of course situating the components into the two categories does not imply that there is not crossover or seepage into other areas. Underlying the eight key areas is the need to ensure that “racialized and Aboriginal people are meaningfully involved as decision-makers” (Lopes and Thomas 2006, p.245). To help me understand what structures and supports are in place for Black African Nova Scotian women in their work with race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation and to evaluate the quality of such supports and structures, I turn to Africentric philosophy, which is humanist and people centred (Warfield-Coppack, 1995).

Asante (2003) states: “the best road to all health, economic, political, cultural, and psychological in the African community is through a centered positioning of ourselves within our own story” (p.vii). Through this powerful sentence Asante conveys a deep caring for the holistic healing and well-being of the Black community. The archetype of policy discussed earlier in this chapter and its constituent components offer a direction for the development of policy and practices needed to realize healing and well-being.

I also turn to Black feminism, “Black feminist thought fosters a fundamental paradigmatic shift in how we think about oppression. By embracing a paradigm of race,

class, and gender in interlocking systems of oppression, Black feminist thought reconceptualizes the social relations of domination and resistance” (Hill Collins, 1998, p.1). As we consider the variety of definitions for Africentrism and Black feminism one can discern an evolution in thought and affirmation of core connectedness. Black feminist/womanist ideology deliberately articulates that it embraces the multiple social markers that serve to define without any hierarchical ranking. Afrocentricism seeks to centre African culture / race and work to show connections

My Story

As a Black Nova Scotian woman, I appreciate the impact of gender differentiation. I acknowledge that I was one of these individuals whose stories I wanted to hear. In some ways I still am one of them. In validation of my dual capacities of researcher and research participant, I reference a salient statement from the work of Dyson: “The idea of ‘story,’ of personal narrative, intersects, with auto ethnography in which the researcher’s story becomes part of the inquiry into the cultural phenomenon of interest” (Dyson, 2007 p.37). My work and personal life experiences will be shared through my narrated story. This research is not delving into auto ethnography as a theoretical framework. However, as researcher I do acknowledge my dual role and share my lived personal and professional experiences through my story.

I have always believed that a structured way of doing things is needed to address presenting issues and their root causes. My narrative about policy development and implementation will merge my experiences from board and department levels. A series of occurrences coalesced to move me into a mode of policy developer, implementer and analyst. Below I share some of the personal challenges that happened to me at formative

stages of my development. I acknowledge that I have many joyous memories from my years as a very young child to present. However, I am choosing to share several of my main challenges because these experiences had the potential to either send me down a path of personal destruction or a path of empowerment. I want to reflect on some significant events.

My experience with policies related to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights begins in the early 1960s with my introduction to formal schooling. All parents feel a certain apprehensiveness about sending their child from the cocoon of their home to places, such as schools, which are beyond their watchful eyes. Layer on to this the knowledge that you are sending your Black child into a school system which is embedded with racism.

During my first few hours at school I learned that there were rights for White students that did not exist for me. The unwritten policy, supported by the ideology of White supremacy, was that your White classmates could call you names with impunity. They would be protected by the system. If I tried to defend myself I would be punished for engaging in any protective action.

As I progressed through the schooling system the “keep you in your place” policies abounded. I needed to always prove that the homework was done by me and come to terms with the fact that what I said needed to be validated by a White voice. How many times did I listen in amazement as the point I had just made be restated by a White student (usually male) and the teacher, who had dismissed what I had just said, say, “Good answer, great point”. Indeed elementary, junior high and the first few years of senior high offered many policy lessons about how the unwritten and written policies

of the day enforced racism and sexism. Most of the unwritten and written policies within the school system would be personally and racially demeaning to me, my family and my racial and gender communities.

My father became ill in my early junior high years. From grade seven to nine I watched him grow progressively more ill until he became housebound and bedridden. This inspirational, determined man lost control of his physical capacities, including speech. My days were long, assisting my mother with his care and still trying to maintain high academic standing. The expectation was to always do your best and remember the pride of the family name. During this time I contracted an infection serious enough to keep me hospitalized for two weeks. My father continued to express his expectations for me to achieve. I saw a man with such pride and staunch religious faith; I wanted to make him proud of me. I returned to school, after my stay in hospital, and stayed focused on my work. I wanted Daddy to be proud. At the end of that junior high year, I received recognition for achieving the second highest academic standing in my class. I worked hard and did not ask for extra (nor have it offered to me) support or special allowances. My lesson was White people aren't going to help but you don't give up because you have family who believes in you and supports you. My father died when I was working to complete grade nine. To this day the memories of his insistence on work ethic, his pride of being a Black man and deference to my mother provide me support and direction. My parents were one voice insisting that we show respect and support to our Black community neighbourhood, live and model Christian values and be non-judgmental and humble.

When I was in the first few months of my grade twelve year, my mother died of complications related to a surgery. She died one day before my birthday. We had been preparing for her coming home (not going home to God) celebration and were filled with excitement knowing that Mommy's surgery had gone well (one of my brothers had gotten that message from the hospital) and that she would soon be home. Well that was not the case and rather than a celebration, we had a tragedy. I received the news of her death while I was at school via a phone call. I was called into the small office just outside that of the principal's, given the phone and the person on the other end, calling from the hospital, said, "Your mother died unexpectedly of heart complications." I was told, by someone (unseen) in the inner office that I could go home. Now left at home was an older brother, a younger sister and me. I had to make a decision about how to deal with the future. My sister was almost 4 years younger than me. I had always had the joy of helping care for her, as is often the case for older siblings in large Black families. There was no discussion; I now needed to care, fully, for my sister.

As my mother died near the beginning of my graduating year, I knew I had to get a plan in place so that I could have my sister with me. I had not planned to attend university as I had had enough of school and was looking forward to heading off to Toronto. As I thought about the best way to care for and support my sister, going to university was my best option. I was heading to St. Francis Xavier University. I would enroll my sister in a high school in Antigonish (the community where the university is located), find a job, get an apartment and try to give her a normal life. I recall some people saying to me that they did not see me crying at my mother's funeral. In my mind, tears were for after all the plans were in place. I would cry and grieve on my own

schedule. First and foremost love insisted on duty to my parents' memory and my sister. What that translated into very quickly was taking off a mantle of coping skills which did not challenge the system and replacing it with a cloak of awareness, understanding and application of policies and systems so as to do all that I could for my sister and keep the pride of the Parris name.

Reflecting on that time of my life, I see the common threads of my activist action was tied to my gender/race roles, family and community. Like hooks (2000) my awareness of feminist struggle was stimulated by "social circumstance" (p.11). I am Afrocentric and have been because that is the history in which I am steeped. I understand the importance of trusting yourself and learning all that you can about systems so that you are equipped to access and hold people accountable for their actions. Warfield-Coppack (1995) identifies African leadership as "leadership based on responsibility, admiration and love" (p.38). My parents lived and modeled the attributes of African leadership. The philosophy of living as Afrocentric beings, grounded in relationship and knowledge of history and self, is the means to how "standing in our own cultural spaces" (Asante, 1998, p.8) operationalizes Afrocentric leadership.

After completing of my undergraduate university degrees, I was ready to enter the world of teaching. I taught junior high and senior high for about 10 years. Following that I moved into the capacity of supporting policy development at the school board level. After a brief hiatus from this role, I returned to policy development and implementation again, only this time at the provincial level.

There is a distinct process in terms of policy development. The steps are as follows: define the issue; consult (this may include cursory research); develop a policy

draft; consult again, more widely; revise the draft and develop the final policy document. Some policies frameworks have an additional step of an implementation plan. The aforementioned steps were used at the school board and provincial level. The only variations among boards and between the province and board are related to whether or not an implementation plan is part of the policy and the nature of consultations. At the provincial level there was not an emphasis on community consultation, unlike the school board level where community consultations would often occur. Rather at the provincial level the emphasis was on stakeholder consultation. Departmental policies do not involve an implementation plan (also called procedures).

When I worked at the school board level and provincial level, I organized both the community consultations and stakeholder meetings. In both situations, there was an aspect of personalizing. I knew that I could draw upon my family name, my role as respected educator and my involvement in the church to assist me in the engagement of community in the consultation process. In regard to stakeholder engagement, I could rely upon my credentials and role of expert within the board. Also these aspects of the relationship connection with both community and stakeholders assisted during the implementation of the board and department adopted policies.

At the provincial level the nuances of relationships were important as well, not in the context of community but of the networks of education / policy maker peers and colleagues. I recognized and championed the expertise of peers and colleagues. I was humbled to have the opportunity to learn from them. At the same time, I knew I had much to offer. I looked forward to doing so at appropriate times and through appropriate ways.

Funds to support develop and implement policy were always lean. As policy maker and implementer I was conscious of the danger of being part way through the stages of policy implementation with no concrete means to support any of the initiatives or programs that were needed to sustain the policy. So often there were trade-offs and compromises, not collaboration (working in partnership to reach a shared intent), but compromise (where concessions are expected and power imbalance plays a role). In terms of content and direction of policies, I would wonder, Did I get the right balance? Given that many of the issues we are trying to address through these policies continue to re-surface, I know that we are missing the mark. My “go forward” approach has been to be clearly rooted in my psyche which is the purpose of this policy work. For me that purpose is to create an equitable space for all learners.

This chapter has provided contextual information regarding what evoked the need to develop race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy, for the Nova Scotia education system. Along with learning about the variety policy approaches available I have clarified the policy direction taken by the education system and identified the components of the archetype of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies. Finally my story not only narrates my lived experiences but connects personal life experiences to work life choices. In the next chapter I provide information on Black/ African Nova Scotian in regard to their historical and current context as seen through the research of the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC).

CHAPTER 11: BACKGROUND

Introduction

In this chapter I talk about the history of the Black/African Nova Scotians in the province. The Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report provides detailed rich descriptions of the of Black/African Nova Scotians communities' experiences as relates to the education system in Nova Scotia and the communities' resistance in the face of discrimination and racism.

Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report

The indigenous Black/African Nova Scotian population of Nova Scotia was the result of three distinct waves of forced and voluntary immigration: Black Loyalists in 1782, Maroons in 1796 and Black Refugees in 1812 (BLAC, Vol. 2, pp.13). Each have their own distinct story but all these movements shared the context of being connected to conflict, the reality of disenfranchisement from land and economy, denial of the right to self determination juxtaposed to individual and community resiliency, a common negative reaction from the White/Dominant culture, and a Black community faith that exhibited unshakeable hope in humankind. Unfortunately, they also shared the brunt of a common reaction from White/Dominant culture.

The history of Blacks in Nova Scotia was fraught with systemic discrimination and racism. The BLAC Report, its resulting recommendations, was the only community sanctioned research which reflected inclusively of community voices and a depth of collaboration with government heretofore never known, especially by marginalized communities. The Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report has contributed

much to the understanding of the specific systemic issues that existed and exist for the Black communities of Nova Scotia.

The Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) Report (1994) is seminal research. It forms a foundational document for the development of policy and program planning to redress and address the needs of African Nova Scotian learners. It is appropriate as part of this background contextual chapter to discuss the BLAC's recommendations pertinent to my research question, that came from that Report, the Response from the Minister of Education to the recommendations from the BLAC Report and to investigate the perceptions of the research participants of their role in the context of the BLAC Report.

The government established and resourced the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) which upon completion of its work and with endorsement of the Minister of Education, evolved into two distinct legislated entities: (i) the Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) and (ii) the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD). The following quote from the chair of BLAC, Castor Williams saliently speaks to the essence of the endeavours of BLAC and the embodiment of the resulting report:

[The BLAC Report] reflects the deep feelings of African Nova Scotians at all levels about matters which closely touch their lives – the education of their children, their own education, their work, their careers, their life roles in Canadian Society (BLAC, p. 13).

The African Nova Scotian communities, via individual and organizational representation, were invited to participate in the work of the Black Learners Advisory Committee through engagement in defined roles which gave them real voice in the

process. Metaphorically, the door to the chambers of change is open and they, members of the BLAC, were welcomed to seat themselves at the multitude of possible seats of change so that their input had impact. Organizations representing the known and respected jurisdictions of the African Nova Scotian community such as the African United Baptist Association (AUBA), the Black Educators Association (BEA) and the Black Cultural Centre, to name a few, were invited to continue their leadership through active participation around the BLAC table.

The work of BLAC invoked four of the seven principles of Nguso Saba: Umoja, Ujima, Ujamaa and Imani (developed by Maulana Ron Karenga in 1960). Dr. Harvey Millar, drawing upon the work of Maulana Karenga, during the 2007 Afrocentric Leadership and Management Summer Institute outlined these principles and their meaning. Each principle is characterized by the Swahili and English spelling of the work: **Umoja** (Unity) means to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race). **Ujima** (Collective Work and Responsibility) means to build and maintain our community together and make our sister's and brother's problems our problems and to solve them together. **Ujamaa** (Cooperative Economics) means to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together. **Imani** (Faith) means to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

The research work of the BLAC gave voice to all the African Nova Scotian communities throughout the province of Nova Scotia and provided a “comprehensive history of the [status of] Black education in Nova Scotia” (BLAC pp. 9-26). It used participatory research methods such as one-on-one interviews, response surveys and

focus groups (BLAC, pp. 10-11). The aforementioned research approach demonstrates the principle of Umoja (Unity). The principle of Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility) was evidenced through the establishment of two specific structures: the Regional Educator Program and the Education Committees (BLAC, pp.32-34) as avenues for data collection and sharing of information from intra, inter and extra – community perspectives. The lens was always the larger [collective province-wide] Black community (BLAC, p. 15). There was a commitment to hire from within the African Nova Scotian communities. This reflects the principle of Ujaama. The salaried positions such as the Regional Educators, (who acted as research assistants), were staffed by members of the African Nova Scotia communities. Also, those who participated in focus groups were provided a stipend and expenses to cover travel and childcare (Kakembo, Personal Communication, January 26, 2008). As well, it was understood that when the structures of the Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) and the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD) were established, they too would be staffed by persons from the African Nova Scotian communities.

Regarding the principle of Imani (Faith), the African Nova Scotian communities have survived and thrived and draw strength for their humanity from this principle. As noted earlier the AUBA was seen as a vital voice to have at the BLAC table: “Quality education for African Nova Scotians means knowing ourselves and our condition” (BLAC, p.16). In general, for African Nova Scotian communities’ parents who received their teaching from and through the Church, Imani is the pillar upon which all else rests.

The construction of the BLAC Report (1994), its resulting recommendation and the Response from the Minister of Education (1995) not only reflects inclusively of

community voices but also a depth of collaboration with government heretofore never known, especially by marginalized communities. Out of the tension that existed between the African Nova Scotian communities and the Nova Scotia education system, there came progress. The recommendations from the BLAC Report (1994) and Minister's Response (1995) which are germane to my research question are the following:

Recommendation 6

Through the new Council on Black Education, establish a strong mechanism to monitor the implementation of Multi-Racial and Anti-Racism policies in the public schools, and implement an intervention process for non-conformance to the standards. (Report of the BLAC Implementation Review Committee, 2003, p.8)

Recommendation 7a

Communicate and enforce equality and anti-racism standards; and require all components of the education system, including school boards, to develop and implement anti-racism policies. (Report of the BLAC Implementation Review Committee, 2003, p.8)

Response to recommendations 6 & 7a

The Department accepts these recommendations and will complete a draft multicultural and anti-racism policy and distribute it for input in the spring of 1996. The policy will clearly identify responsibility for implementation and outline the process for accountability. The new African Canadian Services Division will play a lead role in developing the policy and [Council on African

Canadian Education] CACE will have a role in monitoring its implementation.
(Report of the BLAC Implementation Review Committee, 2003, p.8)

These recommendations and the Minister's Response to them highlight the anticipated role of policy in advancing an equity agenda for African Nova Scotian learners. The recommendations also laid out the process for support and monitoring needed to make the resulting policy functional and effective. My research explores, from a cursory perspective, the extent to which the level of implementation of the recommendations has impacted board race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies.

This chapter has not only highlighted facts about the Black Nova Scotian communities, particularly in regard to education, it has spotlighted the power of first person voices to affect change. In the next chapter, I will talk about the voice, story and narrative and the theoretical framework used to find themes and direction from those voices.

CHAPTER III: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In this chapter I discuss Critical Race Theory (CRT) which will be used as the main analytical framework. I also discuss Afrocentricity and Womanism/Black feminism theories. These latter two theories are important to note as they provide the reader with an understanding of the complexity and interlocking relationship between gender and race.

As I reflect upon my youth I recall the very clear expectations as relates to home chores, church attendance, academic expectations and social boundaries. Being a shy young Black girl, I fit well with “the gender normative behavior in familial and community contexts, in which obedience and compliance were highly valued” (Duncan 2006, p.31) While this ‘normative behaviour’ on my part may have satisfied a desire for stability and routines within a loving family structure, one has to wonder about what might have been different had there been encouragement to be self-expressive. Little did I know at that time the amount of unlearning that would need to occur in order for my African style leadership to bloom. Indeed, it is only upon reflection that I realized obedience exacts a heavy price. “The state of obedience and silent subservience can only be maintained by the exertion of power. Even as we are loved and cared for in families, we are simultaneously taught that love is not as important as having power to dominate others” (hooks, 2000 p.38) As I moved into my work life there was unlearning required to replace obedience with activism and to become comfortable with managed chaos.

I recall my first work experiences, outside my family home. It was in my home community where I worked on weekends cleaning the homes of White families. This exposed me to race and class and what some had labeled as *the real world* (italics for

emphasis). This real world message provided the first lesson in the concept “that it was not the intellect, talent or humanity of the [White] employer that supported the [White] superior status but largely just the advantages of racism” (Duncan, p.155). White folks have unearned privilege based on their race.

In this study I was interested to hear if the familial and work expectations I experienced had been the reality of Black Nova Scotian women research participants. As I shared bits of my story through active listening responses with these women, there was an opportunity to hear how our unique lived experiences have shaped our approaches to addressing issues of equity and racism.

This research draws upon Womanist/Black feminist and Afrocentric theories, to inform the context of the analytical work. The theoretical framework used to explore the research question is Critical Race Theory (CRT). Thus Womanist/Black feminism and Afrocentricity allows the women to speak wholly of who they are in their personal and work worlds. CRT allows the research to be viewed through the multiple elements ascribed to CRT.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) has its roots in American law, most notably work done by Derrick Bell (the first African American to be tenured at Harvard’s School of Law). CRT was first introduced into the field of education in the mid-1990s (Gillborn, 2008). It is a theory that is not quite twenty years old and is dynamic by description. It has been politicized by being called a “movement” (Litowitz, 2009, p. 296) and ascribed the role of “activism as an essential component” (Gillborn, 2008, p.26). CRT is the appropriate theoretical framework for this complex research as it allows for an analysis of

both race and gender. It is also appropriate as it advocates activism which is useful when considering the policy approach taken by government in 1989 and the archetype of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights (as discussed in chapter one,

Solorzano and Yosso (2009) define critical race methodology as a

theoretically grounded approach to research that (a) foregrounds race and racism in all aspects of the research process. However it also challenges the separate discourses on race, gender, and class by showing how these three elements intersect to affect the experiences of students of color [Black Nova Scotian women]; (b) challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color [Black Nova Scotian women]; (c) offers a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination; and (d) focuses on the racialized, gendered, and classed experiences of students of colour. Furthermore it views these experiences as sources of strength and (e) uses the interdisciplinary knowledge base of ethnic studies, women's studies, sociology, history, humanities, and the law to better understand the experiences of students of color [Black Nova Scotian women] (p.131)

Scholars have identified key themes of CRT (Gillborn, 2008; Litowitz, 2009; Parker & Villalpando, 2009) referred to also as key elements (Solorzano & Yosso, 2009) or tenets (Harper et al, 2009; Taylor, 2009; Hartlep, 2009) of CRT. Parker & Villalpando (2007, pp. 520 -521 list the) CRT themes, elements, or tenants as follows:

The centrality of race and racism - CRT acknowledges as its most basic premise that race and racism are a defining characteristic of American society. In

American higher education, race, and racism are embedded in the structures, discourses and policies that guide the daily practices at universities.

The challenge of dominant ideology – CRT in higher education challenges the traditional claims of universities to objectivity, meritocracy, color blindness, race neutrality, and equal opportunity.

A commitment to social justice and praxis – CRT has a fundamental commitment to a social justice agenda that struggles to eliminate all forms of racial, gender, language, generation status, and class subordination

A centrality of experiential knowledge – CRT recognizes that the experiential knowledge of people of color is legitimate and critical to understanding racial subordination. The experiential knowledge can come from storytelling, family history, biographies, scenarios, parables, chronicles and narratives.

Ahistorical context and interdisciplinary perspective – CRT challenges ahistoricism and the interdisciplinary focus of most analyses in educational research.

Gillborn (2008) maintains the language of theme and identifies the following: (i) racism is ‘endemic’ in US society, deeply ingrained, legally, culturally and even psychologically; referred to as ‘the business as usual racism; (ii) it provides a critique of liberalism; (iii) a revisionist critique of civil rights laws; and (iv) call to context the

importance of experiential knowledge: challenges ahistoricism, insist on contextual/historical examination and recognize experiential knowledge of people of colour (pp.27-31).

Drawing broadly upon Matsuda, Lawrence, and Crenshaw, Litowitz (2009) articulates and critiques the following CRT themes: (i) racism is endemic in American life, (ii) the existing legal system and mainstream legal scholarship as well are not colour-blind, although they pretend to be, (iii) the law must be understood historically and contextually, (iv) the subjective experiences of women and people of colour render them especially well-suited for analyzing race relations law, and discrimination law. (v) CRT scholarship borrows from diverse intellectual traditions and (vi) CRT works toward the elimination of oppression in all forms (race, class, gender) and issues a challenge to hierarchy itself. Litowitz (2009) also refers to the elements advanced by Delgado: (i) racism is normal in our society, (ii) liberalism has failed to bring about parity between the races, for the simple reason that formal equality cannot eliminate deeply entrenched types of racism (sometimes called “microgressions”) which are encountered by minorities on a daily basis, (iii) CRT posits an “interest-convergence theory” which holds that the dominant white culture can tolerate minority successes only when these successes also serve the larger interests of Whites, and (iv) CRT issues a “call to context” which rejects the formal perspective taken by white male scholars who subscribe to the “dominant narrative” of the law, whereby the law is seen as clear and neutral (pp.292-294).

Taylor (2009) ascribes the following tenets to CRT; (i) racism is normal, (ii) [there is a role for] social/historical context, (ii) [the importance of] narrative, and (iii) interest convergence (pp.121-124).

Solorzano and Yosso (2009) ascribe the following five elements of CRT in an education context: (i) the intercentricity of race and racism with other forms of subordination, (ii) the challenge of dominant ideology, (iii) the commitment to social justice, (iv) the centrality of experiential knowledge, and (v) the transdisciplinary perspective (pp.132-134).

Harper et al (2009) discusses seven tenets as advanced by various CRT scholars: (i) racism is a normal part of American life, (ii) CRT rejects the notion of a “colorblind” society, (iii) CRT gives voice to the unique perspectives and lived experiences of people of color, (iv) CRT recognized interest-convergence, the process whereby the white power structure “will tolerate or encourage racial advances for Blacks only when they also promote white self-interests (pp. 390-392).

Hartlep (2009) brings focus to five tenets: (i) the notion that racism is ordinary not aberrational, (ii) the idea of an interest-convergence, (iii) the social construction of race, (iv) the idea of story-telling and counter-storytelling, and (v) the notion that whites have actually been recipients of civil rights legislation (p. 6).

CRT combines “defining elements” for which racism is a focus and conceptual tools to form its conceptual map (Gillborn 2006). The five defining elements are: racism is endemic,”normal”, not aberrant nor rare: deeply ingrained legally and culturally; [it]crosses epistemological boundaries; [its] critique of civil rights laws as fundamentally limited; [its] critique of liberalism: claims of neutrality, objectivity, colour-blindness, and meritocracy as camouflages and [it] calls to context: challenges ahistoricism and recognizes experiential knowledge of people of colour. The three conceptual tools are: story-telling and counter stories; interest convergence and critical white studies (Gillborn, 2006, p. 20).

Lawrence (n.d.) highlights a disproportionate impact of everyday acts of racism over the “classical” or overt racism. CRT with its basic tenet that racism is normal, not aberrant in American society (p.2) creates a lens through which to analyze institutional and everyday racism. Everyday racism operates at an individual and system level. The normalcy of White privilege allows people of the dominant culture to use “microgressions” (Lawrence n.d., p.3) to perpetuate racism. Institutional policies and practices propose neutrality and often draw upon on the notion of colour-blinded to justify that claim.

The themes, elements, and tenets share common language and intent. It is beyond the scope of this paper to extensively explore all of them. Rather the focus will be those themes/elements/tenets that provide the best analytical frame for the research question and the themes emerging from the research respondents’ transcripts.

The uniqueness and interwoven connections of race and gender and the impact on race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation are best explored through CRT, combined with Black feminism and Afrocentric theory. There is power in these women being able to connect aspects of their identity, namely Black and woman, through articulating their understanding of Womanism/Black feminism and Afrocentric theories. What emerges is a wholeness that is greater than the sum of the parts. This provides foundation for structures and supports analysis undertaken through CRT.

Womanism/Black Feminism

Throughout this paper, Womanist and Black feminist will be used interchangeably respecting the term used by the various scholars and my personal

preference. The Womanist/Black feminist theory “reveal hierarchies of powers within categories of race, class, gender, patriarchal relations, sexuality and sexual orientation” (Barriteau, n.d., p.15). Black women scholars such as, hooks (1981, 2000, 2003), Jordan (n.d.), Howard-Bostic (n.d.) and Muposta (2006), provide critique of the feminist movement. Even without being stated Black women understood that feminism referred to White women. As we peel away the layers of the feminist movement, one finds that the 1st and 2nd waves of the feminist movement were for White middle and upper class women (hooks, 2000, Howard-Bostic (n.d) and Jordan n.d.).

Womanism is the vernacular of the Black community. “What then is a womanist? Her origins are in the black folk expression ‘You acting womanish’, meaning, according to Walker (n.d.) cited in Williams 2007, p.1), ‘wanting to know more and in greater depth than is good for one – outrageous, audacious, courageous and willful behaviour’. “A womanist is also ‘responsible’, in charge, serious” (Williams, 2007 p.1). Williams drawing upon work done by Alice Walker ascribes agency and a clear sense of purpose to Black/African women. Hill Collins (1998) speaks about Black feminist and specifically Black/Afrocentric feminist thought as “... portray[ing] African American women as self-defined, self-reliant, individuals confronting race, gender, and class oppression; [and she] speaks to the importance that knowledge plays in empowering oppressed people” (p. 1).

Black feminist is the language of the academy. The community and academic voices converge in their use of methodological approaches that view the experiences of women from the women’s perspective. Black feminism purports that those who live the situation are best situated to speak, educate and change that situation. Jordan (n.d.) citing Hill Collins (1998) labels this the “outsider within” phenomena and Dyson (2007) uses

the term “insider-outsider”. Williams (n.d.) quoting Alice Walker poetically notes: “Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender” (Williams, p.2). Thus womanist/Black feminist is two sides of the one theoretical coin. There is richness and depth found in womanism/Black feminism that does not exist in White feminism. Massaquoi and Wane (2007) state: “African Canadian feminism has thus arisen out of the wisdom, abilities, and efforts of women of African ancestry on the one hand, and out of neglect of European feminist movements (first, second and third wave) on the other” (p.131). It is women’s common history, their militant spirit, deliberate quest for freedom, and being activists as other mothers, sisters, sistas, and so on (hooks, 1981; Hill Collins, 1998; Massaquoi & Wane, 2007) that binds together womanists.

Afrocentricity

The second theory (which converges with the womanist/Black feminist theory) is Afrocentricity. Asante (2003) states that “Afrocentricity is a mode of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values, and perspectives predominate. In regard to theory, it is the placing of African people in the center of any analysis of African phenomena. In terms of action and behavior, it is a devotion to the idea that what is in the best interest of African consciousness is at the heart of ethical behaviour” (p.2). Warfield-Coppack (1995) notes that the Africentric worldview is polycentric and values being humanistic and people centered. Brigham (2007) referring to Asante (1988), Hilliard (1998), Wilson (1998), and Ashanti, (2003) states an Afrocentric perspective provides an analysis and interpretation of daily life from the perspective of African people as subjects rather than objects on the fringes of world experiences (p.80). As such, it is through collective action that people of African descent will be able to advance.

Unfortunately, the reality is that the word “people” is often solely interchangeable with the word “male”. Dove (1998) states: “the imposition of Western values on African people’s more egalitarian female-male relations is so insidious, especially when humanity is required to view this condition as progressive, universal and natural” (p.523) to the norm. Hill Collins (1981) states: “Those women who are feminists are critical of how Black culture and many of its traditions oppress women” (p.8).

CHAPTER IV: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

My study relies on qualitative research methods. As the researcher I wanted to ensure that the method I selected would provide my research participants the forum to share detailed contextual information, situated in their lived experiences. I needed a methodological approach that could capture the complexity and meaning of my research topic. Qualitative research provides such a forum for both points. Sherman and Webb, (1998 cited in Amin 2008, p.28) stated that the key philosophical assumption of all types of qualitative research is that it is about individuals interacting with their social worlds to construct reality.

The qualitative research interview is the most appropriate scientific methodology with which to explore the research question: *What structures and supports are in place for Black/African Nova Scotian/Canadian women in leadership positions at provincial and school board levels to sustain their work in race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation?* In order to be able to find answers to this question, I must hear directly from the women engaged in this work. The qualitative method of data gathering that I utilize is one to one interviewing.

Interviews

The interview is a means of data collection common to research performed in the areas of social science. The “inter view, an inter change of views” (Kvale, 1996, p.2) provides a dialogical way to unearth valuable information. This valuable information is analyzed for meaning. It reflects an ideology that “subject matter is no longer objective data to be quantified, but meaningful relations to be interpreted” (Kvale, 1996 p.11). It

validates the contributions of the lived experiences of the research participants by capturing and utilizing their stories to inform that which is the subject of the research.

The interview is much more than simply asking a list of questions. Its depth of complexity is deceptive. “The research interview is an interpersonal situation, a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. “The interviewer must establish an atmosphere in which the subject feels safe enough to talk freely about his or her experiences and feelings” (Kvale, 1996, p.125). As I have a long standing positive collegial and personal relationship with each of the women interviewed. I was able to quickly establish a comfortable and safe interview atmosphere. When engaging in research that involves marginalized communities, it is important to utilize processes and practices that provide opportunity for first-person voice. The method of one to one interviewing is a concrete way to fully engage the research participants who come from disenfranchised communities. I utilized the semi-structured interview process which is comprised of ordered themes with related questions. The semi-structured interview process allows for a consideration of question content, quality of language and equitable participation of research participants. It aligns with some of the principles of the Afrocentric worldviews such as: (i) the highest value in life lies in the interpersonal relationships between humans, (ii) humans should appropriately use the materials around them and (iii) all humans are considered to be equal, share a common bond, and be a part of the group.

As in many instances, the success of interviewing is in the pre-planning. Before the interview date is set and long before the audio recorder is switched on the researcher must be clear as to what is being investigated, why it is important to investigate the topic

and how, as relates to the specific interview technique, it will be investigated. Kvale (1996) has identified a series of dimensions upon which interviews can differ as relates to planning and delivery: (i) degree of structure, (ii) openness of purpose, (iii) exploration versus hypothesis testing, (iv) description versus interpretation, and (v) intellectual-emotional. As noted previously in the theoretical framework chapter this research draws upon aspects of Afrocentric and Womanist/Black feminism theories. I used the Afrocentric worldview of the importance of relationships and the Womanist/Black feminism description of Black women as self-defined, self-reliant, individuals confronting race, gender, and class oppression to select where on the dimensions' scale my research approach fell. With regard to the dimension of structure, I choose semi-structured interviews. Using the semi-structured interview approach allowed me to honour the researcher and research participants relationship as well as each Black woman's understanding of self and capacity of agency. The purpose was explicitly stated with an explanation that their lived experiences, as heard from their voices, were paramount to my research. This approach acknowledges them as subjects, not objects, with particular perspectives and understanding and provides a forum for them to speak of their resiliency and activism. On the dimension of description vs interpretation and intellectual-emotional, my research draws upon interpretation as I review their transcriptions valuing both the cognitive and emotional (nonverbal responses) dialogue as justifiable sources of information. In this regard my story was a valid inclusion in this research as it added to the richness of the data collected from the vantage point of my lived and current work experience in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation.

Ezzy (2010) contends that an interview can, through the lens of emotional framing, be viewed as conquest or communion. The interview which is perceived as conquest is evidenced through “masculine metaphors of conquest: probing, directing, questioning, active listening [which provides] the interviewer [with] an account from the interviewee” (Ezzy, 2010, p.164). The interview as communion advances the “good interview”. The good interview engages with precision “the tension between self-confidence and emotional dependence [and] requires a simultaneous sense of one’s own sense of self as an interviewer independent of the interviewee and an openness to, a dependence on, what the interviewee has to say” (Ezzy, 2010, p.164). Benjamin, (1998, p. 40 as cited in Ezzy, 2010, p.168) states: “the more an interview is performed emotionally as communion rather than conquest, the more likely it is that the interview will result in the voice of the Other [the interviewees]”. My selected interview method of one to one interviews using a semi-structured question approach and undertaken in mutually agreeable settings enhanced by such Afrocentric based practices as gift recognition and sharing a meal/food contributed to the establishment of the interview as communication.

One to one semi-structured interviews

The research method of one to one interviews validates the expertise and contribution of the research participants’ authentic voices. The meaning derived, through predetermined analytical and theoretical frameworks, is used to inform any resulting recommendations emanating from the research (Kvale, 1996).

The research participants were asked open-ended questions designed to gauge their understandings of Afrocentricity, and Womanism/ Black feminism. Through the

methodological approach of one to one semi-structured interviews, I explored the multiple social attributes of race and gender. A set of open-ended questions was designed to hear the research participants understanding of the components of policy and the process of policy implementation, as well as their perceptions of the structure and supports in place and/or needed for them and their policy implementation work. The questions that relate to the exploration of policy and policy process, and perceptions of structure and supports, used during the interviews with the research participants, were derived from the work of Lopes and Thomas' "Organizational Checklist for Racial Equity" (2006, pp.245-253). The questions were presented in the order that they appear in Lopes and Thomas' book, *Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations*, and were organized under the headings of structures and supports.

As the interviewer, I drew upon clear, short, open-ended questions, used active listening, followed up on key terms and used "appropriate follow up probes" (Bates et al, n.d.) to encourage detailed responses from the research participants. "Open-ended questions have a number of advantages: they are flexible; they allow the interviewer to probe so that she may go into more depth if she chooses, or to clear up any misunderstandings; they enable the interviewer to test the limits of the respondent's knowledge; they encourage co-operation and help establish rapport [handling a situation sensitively and professionally, Cohen et al, 2010, p.362]; and they allow the interviewer to make a truer assessment of what the respondent really believes (Cohen et al, 2010, p.357). Douglas (1985, p.25) cited in Ezzy (2010) describes creative interviewing as involving "the use of many strategies and tactics of interaction, largely based on an

understanding of friendly feelings and intimacy, to optimize cooperative mutual disclosure and a creative search for mutual understanding” (Ezzy, 2010, p. 164).

Research Participants

In this research I involve women who were engaged in leading the implementation of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies between the school calendar years 2004 – 2009. The potential number of Black Nova Scotian women who met the criteria (employed with a board between 2004-2009, female and identifying as African Canadian or African Nova Scotian) to be part of the research was eight. Of the eight, five participated in my study. As all research participants are women and are of African descent, they were able to speak about the issues for which they have positional responsibility from their lived experience perspectives. All the research participants due to their position in the school board and by virtue of being of African descent have performance expectations, as relates to knowledge and expertise of the African Nova Scotian communities, from within the system of the school boards they serve. Also the African Nova Scotian communities within the geographical catchments of their boards, attempt to bring definition to the work of these women and call upon them to directly respond to African Nova Scotian community requests.

As a means of facilitating and hearing the voices of the women pseudo names (Sasha, Sula, Lydia, Bessie and Kara) are used.

The women represented six of the seven English school boards across the province, had working experience within the boards that ranged from less than a year to more than a decade and had a wealth of experience of addressing race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights within and outside the policy context. In

considering the women's work experience in the board, in the capacity of policy implementer, Bessie and Sasha have had the greatest number of years and Sula, Lydia and Kara have had the fewer number of years. I was able to hear from women who were seasoned in the role of implementing race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies and from women who are still in the early stages of their role. In this research, I question the role of race and gender as relates to policy (specifically pertaining to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights) implementation.

The interviews with the women ranged from approximately one hour and fifteen minutes to one hour and fifty minutes. The interviews took place in a variety of settings: a university classroom, a hotel room, my home and via phone. All sessions with the exception of the one that was carried out via phone were audio-taped. I recognize the difference in interviewing on the telephone compared to face to face interviewing but I believe the telephone interview did not detract from the data collection. At the close of the interview, the women were asked to share general comments and introduce additional questions and topics that they had anticipated and/or they wished would have been posed to them. All responses to these prompts were recorded as well. The research participants used this opportunity to reiterate previous comments and affirmed their commitment to the work of policy implementation.

Each participant signed a consent form which had been approved through the ethics review board of Mount Saint Vincent University. The consent form invited each participant to take part in my research, clearly stated the purpose of the research, assured them of the process of maintaining confidentiality, acknowledged that this was a

volunteer activity with the potential to disengage at anytime throughout the process and provided contact information for myself and the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board.

Data Analysis Process

As I began analyzing the rich data set I collected I took to heart Cohen et al's (2010) caution, "The great tension in data analysis is between maintaining a sense of the holism of the interview and the tendency for analysis to atomize and fragment the data-to separate them into constituent elements, thereby losing the synergy of the whole, and in interviews often the whole is greater than the sum of the parts" (p.368). Kvale (1996, pp.187-193) lists five main approaches to interview analysis: categorization of meaning (interview is coded into categories), condensation of meaning (an abridgement of the meanings expressed by the interviewees into shorter formulations), structuring of meaning through narratives (a focus on the stories told during the interview), interpretation of meaning (provides deeper and more or less speculative interpretations of the text) and ad hoc methods for generating meaning (an eclectic approach using a variety of commonsense as well as sophisticated approaches to the interview text).

Utilizing the structuring of meaning through narrative approach, the stories told by the research participants are filtered through the following thematic areas: Afrocentricity; Womanism/Black feminism; policy; employment systems; management practices; complaint processes; communication in the organization; programs and work with community; education and professional development and monitoring and accountability. As researcher I must seek out these women's stories and shape them into summaries so the learning can come from those dual approaches. "During the analysis the

researcher may alternate between being a ‘narrative-finder’ – looking for narratives contained in the interviews, and being a ‘narrative-creator’ –molding the many different happenings into coherent stories” (Kvale, 1996, p. 201). This research draws, largely, upon the collective voices of the women interviewed to inform the findings. However, there are times when a voice, as a stand alone experience, is used to inform and/or elaborate upon findings. A significant point to note is that the transcription is informed not only by the “literal statements but also non-verbal and paralinguistic communication” (Cohen et al, 2007, p.370).

This chapter has discussed qualitative research and the specific method of one to one semi-structured interviewing. I am able to, through an analysis of the research participants’ transcribed stories, learn about the issues and challenges they face as they seek to do the work of policy implementation within their respective boards and find advice for the development of solutions to address identified and emerging issues and problems.

CHAPTER V: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the research findings. The responses from the research participants as relates to each category are summarized. This summary forms the overview statements under each category area. The first person voice of the research participants is also captured under each header. This honours the worldview of Afrocentricity that all humans are considered to be equal and that they share a common bond. The specific category areas and the research findings appear in the order of how they were posed during the interviews. Each category section ends with a closing statement or statements that begin with: *What resonates?*

1. Knowledge of Africentricity

All the research respondents viewed Africentricity as a perspective and identity space from which they draw for both their personal and work lives. In essence for them both lives are inextricably entwined. While four of the five women interviewed saw Afrocentricity as opposite to Eurocentric, one woman, Sasha, firmly expressed the sentiment that it should not be viewed as the opposite of Eurocentricity.

So that's one of the challenges I find in dealing with Afrocentricity in terms of not looking at as far as what it is not and not defining Afrocentric as being the antithesis to Eurocentricity or Eurocentric (Sasha)

Sasha, Lydia, Sula and Bessie assert that Afrocentricity is about the opportunity to learn about African traditions and history. They raise the point of connecting self knowledge and knowledge of racial / cultural history to identify development.

It's about Africa in the centre and looking at things through some of the traditional ways in which some of the societies in Africa have functioned and the ways in which people are included, or seen, or treated or things like that. (Sasha)

Afrocentricity is for me, personally, getting to know myself, knowing where I've come from, which entails knowing the history of our people, practising the principles of Ma'at as well as Nguzo Saba principles and implementing that into our daily lives. I am aware of what they [the principles] are and what it means to be a good citizen and to practise and to have the Afrocentric focus in my being (Lydia)

I guess I would define it as perspective; it is a theory that centres and comes from the origins of African culture. [It is] knowledge and legacy. (Sula)

My definition from my own personal perspective is that it's a centre of African people, where we've come from, who we are, and where we're going. (Bessie)

Bessie represents the sentiments of four of the five women interviewed as she situates Afrocentricity as a comparative to Eurocentricity. While Sasha (who was animated in this assertion) indicated she felt it was important to value Afrocentricity on its own strength.

I guess another example, knowing who I am as an African Nova Scotian, and bringing my own experiences of race and culture and just who I am to the workplace and that can manifest itself in a lot of different ways because sometimes your own world view is very different from the Eurocentric perspective

and so it can be learning from others but I bring to my work that piece of history and culture. (Bessie)

It's really to keep that focus and to explain it in terms of Afrocentricity as being centred of Afrocentric and so I guess that's one of the things in terms of my own life of dealing with Afrocentricity is trying to not make it something, yet another thing, related to Eurocentric things. (Sasha)

Kara's articulation of Afrocentricity as a way of being and knowing in both her personal and professional lives was echoed by all the women. The research respondents find it stressful in workplaces that are less than welcoming of the concept of Afrocentricity.

In an Afrocentric perspective, [the] personal and professional are not separate. (Kara)

What resonates is the importance of having the opportunity to know and learn about African traditions and history and to be true to one's self (racially and culturally) in both workplace and personal life settings.

2. Knowledge of Womanism/ Black Feminism

The Black Nova Scotian women who were interviewed noted that generally for them the word "feminism" invokes a thinking /image of White women." The sentiments were expressed that White feminists may talk about women's issues but are not necessarily addressing Black women's issues. The respondents identified Womanism/ Black feminism to be about the realities of Black women. The need for Womanism/Black

feminism arises due to the need to find a response to the focus of feminism on White women.

All women who participated in the study indicated they felt excluded from and marginalized by feminist discourse. For example Lydia, Bessie and Sasha state:

To be a feminist, does not always address the concerns and necessary lobbying that is essential for black women. To be feminist and lobby for equality is one thing, but there are issues that are not truly covering who I am. (Lydia)

When I think about feminism, in some ways, I see it as seeing it through the European lens, of what White women thought was feminism, because for a lot of Black women, we didn't have the vote, we didn't have the same rights when feminism came into place, when it really didn't include women of colour. (Bessie)

When I think of feminism, I think of White women. And so to me, in my experience of feminism has been around White women. And so the term womanism I associate that more inclusive of women of colour and having women of colour having central roles in terms of discussion and analysis of and the realities of different women of colour is also throughout that as well and woven in that as well as opposed to really white women and feminism. (Sasha)

Bessie, Kara and Sula framing it from a Womanism/ Black feminism vantage point identify self pride, strength and opportunities for celebration. They highlight that the positive identity, ascribed to their Blackness through the Womanist/Black feminist theory

should be seen as legitimate and validating of them, their ancestral roots and their lived experiences.

I guess Womanism to me, I guess it's a stance that I take pride being a woman and I guess historically as an African Nova Scotian woman, with the strength and faith that I've learned from other women that has differed from aspects of that I've learned from men. (Bessie)

I think for Black feminists, having a voice to know who you are as a woman, to celebrate the blackness, to celebrate that you are a woman because historically in some cases too, depending on which setting you were in, women were not seen as equals and women. (Bessie)

Black feminism is looking at things from a Black woman's perspective. (Kara)

Maybe Black females don't face some of the same challenges as the European descendant females. (Sula)

What resonates for these Black women is the need to be wholly themselves. Institutions must ensure safe environments for them to embrace their Blackness and their Womanist/ Black feminist ways of being. Most importantly we hear that Black feminism is not feminism with colour added as feminism has negated the presence and the issues of Black women by actively disempowering them (e.g. Black women not having the right to vote till after White women did as noted by Bessie.) and/or by assuming that White women are the neutral and can therefore speak for all women.

3. Organizational Structures and Support

The Black Nova Scotian women expressed that the organizational structure was something they were slotted into; something set up by the board's education system. All indicated that they report to one direct supervisor. Two women noted that they also have a quasi-dual reporting relationship with the board's superintendent in that they also communicate directly with the person in that role. All women indicated that they have access to a budget. There were varying degrees of autonomy each has in disbursing of the budget funds. One woman has total control and autonomy to disburse her overall budget, while another woman indicated that she struggles for funding to carry out her work, and the remaining three women fall somewhere in between. For example, Sula could ask for funds for a particular event and get the money; however, she had no knowledge of what was available for her or when her request for funds would be declined.

Sasha's and Lydia's experiences with budget and access to funding are located on extremes of the budget / funding continuum.

I have control over my budget so that allows me a fair bit of freedom in terms of determining the direction of things. We have financial support in place. (Sasha)

... bottom line, when it comes to budgeting [there are] no additional supports (Lydia)

Many women noted their isolation in this role and within the broader structure of the board. For example in three of the five boards, there were no other Black women in leadership positions comparable to their level.

I find that there's a lot of isolation and part of it has to do with the fact there aren't people of colour there except for people in the RCH. (Sasha)

There should be people around to hold you. We don't have that but you know if you have people you feel safe. (Bessie)

Two women spoke of the idea of “inter-changeableness” (my term) of most diversities with Black racial diversity. The expansiveness of the understanding of diversity allows for a selectiveness of issue-response based on the individual and/or institutional comfort level with addressing the issue and/or issue preference. The women interviewed expressed the frustration with being marginalized because the social categories of oppression were portrayed as in competition with each other. A board could see hiring a non-Black person whose diversity has been deemed as ethnic rather racial as the same as hiring a Black person. As well, they could consider outreach to one community (in this case Aboriginal) as meeting the commitment to outreach to Black communities. The various manifestations of oppression, the “isms’ if you will, need not be portrayed as in competition. This theme also appears in the ‘employment systems’ and ‘programs and work with communities’ categories.

And we always have White folks [apply for jobs designated for African Canadian] but they never applied for positions for Asian or Aboriginal descent. They will say things such as “well my partner is a person of African descent or my kids are’.
(Sasha)

Well they classify themselves as Lebanese background or Greek or someone who might have been seventh or tenth generation First Nation but they wouldn't be racially visible at all. So you can say [we] have diversity but [still] have very few people who are racially or ethnically visible. (Bessie

So we have some people in place, I guess I could put it more generic, who address people of Mi'kmaq and African descent. (Sasha)

The Mi'kmaq consultant falls under my position but that is not someone doing RCH initiatives (Lydia)

What resonates is the necessity to recognize and respond to the need for approaches that honour the policy intent of addressing systemic racism and discrimination. These women must be concretely valued for their expertise that comes from their lived experience as well as any training and academic credentials they bring to their roles. Their advice must be valued and their recommendations implemented. It is important to be clear about the intent and foundation of policy work in the Nova Scotia context.

4. Policy and Plan

All respondents felt there was general knowledge by board leadership, board and school level staff of racial equity / race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy due to training provided by staff from the Department of Education and school boards through the RCH positions and other school board level people. However, all expressed concern about the application of that knowledge. Some respondents noted

that it is integrated into some aspects of board work such as school improvement planning process and board business plans. The idea that policy is only used to the degree that it satisfies immediate or short term needs of a particular individual and/or the school board was expressed by all women interviewed.

Sasha and Lydia highlight that the collaborative training that took place between boards and the department has positively impacted people's knowledge level of the policies.

I think it [the policy] tends to be the sort of thing that people come to when they need it for stuff when things happen but as they go about their everyday lives and as time passes by[it is less in the forefront]. Every time I do a workshop in any of our schools I am doing the policy work. (Sasha)

Individually people know some things [about the policy] largely because of the training that was done by the department. (Sasha)

The [RCH individuals based in schools] provide each school on numerous occasions with PD [professional development] sessions. (Lydia)

Lydia voices the frustration about the lack of ownership of policy work by board leadership as she notes that spreading the knowledge of the policy is solely her responsibility.

And to expect me to do it [training on the policies] with staff or to constantly arranging and expecting to serve on various committees here and there and

everything, it's just not possible. RCH policy is not passed [and] the employment equity policy has never been passed. (Lydia)

Bessie's experience is different from that of Lydia's in that it in Bessie's board the policy training and implementation work is somewhat integrated. However she still has the disproportionate burden of the work and is without team support.

It [race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights] is explicit in the board in that many programs and services because professional development was completed with all principals. (Bessie)

It's [race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights] part of our [board's] school improvement planning process so that's being integrated [into school improvement and business plans] as well. (Bessie)

Kara and Sula acknowledge the existence of policy and policy promises. They both express a feeling of disenchantment with their boards.

If we need to use it [the policy], we can say we have it. (Kara)

In terms of the Racial Equity Policy, the department, it says in there they are promoting or trying to promote more African descent or diverse employment or something like that. (Sula)

What resonates is the need to go from superficial knowledge of policy and policy implementation to a deeper level that would be seen by the level of engagement and ownership of the entire board.

5. Employment Systems

Three of the respondents noted that as there is an emphasis placed on the broader concept of diversity, but the specific redress for Black/African Nova Scotians has weakened. Thus Black people and other racially visible people are not necessarily the beneficiaries of equity practices related to employment equity policies. Two women, citing institutional and direct personal experiences, noted that a focus on designated positions has enabled the increased participation of Black Canadians. However, the stigma often attached to these positions has made it challenging for individuals who were successful candidates. Two women felt that when a policy commitment within their boards is enacted, progressive and responsive measures are developed to ensure affirmative action is in play.

Sula, Kara and Bessie highlight the notion of “lip service” at relates to boards embracing and implementing employment equity and race relations.

The province says it supports Employment Equity, promoting diversity and hiring diverse people, so then each board comes out and says we support Employment Equity too and affirmative action, but that’s kind of where it ends. (Sula)

There is employment equity in RCH but ineffective, does not have life.

[The question is raised], what does diversity look like? (Kara)

The employment system is there but it is not as evident when it comes to groups that have been marginalized historically, it’s really not evident. (Bessie)

Lydia’s comment sheds light on the barriers that come from within the board structure. In one area she is collaborating with a department within the institution,

Human Resources (HR), and then she must face the barriers raised by the very unions that profess to be a voice for and represent all employees.

I am working with HR in the area of hiring but the issue becomes a union matter when you're looking for criteria for elevating individuals into administrative positions. (Lydia)

Sasha spoke of the growth journey in her board as relates to affirmative action which is a strategy under employment equity. Once this employment equity approach became embedded in board practices, it became more effective.

We do have a strong affirmative action program that's been effective in getting more folks in [leadership positions]. (Sasha)

I mean people say they want to promote it, but that doesn't necessarily mean they want to promote African or Afrocentricity. (Sula)

What resonates is the need for the integration of employment equity practices, such as affirmative action, into the mainstream operations of the boards. Actions speak louder than words. The direction of the policies must be fully implemented. This requires leadership to be supportive and accountable to the principles of employment equity which as stated by these women are about removing barriers and utilizing proactive strategies.

6. Management Practices

Four of the five respondents had concerns about the lack of demonstrated leadership in the area of RCH and management. People in leadership roles might say they are committed to leadership through and about RCH but the practices in which they choose to engage do not match that voiced commitment. Those in positional leadership

positions do not “walk the talk”. However, two women indicated that policies exist to help hold people accountable for their knowledge of social justice.

When they are hiring principals or Vice principals, part of the weighted questions are around their training and experience in regards to social justice or racial awareness, cross cultural understanding, human rights. (Sasha)

Sasha provides an example of how at the stage of hiring and during performance measures processes, management is expected to prove knowledge as relates to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights.

The ones that have the understanding are the ones that work more day to day with people that are diverse, that have the diverse backgrounds, and that have learned from communities and have been visible within the communities doing part of their work. (Bessie)

Bessie’s statement draws attention to some of the characteristics required of an individual level in order to work successfully at a system level.

Sula, Lydia and Kara speak about their boards’ ambivalence as relates to supporting the boards’ policy work.

Verbally people say they are on board and support initiatives that take place but in reality they are not put into practice, I don’t think the true commitment [by management] is there at this time. (Lydia)

[Management appears] incompetent about RCH issues. (Kara)

Well I don't know if it was their commitment or not [...] It was like they support but they don't support. (Sula)

Sula acknowledges the feeling of an “outsider” within the context of understanding that the work of policy implementation in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights is best achieved through teamwork and collaboration, both which are lacking.

Well you're just kind of an outsider unless you have a team of coordinators, who really want to promote social justice. (Sula)

What resonates is the idea that individuals and systems need to take an active role in their own learning. The learning is on a continuum: challenge one's individual views, learn and growth, challenge the institutions, and learn and grow.

7. The Complaint Process

All women indicated that there are policies that exist to address student and staff complaints. Three of the respondents specifically noted that the individual's level of trust of those who will engage with them during the process and the system and knowledge of the complaint process impacted usage. Two women commented that the complaint process often involves the Human Resources personnel.

There was a gap in senior leadership understanding of the complaint form; found the form to be cumbersome. (Kara)

I guess a support in the sense if the complaint cannot be handled or dealt [with by the] immediate supervisor there are other avenues [we] have outside mediation, human rights and so on. Also preventative – address the issue before it gets to

that level [of escalation]. If there are incidents, there are procedures in place for that. (Bessie)

I think that people know where they can go [concerning complaints] for support. It all goes through HR and they'll inform me of the situation. (Lydia)

There's a process for students, there's an RCH incident form that gets completed with anything involving students. The process for staff complaints, if it was just between staff, is more along the HR [human resource] line. (Sasha)

Kara, Bessie, Lydia and Sasha's comments indicate that there are processes, such as complaint forms, but they may not be well-known or optimally utilized. Forms exist for both students and staff. Having identified a concern about knowledge and using the respondents' comments suggest an under reporting that can negatively impact the effectiveness to plan programs to address the roots of complaints.

What resonates is that individuals, beyond these women, need to understand and utilize the forms and processes that exist. These women are once again lone voices attempting to convey to colleagues and supervisors that valuable information for supporting the work of policy implementation is being lost or compromised. A valuable source of information is lost when the complain processes, such as completion of forms, are not adhered to as outlined in policies.

8. Communication in the Organization

Communication in the organization was discussed by the women from two perspectives: communication about what is taking place regarding RCH within the boards and how folks are communicating with each other. As relates to communicating about RCH, the women indicated that it generally fell solely, to their positions. Two women highlighted that RCH is built into the business plans of their boards.

... we have an annual report about the progress in terms of RCH in our board.

RCH has been one of the goals [in my board's business plan]. (Sasha)

Sasha speaks about communicating within the board through formal processes. This implies an integration of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights into the fabric of the board.

Lydia and Sula speak about their accountability role for communicating about race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights within the board. Both see it as a legitimate place for them. The lack of engagement of colleagues in this work reflects the lack of understanding that this work belongs to all in their boards.

Largely that would fall on me with communicating [to board colleagues and community]. (Lydia)

But many administrators feel that RCH is not as important especially if they don't have Black or Mi'kmaq students in their schools. (Lydia)

I would recommend [to facilitate communication] a reporting structure so the RCH coordinator would be a director or an independent level and just have them report to the elected board or the superintendent. (Sula)

Bessie brings to our attention the concept of communication as one aspect of cultural identity. Acknowledging this may help one view conflict through this perspective; that it may be arising from miscommunication.

I would say that's on a continuum too because sometimes if it's within the cultural aspect, then sometimes depending on the culture, the race, the ethnicity, then their forms of communication might be quite different from the majority. (Bessie)

What resonates is the need to appreciate and manage communication. There is a clear role for education regarding both aspects of communication raised by the interviewees.

9. Programs and Work with Community

All the research respondents indicated that there were community collaborations. The majority expressed concerns about the quality of those collaborations. As well, a few women questioned the transparency (or lack of) related to the board's intent /goal of working with the Black community.

...through RCH, they did build relations with one of the Aboriginal communities in the [board area]. (Sula)

Sula's comments speak to her board's perception of interchangeability of diversities as relates to Black community. She questions the idea that the board saw outreach to one community, Aboriginal, as meeting their overall commitment to community outreach.

Kara and Lydia acknowledge the aspect of intentionality. In order for communities to feel welcome their boards need to take deliberate actions to ensure the message of welcome is transmitted.

System and schools can make the community feel disconnected. (Kara)

And the community is not as welcomed as a community could be. I've heard several parents complaining they don't feel invited into the (name withheld) school. (Lydia)

Bessie's comment speaks to the quality of communication with community and the board's level of knowledge of community and community dynamics.

There is some community involvement within committees but once again it's basically directed by the board and not the community so in other words, it's a selection process where you designate people that you feel have the pulse of the community but [who in fact] may not [have] the pulse of the community. (Bessie)

Sasha speaks to valuing community voice to inform the practices of the board by providing policy advice.

I can only speak in terms of our RCH stuff, we're reviewing the RCH policy and we sent it out to community groups as well for input. [When the board] has presenters we invite community organizations to come (Sasha)

What resonates is the need to find effective ways to engage and learn with Black communities. As this research study demonstrates the learning from first person voices and the validating of their experiences can truly inform policies and practices needed for sustained

change. Who best to speak about their needs than those for whom the institution within the education system has a responsibility to serve!

10. Education and Professional Development

All women indicated that professional development as relates to RCH, diversity and social justice was offered to all jurisdictions: teachers, administrative board staff and elected board members. It was mostly delivered directly by them. Two women noted that at times they could engage external people to deliver sessions. Some women questioned the support given to them for education, particularly that type of professional development which might support their advancement.

Sasha, Bessie and Sula acknowledge their boards' general embrace of professional development (PD). They have been able to capitalize on this to advance education and training as relates to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights.

Our board is really strong in professional development [PD]. They love PD.

That's been one of the strengths for in terms of putting forward a lot of the things on RCH. I think we've been able to successfully move a lot of things along because of our board's commitment to PD, (Sasha)

So I think that the board is making some efforts in educating all levels, teachers and administration, also there has been workshops provided by the department and also within the board, where race and ethnicity and all those things have been brought to the table, based on the criteria of the policy. (Bessie)

And I think too that we're getting to more of a phase that it's integrated more into what we do and it's not an add-on so it's seen as just a way of doing things, it's the environment, when you go into a school, what does it look like, those questions now are being asked more. (Bessie)

That [professional development] we put in a policy. RCH training takes place every year. (Sula)

Lydia highlights the challenge of inadequate funding and lack of human resources. This slows progress and change.

I really and truly need more funding because that really is a position in itself. PD could be a full time position for someone and not having those consultants that I can rely on to actually deliver that [is a problem]. (Lydia)

We don't have the additional funding to support the implementation of RCH that's needed to cover all staff to make it mandatory that some type of PD take place at least every couple of years. (Lydia)

Kara's point highlights the valuing of training so as to allow for employment growth opportunities within her board.

There are some hindrances. There is a lack of opportunity for African Nova Scotians (Kara)

What resonates is the need to commit to provide learning experiences that will contribute to accessing advancement opportunities within the board for these women. As

well those aspiring to leadership positions are expected to acquire knowledge and understanding in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights and to apply it to all decision making.

11. Monitoring and Accountability

Within in all policies there are accountability statements. The Black Nova Scotian women noted various degrees of connecting those policies with concrete monitoring such as annual reports and school improvement goals related to RCH being present in business plans. One woman articulated that there was a lack of accountability because there was no tracking of the work that she was doing to facilitate the implementation of policy.

Lydia's insights raise the question of roles and clarity of purpose. Are school leaders facility managers or change leaders?

There is no actual monitoring [of policy implementation]. The reality is, as it stands right now, we're not making schools accountable for what's not happening. But the people are more focussed on running the facility as opposed to the importance of curriculum development with the RCH component. There are some individuals (principles) who are committed [to racial equity work]. (Lydia)

Kara speaks to a leadership practice that could increase accountability in two ways. One is that the number of Black people in leadership roles would increase. Secondly, as mentoring requires knowledge in all areas of board policies, the RCH policy would have to be well known to the leader who is doing the mentoring.

Mentoring can lead to accountability. Strong positive leadership voice can make a difference. (Kara)

It is a struggle to move leadership. (Kara)

Sasha and Bessie bring to the forefront the idea of multiple levels of accountability; macro and micro, respectively.

Racial incidents or RCH incidents are tracked. (Sasha)

It is because it is built into the principal appraisal process, so when supervisors are going into schools and they are working with principals and doing evaluations, that is something they have to demonstrate with evidence, like what does that look like in your school?. (Bessie)

So that's an annual report and we also have an interim report to the board that's sort of a progress report. (Sasha)

What resonates is that the accountability and monitoring processes that exist within policies need to be used in an effective manner so that sustained change is able to occur.

Viewing the transcribed notes through each of the ten category areas provides rich insights as to what the women in the research study are experiencing on an ongoing basis. The following discussion connects the findings with relevant literature.

Discussion

As the Black Nova Scotian women in this study shared their experiences, expertise as relates to implementation of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies and their passion for this work, I was re-invigorated by the reaffirming of purpose expressed by them, even in light of the challenges and obstacles they encounter. The interlocking social determinants, race and gender are validated and positively responded to when embracing Afrocentricity and Womanism/Black feminism. Reviere, 2001, p, 712 citing Asante, 1990 states: “The basic Afrocentric beliefs are that researchers must (a) hold themselves responsible for uncovering hidden, subtle, racist theories that may be embedded in current methodologies; (b) work to legitimize the centrality of African ideals and values as a valid frame of reference for acquiring and examining data; and (c) maintain inquiry rooted in a strict interpretation of place” (p.8).

Privilege and power are integral to the discussions of Black feminism/womanism and Afrocentricity, i.e. the belief in “the notions of superior and inferior which are components of all those [politic] systems” (Hill Collins, 1998, p. 4). The recognition of physical and social locations and history can act as lens through which one can critique privilege and power from an external and internal perspective: “Race, class, and gender represent three systems of oppression the most heavily affect African American women” (Hill Collins, 1998, p. 3). These women challenge the privileging of feminism which comes from a place of knowing it is attached to White middle class women and claim space for Womanism/Black feminism. They embrace their Afrocentric and Womanist self.

The theme of accountability and ownership threads throughout all the categories that inform the structures and supports analysis. Lopes and Thomas (2006) state: “One of the biggest challenges of racial equity work is that we are often hired by the people with the most power in an organization to engage in a process that ought to shift how power is used and by whom” (p.9). Thus the work of effective implementation of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy that leads to sustained change insists that institutional leadership pay attention to the advice of the internal change agents (the Black Nova Scotian women who lead policy implementation) and become allies in the quest for change by adopting management and employment system practices.

This work can be supported in a concrete way by enhancing the policy capacity of the institution. The person who is leading the implementation of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies, must have “the ability to anticipate and influence change; make informed, intelligent decisions about policy; develop programs to implement policy; attract and absorb resources; manage resources; and evaluate current activities to guide future actions” (Honadle, 1981 cited in Wellstead and Stedman, 2009, p.8). This requires the trust of their supervisors and a high level of autonomy.

I will now consider the findings through the lens of CRT. The results will help inform the conclusions and recommendations.

Data Analysis

What do the findings offer when viewed through the CRT framework? In order to answer that question the elements of CRT that are most germane must be aligned with the analytical areas of the aspects of policy work: existence of policy and plan, employment systems, management practices, complaint processes, communication in the organization, programs and work with community, education and professional

development and monitoring and accountability. As the focus of the work of the Black Nova Scotian women in this research study is to lead policy implementation in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights and considering the emerging themes from the transcriptions, the elements of CRT which are most appropriate to highlight are: race/racism, dominant ideology, experiential knowledge, interest convergence and social justice.

Race/ Racism

The normalcy of race /racism is the CRT element that is explicit and implicit throughout all aspects of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy work as “[r]acism is a global White supremacy and is itself a political system, a particular power structure of formal and informal rule” (Mills, 1997 p.4 cited in Taylor, 2009). As these Black Nova Scotian women move through their work lives with interlocking identities, including Black and woman, they must draw upon their counterstories (Taylor, 2009, Solorzano and Yosso, 2009) as a means of “exploring, analyzing and challenging majoritarian stories of race privilege” (Taylor, p. 11). When boards profess to be doing all they can, Bessie’s story asks them to look at their schools, classroom environment and consider how are they incorporating race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights into the curriculum so that it is natural for all students. Sasha’s story challenges the comfort level of perceptions and assumptions. Part of her story recounted here provides an example of the unconscious manner in which disempowering messages can be passed around. “It’s [the bias] reflected in that tendency to say White middle class people and Black people in poverty, the way of coupling these things all the time”.

Dominant ideology

The CRT element, challenge of dominant ideology, the maintaining of dominant group power and privilege, is highlighted in the findings related to organizational structures and supports, policy and plan, and management practices. These women, through restrictions of access to resources (e.g. staff to support work), limitations on level of autonomy (e.g. little to no control over budget allocation or dollar amount) and isolation (stemming being the only Black woman employed in a positional leadership role and lack of/weak demonstrations of leadership), are denied access to the tools (e.g. money, professional development to support career advancement) necessary to create substantive sustained change.

Experiential Knowledge

The importance of experiential knowledge is highlighted in the findings related to communication in the organization and program and work with community. Ikemoto, (1997 p.36 cited in Solorzano & Yosso 2009 note) that “majoritarian methods [and stories] purport to be neutral and objective yet implicitly make assumptions according negative stereotypes of people of colour”. This type of messaging can weaken and perhaps even destroy the psyche of the oppressed persons and the oppressed racialized communities. These Black Nova Scotian women must, on a daily basis deal with interactions that are influenced by negative messaging and challenges of who they are as racialized women while working, from a leadership role, in a field of work that must continually seek validation and legitimacy: “Members of minority groups internalize the stereotype images that certain elements of society have constructed in order to maintain their power.... Naming one’s own reality with stories can affect the oppressor. ...

Oppression is rationalized, causing little self-examination by the oppressor. Stories by people of colour can catalyze the necessary cognitive conflict to jar dyconscious racism” (Ladson-Billings and Tate IV, 1995, pp.57-58).

Interest Convergence

The importance of interest convergence is highlighted in the findings related to program and work with community, education and professional development, and monitoring and accountability. Everyday racism operates at an individual and system level. The normality of White privilege allows people of the dominant culture to use “microgressions” (Lawrence n.d. p.3) to perpetuate racism. The application of institutional analysis through the lens of race forces one to question the concept of meritocracy. Advancing the belief that White is a race and therefore subject to the conceptual analysis proposed by CRT empowers the analysis of the “socially constructed and constantly reinforced power of [W]hite identification and interests” (Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.25, cited Gillborn 2006).

The limiting of educational access for many of the Black Nova Scotia women interviewed, the lack of transparency when engaging with the Black community and the weak monitoring and accountability measures by the educational system indicates that boards are willing to only go “only so far” with the work of implementing race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights. The deliberate limiting of Black women’s access to educational opportunity that could situate them for advancement; policies that encourage leadership (particularly White leadership) to gain knowledge of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights but that does not include consequences if the individual does not seek education sends a weak message of support and contributes

to the maintaining of the status quo. In the Nova Scotia school board context, this status quo is leadership by White males and secondly by White females. Thus “the interests of Blacks in gaining racial equality have been accommodated only when they have converged with the interests of powerful Whites” (Taylor, 2009, p.5).

Social Justice

The commitment to social justice, another element of CRT, is highlighted in the findings related to policy and plan, management practices and complaint process. Solorzano and Yosso (2009) indicate that a social justice agenda leads to the elimination of racism, sexism and poverty and the empowering of subordinated minority groups. Positional leadership is a key thread throughout these three areas (policy and plan, management practices and complaint process). As such, clear voiced leadership is needed to support these Black Nova Scotian women and the work of policy implementation. The expansiveness of the work that falls under the umbrella heading of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights is best supported by collaboration with colleagues and staff. The demonstration of effective collaboration with colleagues and staff are either mediocre or not present.

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

In the previous chapter (chapter five) I presented research findings drawing on the narratives of my research respondents. I organized my findings into 10 themes. These were: 1. Knowledge of Africentricity; 2. Knowledge of Womanism/Black feminism; 3. Policy and Plan; 4. Employment Systems; 5. Management Practices; 6. The Complaint Process, 7. Communication in the Organization; 8. Programs and Work with Community, 9. Education and Professional Development; and 10) Monitoring and Accountability. Each of the thematic points reflects a focus area for change. In this chapter I will present recommendation that correspond to each theme as well as an overview comment on organizational structures and supports. The themes of Knowledge of Afrocentricity and Knowledge of Womanism/Black feminists are addressed through a combined response. The remaining themes, developed from Lopes and Thomas' Organizational checklist, are organized under the category headings, structures and supports. Before moving to the conclusions and recommendations I first summarize the chapters.

Summary of chapters

This study reports on the experiences as relates to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation of Black Nova Scotian women who work (or had worked) in five of the six English school boards in Nova Scotia from 2004-2009. Specifically, the research question I addressed in this thesis was: What structures and supports are in place for Black/African Nova Scotian/Canadian women in leadership positions at provincial and school board levels to sustain their work in race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation? The

data analysis provides information about the quality of structures and supports that the research participants perceived to be available to them.

In chapter one I shared my story, a recount, a narrative, which traces my homelife, school (elementary, junior high and senior high) and work experiences. All these were discussed in the context of policy work. Through reflection, during the writing of my story, I realized that those life experiences had a profound impact on my life. There were messages from my family, and the society of the day that had to be deconstructed and reframed so as to provide strength and affirmation of self for who I am today, both personally and professionally. My narrative affirms that “storytelling [can be] a kind of medicine to heal wounds of pain caused by racial oppressions” (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, p.57) and is a “first step on the road to justice” (Ladson-Billings & Tate IV, p.58).

In chapter two I provided the context of my study, in which I discussed the work of BLAC and its recommendations, specifically recommendation numbers 6 and 7a, as well as the Minister’s Response to these recommendations.

In chapter three I presented the theoretical framework, which includes critical race theory, Afrocentricity and Womanism/Black feminism.

In chapter four I discussed the research methodology. The qualitative research approach, namely, semi-structured one to one interviews, allows for the voices of a marginalized group; Black Nova Scotian women who are in leadership roles in implementing race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies to be heard. Ladson-Billings and Tate IV (1995) state: “political and moral analysis is situational [and its] social reality is constructed by the formulation and the exchange of stories about individual situations” (p.57).

In chapter five I discussed the research findings as they relate to each category. I summarized the responses from the research participants in dual and complimentary manners. One summary of the participants' responses appears under each category alone with closing comments which open with: What resonates. The discussion section which looks holistically at the category summaries concludes this chapter.

In the first section of this chapter, "Conclusions", I focus on the "how" for the journey to justice for both the Black Nova Scotian women in this study and the systems which benefit from their work. I draw upon summaries of the findings and use of the first person voices of the women interviewed to inform the conclusions and recommendations. In the second section, "Recommendations" I provide recommendations to address the issues raised by the women interviewees. I also return to the metaphor of the "nuanced dance".

Conclusions

Knowledge of Afrocentricity and Knowledge of Womanism/Black feminism: The Black Nova Scotian woman interviewees, through their stories as relates to their understanding of Africentricity and Womanism/ Black feminism convey the importance of "getting to know myself"(Lydia); "knowing who I am as an African Nova Scotian woman" (Bessie); the privileging of White women in feminism (i.e. Sasha says, "when I think feminism, I think of White women") and the power of Womanism/ Black feminism theory, "For example Bessie says, "Womansim to me, I guess it's a stance that I take pride being a woman, and I guess historically as an African Nova Scotian woman, I have strength and faith that I've learned from other woman...").

Structures

The categories that are related to structure are: policy and plan, employment systems, management practices, complaint process, communication in the organization, programs and work with community, and monitoring and accountability.

- **Policy and plan** - Policies for racial equity, race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights and employment equity are in place in all boards. “All schools have copies of the policy” (Lydia). However, the level of understanding and depth of application to respond to issues or be proactive in advocating for racial equity of these policies is seen by these women as superficial. “The policy is the kind of thing that people come to when things happen”. (Sasha).
- **Employment systems** –Employment equity practices such as affirmative action have been used in boards with varying success. Three of the research respondents noted that there is a focusing on diversity in a manner that detracts from the policy commitment to racialized, specifically Black, communities.
- **Management practices** - Four of five respondents had concerns about lack of demonstrated leadership in this area. “Principals do not place RCH representatives on the staff meeting agendas.” (Lydia) All respondents felt that while leaders can say they are on board with the work of policy implementation more concrete actions such as making race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights an ongoing priority goal at board and school level, is needed. “I would say they are really trying but are not there yet.” (Bessie)

- **Complaint process** - The practices that come from policies that support receiving and addressing complaints from students and staff are firmly in place in each board. “It is an extensive complaint process.” (Bessie) However, the relationship component, that is the trust of individuals in charge of the practices by those wishing to register a complaint, is weak. In spite of this challenge one of the research respondent’s speaks to how her work at relationship development has built trust. “I have a couple of staff that came to me and we were able to resolve things.” (Lydia)
- **Communication in the organization** – Communication about race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights is ongoing, although it appears to disproportionately burden the Black Nova Scotian women who work in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights. “You are to the point where you are trying to communicate however the information is just not being disseminated” (Lydia). The aspect of communication that is about style of communication is problematic in that the uniqueness of communication that is culturally specific may be missed and this uniqueness can often be perceived by those engaged in the communication as a conflict rather than miscommunication. “If there is some difficulty with understanding [what is being conveyed in a meeting among colleagues or with supervisors] it might be cultural” (Bessie).
- **Programs and work with communities** – There is active work carried out by school board personnel with the communities through solicitation of the communities’ input into such things as policy revision and to attend presentations, geared to community audiences, on race relations, cross cultural

understanding and human rights. However, the approach to community outreach does not appear to model collaboration; rather it lacks transparency of board intent and end goals and invitations are only as necessary. Bessie states: “People are expected to speak for the whole group or the whole community, different avenues of communicating with communities are not explored”. “The board is not as accountable to the community as it should be.” (Kara)

- **Monitoring and accountability-** While all policies have accountability statements there is concern, expressed by the women interviewed, about the lack of effective monitoring needed for ‘real’ accountability. However of note is one board that has reporting structures in place such as tracking of RCH incidents, mandatory in-servicing and training and RCH annual reports. “It is in the policy and a part of the monitoring has to do with the annual report” (Sasha).

The category which falls under supports is education and professional development:

- **Education and professional development-** The Black Nova Scotian women identified that there is a disproportionate expectation placed on them by their respective institutions to deliver training for all school board staff in the areas of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights. In those boards which place a high value on professional development, in general, the opportunity for these women to access professional development and education in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights is greater. “One thing in particular that I like is when you have more than one person going to a conference, especially when you are from the same board, then you can really talk about [what you have learned] in relation to practice and then get some good ideas

on how you can implement” (Sasha). However, none of the research respondents expressed that board level professional development in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights is prioritized over other competing initiatives by board leadership. Education and professional development that could support the advancement of these women within their boards was seen by the research interviewees as weak to non-existent. “I don’t see much happening to encourage Black women to progress” (Kara).

Within Nova Scotia school boards the work of implementing race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies is dynamic. There is much happening in regard to training on policies, research projects and daily responses to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights’ issues. While students, board staff, elected board members and community members are benefiting from this work so much more needs to be done. One issue is that this, the work of implementation, is predominately done through and by the Black Nova Scotian women in this study. These Black Nova Scotian women bring themselves wholly, mind, soul and body, to their roles. One research respondent referred to herself as “a hamster on a wheel”. “I really and truly feel that I’m continuously going in circles” (Lydia). Another noted a pressure on her because her race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights work is seen in a negative light. “It’s always a negative feeling. They [the principals] always think they’re going to get in trouble if I am coming to see them” (Sula). That disproportionate burden exacts a price. At the time of writing of my thesis two women have chosen to leave their positions to pursue other career interests and number of them had indicated that they are dealing with various illnesses in recent years. They did not explicitly blame

the illness on their work but they did acknowledge that they found the work puts serious stress on them.

Recommendations

What changes need to occur that would best support the Black Nova Scotian women in leadership positions to sustain their work in race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation? The findings from this research provided the insights which are now shaped into recommendations. The recommendations are: i) institutions need to engage in a process to determine the optimum number of staff and the expertise and competence needed to do the work of implementation and hire accordingly, ii) the board leadership needs to develop the comfort level and skills to analyze and interrogate their positionality (the advantaging and disadvantaging of one's location in society and institutional structure) and White privilege. Finally, iii) institutions need to acknowledge the reality that racism is "endemic" (Gillborn, 2008, p.27). I assert that a genuine acknowledgement of that truism will be liberating and transformative as then the work of addressing the inequalities that continue to disempower people and clog the progress of systems can begin/or continue with new found zest.

The Metaphor of the dance

"Metaphors put forward proposals for another way of looking at things and of grasping inchoate intimations of possibilities" (Aspin, 1984, p.23, as cited in Jensen, 2006, p.13). I juxtapose my findings with the metaphor of dance as relates to the fabric of African culture (as a concrete manifestation of African rich traditions) which can be

drawn upon to demonstrate process, structures and strategies needed for effective policy implementation.

For the purpose of communication, the dance utilizes symbolic gestures, mime, props, masks, costumes, body painting, and other visual devices. The basic movements may be simple, emphasizing the upper body, torso, or feet; or they may be complex, involving coordination of different body parts and intricate actions such as fast rotation, ripples of the body, and contraction and release, as well as variations in dynamics, levels, and use of space. The dance may be open to all, or it may be an activity in which one, two, three, or four individuals (regardless of sex) take turns in the dancing ring. Team dances also occur. The formations may be linear, circular, serpentine or columns of two or more rows African People and Culture” (The Africa Guide, p.1).

The metaphor of dance is demonstrative of the way the Black African Nova Scotian women must engage with colleagues, supervisors and peers to advance race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation. The metaphor of dance displays how these women must be conscious of their gestures so as to engage and not be perceived as threatening to the board leadership and the stability of the institution. They must symbolically wear masks and visual devises to deliver a message for change that for them is steeped in passion. The complexity of an African dance through body movement and variances in the dynamic levels of expression reflect the complexity of interactions with colleagues and supervisors as these Black Nova Scotian women are often challenged to not only advance race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights within their boards but also to keep race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights on the table of board priorities.

In the metaphor of dance there is the dance itself which, concretely represents the work of implementing race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policies, and the dancer, the Black Nova Scotian women who provide leadership for this

work. I draw the essential components of the traditional African dance in relation to the three recommendations: 1) institutions need to engage in a process to determine the optimum number of staff and the expertise and competence needed to do the work of implementation; 2) the board leadership needs to develop the comfort level and skills to analyze and interrogate their positionality (the advantaging and disadvantaging of one's location in society and institutional structure) and White privilege and 3) institutions need to acknowledge the reality that racism is "endemic".

The identification of the staff, considering number, expertise and competence requires the participation of two key people, the Black Nova Scotian woman and her immediate supervisor. They can take turns dancing in the center of the circle, i.e. being the lead. Their movements can be simple such as crafting a board level message to demonstrate the commitment to increase staffing to support policy implementation or intricate, utilizing complex body movements and fast rotations such as embedding employment equity practices within all policies and practices of the board.

The honing of leadership skills, through recognition of unearned advantaging of White privilege, to increase the board's institutional capacity in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights is a team dance. These women rely upon mime (holding a mirror up to the system), masks (screening their reactions to injustices perpetrated by the system) and props (visuals to show what exists and what could be) to engage and educate. The team dance is comprised of all leadership levels of board (elected board, board level staff and school based administrators). Their movements are serpentine and circular as they weave through the obstacles of union contracts and system

tendency to default to status quo and engage in change process which regenerates itself as policies and practices evolve and grow.

The dance is open to all and racism, in its pervasive manner, affects all. Racism disproportionately impacts all racialized communities. In the Nova Scotia context, it disproportionately impacts Black communities. The complexity and depth of the African dance provides insights into the complexity of the manifestations of racism. Racism is conveyed through symbolic gestures (lack of icons representative of racialized communities), basic and complex dance movements (no expectation that leaders have competency related to race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights to no strategic plan to ensure the presence of Black leaders are positional leaders throughout the board). It is circular and regenerative (continually problematizing difference and othering marginalized individual so that the status quo remains). In order to work toward eradication of racism the actions and activities which sustain racism must be challenged and addressed.

All three recommendations have implications for institutions of lifelong learning. However, most directly I draw attention to recommendations one and two. If we are to produce individuals, such as teachers, school board administrators and policy makers, to name a few, who have expertise and competence in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights, then institutions which process to provide a full and robust education for these individuals must possess this expertise in their faculties. They must also be skilled at assessing in this area so they can fully support the learning and hold themselves and the learners accountable.

Future Research

While the findings, conclusions and recommendations provide opportunity for immediate action, future research opportunities exist. It would be informative to hear directly from students. How do they view the role and impact of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation? Do they see purpose and feel a sense of agency? Now that we have the framework of the recommendations to draw upon, there is opportunity to engage with board leadership beyond the Black Nova Scotian women who participated in this research. Additionally future research can explore more deeply the impact of gender and relationships, e.g. when a researcher who is not of the marginalized community engages with research respondents who are of the marginalized communities. How does that impact what is shared and communicated? How might it impact data collection, analysis, and findings?

Summary

This chapter has provided summaries and first voice narratives to provide recommendations with regard to the structures and supports available for Black Nova Scotian women who work in the area of race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights policy implementation. The recommendations presented distinctly and in context of the metaphor of dance provide overarching areas of focus as well as succinct action item areas to be addressed. I also suggest possible future research areas which combined with the recommendations fuel the following quote from Lopes and Thomas. Lopes and Thomas (2006) state: “Change need to be persuasive, pervasive and successful. It must keep in mind the foundation of the organization and the most powerful

structures within it. There will be no change until we have changed all aspects of the organization” (p.172).

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