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FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND
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Investigating an antiracism policy : The case of an Ontario school board

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Investigating an antiracism policy: The case of an Ontario school board

By

Sandra Parris

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA degree in Education

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Abstract

How are the issues of racism, antiracism and the antiracism policy development process understood and discussed at the school board level? What is the relationship between antiracism policy makers' personal experiences of racism and their involvement in the antiracism policy process? How do antiracism policy makers' understandings of racism and antiracism affect their participation in the antiracism policy process? This case study uses a humanistic and narrative mode of inquiry to examine the preceding questions. This particular mode of inquiry emphasizes (a) the role of the individual in the organization and in the antiracism policy making process, in particular, (b) how the individual affects the way in which organizations work; (c) and the existence of contested meanings and understandings of how to define the theoretical aspects of antiracism approaches and the idea of race and racialization as lived experience.

Seven individuals who participated in the Ontario School Board (OSB) antiracism policy process were interviewed and asked to discuss their personal understandings of racism, antiracism and the antiracism policy development process. Findings indicate that (a) there are underlying racialized assumptions that play a formative role in the OSB antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development process, (b) participation in the policy process is often motivated by the participant's personal experiences and interests, (c) and that organizational structures may simultaneously foster and hinder the creation and subsequent enactment of antiracism policy. Analyzing participant understandings of racism, antiracism, and the antiracism policy development process raises awareness of the complex nature of social, organizational and to a lesser extent, micro- and macro-political conditions that are central to antiracism policy development and implementation.

Date: Tuesday July 19, 2005
Time: 1:30pm
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Investigating an antiracism policy: The case of an Ontario school board

"Organizations do not think, act, have goals or make decisions – people do." (Greenfield, 1993)

Chapter 1: Introduction

For some time, antiracism/educational equity policies have been one of the key instruments for introducing antiracism in schools, yet, relatively little attention has been given to how these policies were developed, and how people's understandings of racism and related issues affected their participation in the policy development process (Fisher & Echols, 1989; Foster, 1990; Troyna, 1993; Wideen & Barnard, 1999). This document recounts my efforts to investigate the policy development process of the antiracism and equity policies in one Ontario school board.

1.1 - The requirement for flexibility in the research process

During the course work phase of my Master of Arts in Education studies, Dr. Janice Ahola-Sidaway (personal communication, September 11, 2002), my professor of qualitative research impressed upon her students that 'research, particularly qualitative research can be a messy business'. I always liked that phrase, possibly because of the humour, honesty and poignancy with which it was said, and in embarking upon and conducting this research study I too have come to experience 'research as a messy business'.

When conducting qualitative research, flexibility, adaptability and patience are essential to the entire endeavour. Flexibility and adaptability may be required for those times when you need to reformulate certain aspects of your study and the need for patience comes into play when your work is dependent upon eliciting participation from a sample pool. In the end it was my understanding that research can be a 'messy process' and my willingness to be patient proved critical to my surviving the 'messy' phases of this study.

I had planned to conduct the study using a purposeful sample of the individuals who were involved in developing the original policy document. I began by soliciting participants who represented different levels of the school board policy development process including board trustees, school administrators, teachers and community group members. However, despite my repeated efforts to secure the participation of senior board administrators, obtaining participants from the different levels of the Ontario School Board¹ was not to be. For the most part, the individuals contacted said that they had not been involved in the initial development of the “Peters Policy”² and therefore felt that there was little for them to contribute. As a result of these initial refusals, I chose to redefine the sample composition because I felt that it would still be possible to ask some of the same research questions of others. So, instead of finding study participants who represented various levels of the school board, participants were identified and contacted through a combination of purposive and snowball sample techniques (Frankel & Wallen, 2002). As a result of this revised sampling procedure, I was able to garner the participation of seven individuals who were and/or are currently involved in developing and implementing the OSB Peters Policy.

My intention for this case study was to trace the origins of an Ontario school board antiracism and ethnocultural policy. I set out to investigate the policy development process in an effort to examine the roles people play and some of the choices they make when initiating and developing policy, and to understand the relationship between knowledge of antiracism and the policy-making process. However, as the study progressed, I found that my area of interest shifted. Instead of focusing on tracing the policy life cycle and the roles that people played, I found myself becoming more interested in examining how the notion of

¹ A pseudonym that refers to the Ontario school board that serves as the basis for this case study

² A pseudonym that refers to the antiracism policy document that was created by the OSB. I use this pseudonym to maintain confidentiality.

race, racism and educational equity is discussed, understood and negotiated during the school board antiracism policy development and implementation process. In the next section I present an overview of the research questions that inform the study.

1.2 - Research Purpose and Question(s)

School boards use the policy-making process as a way to (1) address societal needs and demands; (2) set directions for the school system; and (3) set guidelines that direct how the system functions (Downey, 1988; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Lipman, 2002). But, who constitutes the board and what is its function? Might one understand the board as a group of individuals brought together for the purpose of developing approaches to goals, values and strategies and, if possible, end products like guidelines and documents?

Although understanding the policy-making process and the role of the individual in it may be important, various scholars have noted that only a modest amount of the educational administration literature has been devoted to examining the treatment of diversity issues from a policy development perspective (Arthur, 1997; Fullan, 1982; Levin & Riffel, 1994). For example, from an antiracism perspective, Arthur (1997, p.1) found that studies most often looked at the “implementation and outcome” of bias in curriculum materials developed at the provincial and school board level across Canada.

This study focuses on the development and implementation of a particular Ontario school board’s self-described antiracism policy. Currently, the Ontario school board selected for the study stipulates that central to the Peters Policy are the notions of fostering equitable access and treatments and outcomes regardless of the learner’s racial and/or ethnocultural background. More specifically, the document identifies several areas of importance including: leadership and staff development, school-community partnership,

curriculum, and racial and ethnocultural harassment. As an example of policy objectives, under the heading “Racial and Ethnocultural Harassment” the document states that:

The Board is committed to providing an educational environment and a school system free of racial and ethnocultural harassment and discrimination. No expressions of racial or ethnocultural harassment by staff, students, trustees, parents and visitors, shall be tolerated” (Ontario School Board, 2001, p.1).³

This stated OSB policy objective is rather broad in its focus and general in its expectations. Although, the document identifies the need to eliminate “racial harassment and discrimination”, the document does not identify what, if any penalties exist and will be exacted upon those who fail to adhere to the school board’s policy.

This study commenced with a content analysis of an Ontario school board’s antiracism policy and related documents such as school board minutes. Reviewing the aforementioned documents and papers assisted in presenting the developmental chronology of the policy. In addition, seven board and/or community group members’ were interviewed about their understandings of the origins of the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy from both a chronological and content perspective. Study participants were also asked to discuss their personal understandings of race, racialization and the processes followed to create the Peters Policy. The study was framed by the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between the study participants’ personal experiences of racism and their involvement in the policy development and implementation process?
2. How do the study participants’ understanding of racism and antiracism affect their participation in the policy process?

³ A pseudonym is used in this citation to maintain confidentiality.

3. How do the study participants understand the policy development and implementation process in the OSB? What are the immediate origins of the OSB antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy? What were the perceived roles of key board officials, teachers, trustees and/or community organization members in developing the policy?

By conducting a case study of the origins of the OSB policy and of the understandings of race and antiracism held by individuals who elected to participate in the policy development process, I wanted to explore the factors that may have helped and/or hindered the development of more profound antiracist and ethnocultural equity policies. Investigation of these issues is important for a number of reasons: (1) it provides a first hand account of what is involved in developing antiracist policy documents for the education system; (2) it investigates the roles of various participants in the process; (3) it asks these participants to reflect upon the process used in policy development; (4) it examines the role of knowledge development in subsequent doing and thinking related to antiracism and ethnocultural equity issues; and (5) it can provide a narrative of participant roles and understandings for policy developers, educators, antiracism policy advocates and students of the policy development process. The usefulness of providing such a narrative to diverse audiences rests in the potential for generating further research on the affect that the individual has on the policy development process in general and upon antiracist education policy development initiatives in particular.

Overall, this study aimed to provide insight into key participants' expressed thoughts and attitudes and to lift the veil on some of the machinations involved in antiracist policy development in one Ontario school board. Furthermore, examining the manner in which

participant issues and interests may inform the processes employed to create and implement an antiracism policy may prove helpful in understanding the extent to which the policy developed has a significant effect on the lives of its intended audience which includes administrators, teachers and, in particular, students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Some commentators have suggested that antiracism policies developed and implemented at the school level have been superficial and inadequate (Dei, 2003; Brathwaite, 2003). Provincially mandated policy has weakened over time and has become “virtually an empty shell in most school boards” (Dei & Wane, 2003, p.1). According to Dei (2003) and Lipman (2003) the creation of policies intended to address diversity issues has generally been aimed at creating more inclusive school environments that take into account constituent needs. However, if as noted by Dei (2003), Lipman (2003) and Brathwaite (2003), inclusive outcomes are not being met then one is left to wonder whether the fault may lie with the policy and its development and subsequent implementation.

Since policy development is considered a precursor to the implementation phase (Hill & Hupe, 2002) then discussion of the development process itself serves as a sensible starting point for this investigation. Levin and Riffel (1994) have noted that issues of diversity and school responses to it are central to the debate on educational policy and practice. They also state that not much educational administration literature has been devoted to examining the treatment of diversity issues from a policy development perspective. Instead the literature that does exist appears to assume that “the phenomenon is a simple one and that relatively straight forward solutions are available” (Levin & Riffel, 1994, p.1). Understanding more about who is involved in the initial stages of the policy development process, how decisions are made, who gets heard and not heard are all factors that will likely impact the type of policy that is created and the efficacy of said policy.

The four types of literature that are critical to this study of the origins of a school board antiracism policy are educational administration and the role of the individual in the

organization, policy analysis, antiracism, and research related to the antiracism policy formulation process. The first type of literature that is addressed in this section pertains to educational administration, but more specifically to the role of the individual in the administrative setting. Key to this area is presentation of thoughts on the roles that people play in educational administration. The second section looks at the issue of policy analysis and how those who investigate the issue discuss the process of developing policy. The third section on antiracism focuses on providing an understanding of how issues of race, racism and racialization are defined and discussed. This section also considers how these definitions and discussion have guided current understandings of antiracism in general and antiracism approaches in education in particular. Also included in this chapter is a review of some of the research that has been conducted in the area of policy development as it specifically relates to the introduction of antiracism approaches in educational settings.

2.1 - Understanding Organizations

An organization is not an entity unto itself devoid of varied internal and external demands, challenges and affiliations. "Organizations are not monoliths" (Weick, 2001, p.28). An organization is in fact comprised of individuals, and organizational policies are an expression of how people think they should relate to each other and how the organization should relate to the world (Greenfield & Ribbens, 1993). An additional organizational component to consider is the hierarchical power structures that are often found in organizations. The existence of organizational hierarchies in which individuals have varying degrees of decision making powers and resources has the potential to affect how policies are developed, legitimized and enacted.

If individuals within the organization develop policies, then it seems appropriate to query how their values, beliefs and interests are presented or omitted in the organizational setting. Raising questions about the role of individual values in policy development may serve as a precursor for critically examining (a) the extent to which individual interests may or may not affect the procedural directions taken in creating a particular policy and (b) whose voices are 'included' or excluded from the policy development, monitoring and evaluation process. Assuming the existence of variability in organizational forms, values and effects acknowledges the possibility that individual interests and motivations may affect policy implementation and evaluation strategies, as well as the achievement of originally intended outcomes of a given policy initiative.

Prevailing tenets in the study of administration include the notion that (a) there is a body of knowledge that clearly demonstrates how individuals and the organization can be unified in terms of process and purpose; (b) organizations tend to think of planning as a good thing, spending lots of time planning, and basing assessment of actions on how they fit within the plans; and (c) individuals who gain the appropriate knowledge will be equipped to act and "make better organizations" that can serve the needs of all stakeholders and meet broader social needs as well (Stone, 1997, Weick, 1993). The assumption is that human actions can be broken down to a set of definable, "natural laws" that are discoverable and applicable to the benefit of humankind (Greenfield, 1981).

Greenfield (1993) along with Leithwood and Duke (1999) has written on positivist and empiricist epistemologies and their impact on the field of educational administration and leadership. Greenfield (1981) claims that such a science does not account for the role of values, "the reason for the theory's incapacity in the face of values lies in the positivistic

separation of facts and values (p.9)". The theory ignores "lived experiences", that is, the experiential world of the educational administrator. Essentially Greenfield (1993), as well as Leithwood and Duke (1999) have stated that those who subscribe to alternative and more humanistic methodological predispositions believe; (1) that individual values, feelings, goals, knowledge and past experiences shape the meanings attributed to events; (2) administrative decision-making is inherently value-laden; (3) knowledge is personally constructed; and (4) what is considered scientific, objective knowledge within the organization is more accurately characterized as socially shaped and shared knowledge.

Weick (1993) introduces an additional dimension to understanding how organizations function. He has stated that by focusing too much on the idea of organizations as rational, linear, and objective entities, practitioners as well as researchers may have overlooked potentially positive attributes or virtues of "less rationalized and less tightly related clusters of events (Weick, 1993, p. 44)" found in organizational settings. In his view educational organizations are "loosely coupled systems" and his notion of loosely coupled systems refers to (a) richly connected networks where influence is slow to spread or weak while spreading, (b) lack of coordination, slow coordination, coordination that is weak as you go through the system, (c) planned unresponsiveness, (d) infrequent inspection of activities within the system, (e) delegation of discretion, and (f) absence of linkages that should be present based on a theory, for example feedback linkage between outcome and inputs is often non-existent (Weick, 1993, p. 47). As defined by Weick (1993), the loosely coupled systems model allows one to examine and question traditional and more bureaucratic ways of thinking about how organizations function. The loosely coupled

systems model refrains from assuming that work within the organization is driven primarily by the development of strategies and plans.

Greenfield (1993) and Leithwood and Duke's (1999) more humanistic understanding of how decisions are made and knowledge constructed in organizations, combined with Weick's (1993) concept of loosely coupled systems suggests that the existence of ambiguity is commonplace in educational organizations. In turn, the existence of ambiguity in organizational forms and effects suggests that there is an increased need for organizational members to create or negotiate an environment that people can live with (Weick, 1993).

2.2 - Analyzing Policy

According to Stone (1997), the fields of public policy and policy analysis are dominated by the notion of rational analysis. This approach assumes that a process that involves humans, personalities, agendas, interests and allegiances can be broken down into a clearly linear and objective process. In direct contrast to the prevailing view, some authors and researchers have claimed that the linear model is not a valid one (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Stone, 1997). These researchers propose a kind of analysis that involves people living in a web of interdependencies, loyalties and associations – where public interests and individual interests are both important (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Stone, 1997). Policy decisions are made by people in particular roles and settings, using particular procedures and addressing particular audiences (Downey, 1988; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Hill & Hupe, 2002).

Studying organizations is made all the more difficult because of the need to understand “human intention and meaning” (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p.92) within organizational settings.

People can act purposefully and yet bring about consequences that are wholly unintended for themselves and others...in living we believe, assert self, establish order around us, dominate others or are dominated by them.

(Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p.92)

Educational organizations have been faced with the need to manage change. Recently the norm has been to require the implementation of multiple changes over shorter periods of time (Gulka, 1993; Levin & Riffel, 1994; Lipman, 2003). The number of change initiatives has often resulted in competition for these changes to be implemented alongside more routine activities. For example, the Ontario provincial government has called for the introduction of new curriculum at the elementary and secondary level, a new grade reporting system, as well as mandatory literacy testing across all school boards (Molinaro & Drake, 1998; Shantz, 2002). In addition, there have also been cuts to special education and English as a Second Language programs and services (Molinaro & Drake, 1998; Shantz, 2002).

In terms of the activities that have been researched, educational leaders, researchers and policymakers have often opted to pay greater attention to organizational constructs like teacher evaluation, learning outcomes and test performance (Lipman, 2002; Smrekar & Mawhinney, 1999) than to socio-cultural diversity. For example, analysts interested in the policy research paradigm have investigated whether certain policies have led to an increase in ineffective instruction practices among teachers. Similarly, analysts have sought to understand whether the effectiveness of various policy initiatives is lessened due to a lack of necessary human and capital resources and time (Gulka, 1993). Missing from the literature on the policy-making process are investigations that centre on the role of the individual in the policy development process (Stone, 1997).

The rationalist, linear perspective on policy making approaches change initiatives from the standpoint that these initiatives can be clearly defined, and linear and logical steps can be taken to achieve the outcomes associated with a particular change initiative (Finch, 1986; Rist, 1994). The participants involved in the policy process are assigned clear roles and will “choose between well-defined alternatives after weighing evidence about the outcome of each” (Finch, 1986, p.150). Traditionally this rational, linear approach to the policy development process has considered the process to be “discrete and defined, with a specific group of participants involved in its creation over a set period of time. The decisions made by the policy maker were considered a result of a thorough analysis of existing alternatives” (Rist, 1995, p.546). According to Rist (1994, p. 547) “if the policy direction is sufficiently explicit, then the necessary information relevant to the development of the policy can be collected...and the policy actions can be deliberate, directed, and successful”. In contrast, the incrementalist approach to policy making acknowledges that there are likely to be a number of input points, individuals and groups involved in the policy process (Lindblom, 1986). Additionally, given the often-fragmented nature of authority in most organizations, the possibility of realizing a sequential and clearly defined model of decision making in the policy development process is at the very best, minimal.

The situation within educational settings is that there may be a core group of individuals and organizations involved in the policy development and implementation process. These individuals and organizations may share relationships and linkages, but they may be motivated by competing values and goals (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). Despite the organizational interdependencies that may exist, individual values, beliefs and understandings may conflict with stated organization goals. Furthermore, questions of habit,

uncritical practice, inertia, and lack of requisite knowledge may hamper the degree to which an individual acts, or fails to act, in response to organizational initiatives.

In the case of educational organizations, “many changes that schools are expected to implement arise from external sources, usually provincial departments of education” (Mackay as cited in Gulka, 1993, p.3). According to Gulka (1993), bureaucratic and hierarchical arrangements of educational organizations and school divisions dictate that resources, power and support structures be delegated and allocated by school boards. Oftentimes educational organizations and school divisions also cite the need to include members of the community in the policy development process. The assumption is that the policy development process is best served by including individuals who are most likely to be affected by the suggested outcomes and anticipated change (Fullan, 1982; Sarason, 1982).

Successful and long lasting change of policy development and implementation requires system-wide change. This system-wide structure involves what Gulka (1993) calls “layers of actors that are nested in other societal, environmental contexts and layers. There are distinct subcultures within and without each group (p.6).” Therefore, understanding the policy development process necessitates examination of the key participants, the institutional context and historical and local setting(s) and culture(s).

2.3 - Antiracism in Educational Settings

Before embarking upon a discussion of antiracism approaches in educational settings, it is necessary to provide some background on current conceptions of race and racism and its role in society. Inclusion of information on how race, racism and racialization are discussed in the literature is important because it highlights some beliefs and debates that may frame the development of antiracism approaches. Additionally, including literature

regarding discussions of race, racism and racialization facilitates discussion of whether the policy does in fact qualify as an antiracism policy.

To begin, use of terms like race, racism and racialization can oftentimes prove troublesome because *use* of words like race and racism can be part of a consciousness-raising exercise or a way to silence particular individuals and groups (Satzewich, 1998, p.12). The *idea* of race emerged as a result of historically driven events and practices of categorization. Race is a “material and ideological signification of difference” (Dei, 1998, p.303) that shifts depending upon history and social and political contexts (Brown, Jr., 1998; Diamond, 1994; Miles, 1989). “There is no scientific justification for using the term race to create a discrete hierarchy of races as distinguished by phenotypical features such as skin colour” (Miles, 1989, p.70).

However, the practice of race categorization has continued to be reproduced and applied by all sides of the discourse on race and racism (Miles, 1989; Nelson & Nelson, 2004). This practice of race categorization came to be seen as

“...natural, long-standing divisions of the human species, evolving at different rates biologically. During the early 20th century these beliefs and practices of categorization were generally supported by European and North American science and their support helped in naturalizing and legitimizing the *idea* of race” (Satzewich, 1998, p.2).

More recently scientists have begun to refute the notion of race as based in biology (Diamond, 1994; Miles, 1989; Mukhopadhyay & Henze, 2003). According to Satzewich (1998) this shift in perspective means that they are rejecting at least three fundamental premises of racial ideology are being rejected, including the (a) subspecies concept which is

often characterized by the existence of distinct lines of evolution among human beings; (b) the divisibility of humans into scientifically valid biological groupings, and (c) the existence of a link between the criteria used in racial categorization (racialization) and social, cultural and political status.

As previously noted, despite the lack of credible biological or scientific foundation that race-based categorization is accurate, race *does* remain important as a socially constructed category (Mukhopadhyay & Henze, 2003; Nelson & Nelson, 2004). In fact, the practice of racialization or the process through which race-based designations are produced and reproduced by assigning phenotypical and/or cultural characteristics to human beings can and does have political and ideological implications in society. For example, institutional policies and practices that marginalize and exclude particular groups “may involve political repression, harassment, unequal access and treatment and legislation” (Troyna, 1993, p.14).

The notion of race as socially constructed notwithstanding, debate still exists regarding race, racism and racialization (Henry & Tator, 2000; Rizvi, 1993). For example, according to Satzewich (1998) some detractors of the view of race as a socially constructed idea not based on a biological/scientific foundation claim that emphasizing the socially constructed nature of race denies the reality of racism. “Race has real consequences for all concerned because those with power have chosen to view race as real” (Allahan, 1998, p.351), therefore its continued use as an analytical category is appropriate. Meanwhile, Synott and Howes (1998, p.155) have stated that “...by talking about race in terms of colour” the institutionalization of “biological reductionism” may become further entrenched if society persists in linking colour and race. “Dismantling the myth of race as biology

means that we must now shift our focus to analyzing the social, economic, political and historical conditions that breed and serve to perpetuate social inequality” (Mukhopadhyay & Henze, 2003, p. 675).

Although race has no biological basis, racisms are used to identify and marginalize or exclude certain members of the population (Miles & Torres, 1998). The practice of racism involves erecting socially constituted categories and boundaries. According to Hall (1998), this “binary system of representation” signifies who is to belong and who is to remain “the other”. Oftentimes the categorization of “the other” involves assigning “negative meanings,” in turn “said meanings relegate people to subordinate positions within a system of hierarchical social rankings” based on race or the perception of race (Allahan, 1998, p.337). These race-based classifications are often the foundation for determining who is to be included or excluded from becoming full participants in the social economy, which in turn raises questions about power distribution and the potential for members of certain groups to fail or succeed (Allahan, 1998; Foster, 1990; Rizvi, 1993).

Along similar lines, Dei (1998) and others (Diamond, 1994; Miles, 1989; Troyna, 1993) argue that despite the lack of scientific rationale, the socially constructed nature of race-based categorization *does* have a significant impact and power socially through one’s lived experience and how others recognize an individual. “Race based categorization is often directly linked to how rewards, privileges, penalties and punishment are distributed” (Dei, 1998, p.303) and “...through labelling some are consigned to supposedly inferior races, thereby raising questions of power and legitimacy” (Allahan, 1998, p.335). Dei (1994) notes that although race is a heavily contested notion, it would be inappropriate to deny the extent to which it impacts particular groups and individuals in today’s highly

racialized society. An example of the personal impact of racism and racialization in education is the Dei, Mazzuca, McIssac and Zine (1997) study on Black student performance in Toronto schools. The authors (Dei et al., 1997) argue that race has played a significant role in black student disengagement and drop out rates. Based on interviews conducted with high school students and drop outs, the authors found students felt that schools were either unable or unwilling to engage these students and connect the education given to the realities of their daily lives. This lack of engagement and connection resulted in Black students “not seeing themselves or their interests represented” which in turn led students to “develop a fatalistic attitude about themselves, their education, and their future” (Dei et al., 1997, p.69).

As demonstrated in the Dei et al. (1997) study and also noted by Henry and Tator (2000), education can play a role in the production and reproduction of race-based bias and inequity, in that racism can manifest itself in numerous ways in the educational system including: (a) racist ideology and differential treatment; (b) practice of marginalizing certain histories, experiences and contributions; (c) the school’s response toward racism; and (d) conscious and unthought-of racialized discourses that occur within all levels of education and the unwillingness of these institutions to address the issue of racism. All of these points negatively impact student academic performance and self-perception among the visible/ethnic minority student population (Dei et al., 1997; Henry & Tator, 2000). The education system has maintained a “monocultural” perspective in terms of its teacher training and practice, content, and administrative practices such as policy formation, and human resources (e.g. hiring and promotions). The sense of disempowerment that is felt by some students is due in part to the monocultural perspective, long-term interactions with

educators and educational system, and the degree to which their communities and families (parents) are empowered in their interactions with these institutions (Henry & Tator, 2000; McCarthy, 1994; Troyna, 1993).

Attempts to redress bias, inequity and minority student underachievement in education have centred on the introduction of multicultural policies and education in schools (McCarthy, 1994). Multicultural education has focused more on creating learning environments that respect the “histories, traditions, and lifestyles of diverse cultures” (Henry & Tator, 2000, p.249). In her article on the need for the participation of adult role models in the education experiences of ethnically and linguistically diverse students, Onyekwuluje (2000) defines multicultural education as “a new way of educating the young and old about difference...a theory that can incorporate the strengths, potentials and the diverse/multicultural realities of all people regardless of age, race, class, and gender” (p.67). Furthermore, “equality of opportunity in education” is said to be an essential aspect of multicultural education (Foster, 1990, p.3).

In addition to placing emphasis on “equality” as found in multicultural education, antiracist education has also sought to address “institutional and systemic” racism from a more “theoretical and practical approach” (Henry & Tator, 2000, p.250-251). “Antiracism begins with a commitment to fighting racism in the world today...and requires one to acknowledge the existence of racisms” (Stanley, 2001, p.81). A central principle of antiracist education is “a notion of how we might use education to work toward the realization of a non-racist society” (Foster, 1990, p.1). Antiracism asks educators to question racialized practices in schools. It is expected that educators will question existing

notions of what constitutes “valid and legitimate knowledge” and “how such knowledge should be produced and distributed” (Dei, 1998, p.307).

Also key to antiracist education is the notion that there is a need to address issues of race based discrimination and the importance of developing new, more critical teaching methodologies and materials (Lee, 1994). The aim is to help deal equitably with cultural and racial differences, to understand past and current power structures and relations, and to develop an understanding of the histories of traditionally silenced and marginalized groups. A goal of antiracist education is to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to address issues of discrimination and inequality, and to find ways of building an equal society for all.

The strategies employed by educators should be geared towards “transformation” and this “educational transformation requires a disruption of standard knowledge, classroom practices and instruction materials” (Dei, 1998, p.310). These practices and materials should not be over-simplified caricatures that are based on a homogenous and static conceptualization of what characteristics and practices constitute a particular group or community. Instead educator strategies regarding classroom practices and instruction materials should consider the issues of attitude formation and the interplay of social relationships (Foster, 1990).

Antiracist education seeks to challenge existing structural and organizational frameworks, therefore, it is crucial to also have administrative support for proposed policy initiatives (Lee, 1994). “Antiracist education challenges the total school environment to understand the ways in which racism is manifested in schools and society” (Grant &

Ladson-Billings, 1997, p.20) and stresses the need for integration of antiracist concepts and practices at all levels within the education system.

According to Foster (1990), the school environment should offer additional resources in the forms of educational programs and services to the children of traditionally disadvantaged groups. These resources are important mechanisms for achieving equality of educational opportunity. Additionally, Foster (1990, p.4) states that although the education system may provide students with more “universalistic values of society”, the “maintenance of teaching of the cultural forms of the child’s home community” need not be overlooked. Antiracist educators are encouraged to view the community as a useful resource. As “experts on their own experiences” (Wright & Allingham, 1994, p. 6), all ethnocultural communities are encouraged to play a role in the antiracism policy development and eventual implementation process (The Doris Marshall Institute, 1994).

Action on education system issues and policy development occurs at several levels, one of which is the school board level. Although action may occur at the school board level, analysis of the action taken, such as in the case of an antiracist policy should not cease there because “...the organization does not exist...outside of the humans who populate it” (Lincoln, 1990, p.280). The institution does not act in and of itself – individuals come together to make the institution - therefore the individual’s understanding of the issues, actions and the outcomes of these actions are worthy of investigation. More specifically, the wide range of views concerning race and its importance from a social, political and lived perspective raises questions of how the notion of race is discussed, perceived, negotiated and defined at the school board level. These questions guide the inquiry that follows.

2.4 – Research on antiracism policies in educational settings

Antiracism policies in educational settings emerge within a socio-political context and are typically framed within the context of government policies (Troyna, 1993; Fisher & Echols, 1988; Lipman, 2002). They are therefore subject to internal and external forces (Troyna, 1993, Fisher & Echols, 1988, Lipman, 2002). As noted in Troyna's (1993, p.47) study of the British Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) antiracism policies, "policies created operationalize particular interpretations of cultural pluralism in response to locally perceived and interpreted problems through which racial issues impinged on local politics and educational institutions" (p.47). Troyna further adds that "ILEAs policy didn't stem from pedagogical foresight nor was it representative of policy maker's beliefs in the efficacy of multiculturalism as an ideal format for educational provision. It was a coping strategy that was provoked by compelling political and social concerns (p.54)". Ultimately, Troyna (1993) did raise questions about the extent to which political and social concerns dictated the creation of the policy.

Deconstruction of the enshrined reality and the explicated foundational values of a policy is necessary because it allows for the investigation and potential identification of whose reality and ideal society is being packaged and presented (Troyna, 1993). From a conceptual standpoint, understanding more about whose version of an ideal society is represented and the degree to which ambiguity exists in the policy, may help counter the degree to which "the policy is susceptible to misinterpretation, appropriation and subversion by those indifferent or opposed to the concern" (Troyna, 1993, p.37).

One Canadian study that examines a school board race relations policy was conducted by Fisher and Echols (1988) for the Vancouver School Board (VSB). The

evaluation “focused on the implementation of the VSB’s Race Relations Policy since its adoption in 1982...its intent was to determine the effect of the program on schools throughout the District” (Fisher & Echols, 1988, p.2). The researchers found that at the administration level, 40% of those surveyed thought that the policy was positive in impact, 26.6% felt it made no difference and 31.5% were uncertain (Fisher & Echols, p.166). Of the teachers responding, to the survey 25% thought the impact was positive, 29.9% saw no difference and 44.8% selected the *did not know* option (Fisher & Echols, p.167). In discussing their findings, Fisher and Echols (1988, p.185) noted that concerns were raised “over the lack of implementation of the policy and the program”, highlighting the need for proper implementation, monitoring, reviews and enforcement. However, the issues of the initial policy development phase and the roles of individual participants were not addressed.

In his study of one British school’s efforts to introduce multicultural and antiracist education, Foster (1990) does provide background information on how and why the school formulated an antiracist policy. Foster (1990) states that the development of antiracism policies in British schools was influenced by national antiracism policy initiatives and by members of the teacher community and general public involved in antiracist work. Foster (1990) also acknowledges that the need to create the policy was largely driven by the Local Education Authority (LEA). The study found that the policy provided “a number of general prescriptions for action to counter racism and promote a dynamic multicultural education” (Foster, 1990, p.43) but the statements were thought to be vague and lacking clarity in terms of appropriate implementation and evaluation strategies. Foster (1990) adds that, “one might speculate that this lack of specificity was one reason why the policy statement was accepted by staff without controversy” (p.43).

Although the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training antiracism policy formally cited the need for school boards to “develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity, as well as a plan for implementing its policy” (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993, p.46), no review has been conducted on the impact of the Ontario antiracism policies developed at the school board level. Studies have been conducted that have focused on the formal evaluation of teachers (Burger & Bumbarger, 1991), the nature, implementation and outcome of policies aimed at addressing racial and cultural bias in curriculum materials (Arthur, 1997, p.1), and the manner in which antiracism “policies exacerbate existing race and class inequalities and create new ones” (Lipman, 2002, p.380).

In the Lipman (2002, p.379) research study, the assumption was made that policies calling for “high stakes testing and accountability policies” in Chicago elementary schools further “promote unequal educational opportunities and experiences” among groups that have been traditionally marginalized. Furthermore, the author argues that these policies are in fact part of a “cultural politics” that is aimed at controlling and regulating these individuals. This “cultural politics” refers to the manner in which policy texts help “organize consciousness around shared understandings of educational issues and of specific social groups” (Lipman, 2002, p.382). The “shared understandings” that are referred to by Lipman (2002) are manifested in the way that education reflects the prevailing system of social relations that frames what is thought and said, while silencing or excluding the voices of some social groups.

The Lipman study (2002) was geared to researching the “relationships between school level meanings and district wide effects of policy...and political, economic and cultural contexts” (p.380). However, the study looked at the issue of school policies within

the context of restructuring the Chicago economy in order to present the image of a 'global city' and not one based on building the equitable system that is espoused in the reform policies.

During the literature review it became apparent that studies looking at the policy development process itself were absent. Also missing from the literature were significant reviews of studies that trace the emergence of race relations or antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies at the school board level. Research by Hull and Guthrie (1993), McDonnell & Elmore (1987) and Elmore and McLaughlin (1988) has attempted to demonstrate to policymakers such as legislators and school board members how they can influence schools, how externally derived policies can affect school operations, and how internal school values and structures can limit policy efficiency and efficacy. However, a minimal amount of attention is given to examining how ideas and strategies emerge in the early stages of policy development or who participates in the process and how participants function in their roles as teachers, principals or school board members.

To date, policy researchers have relied more heavily upon a human science framework that is closely linked to the natural scientific framework (Greenfield, 1993). The research that has been conducted on policy development has relied heavily on "if" and "then" statements. For example, in considering the policy development process, it may be assumed that if an issue (e.g. antiracism) is identified and defined, then alternatives will be defined and classified, and the policy process will culminate with the selection of the best alternative. According to Aoki, (1981) this reliance on "if" and "then" statements is a result of relying and borrowing from a behavioural science orientation that reduces "beings as humans into beings as things" and uses approaches that simply reduce "administration to

technical problems and administrators and those administered to technicians” (p.38). The differences that exist among individuals, from a personality and experiential perspective, do not lend themselves well to the manipulation that is required when using a behavioural science approach to educational research. Diagrams and models may be created that show how administrators work but they cannot account for the “values, philosophy, conflict, and the hidden injuries of school” (Greenfield, 1981, p.12).

Greenfield calls for an administrative theory that is based in administrative practice. The knowledge base comes in part, from taking into consideration the realities of those who possess and wield power in the educational setting *and* those who are recipients of the decisions made by those with power. According to Aoki (1981), Greenfield further highlights the need to “move away from the general and more specific focus as a place to begin one’s inquiry, to one that begins by looking at a unique event and its context, to the intersubjective world of daily life” (p.39). Thus what must be studied is human interaction and *meaning in context*, which for students of educational administration is the administrative milieu (Chapman, Sackney & Aspin, 1999).

Overall, the alternative model advocated by Greenfield suggests employing a more humanistic and narrative oriented approach to studying educational organizations. This humanistic and narrative oriented form of inquiry places greater emphasis on the specific as opposed to the general and considers the importance of “the existential realities experienced by those who wield power in schools and by those who suffer its application” (Greenfield, 1981, p.14). Important aspects of this study are the existential realities of the individual(s) involved in creating an antiracism policy. This humanistic and narrative oriented model provides an opportunity to raise questions about the ease with which antiracism policy

development may unfold. This approach emphasizes the degree to which the presence of individual values and goals can describe policy development as a more complex endeavour that necessitates negotiation, contestation and compromise (Rezai-Rashti, 2003).

2.4 - Race and racialization as lived experience

A review of the literature has provided an initial understanding of the debates and issues associated with defining antiracist policy. However, equally important to understanding the more theoretical aspects of antiracist pedagogy is the need to examine how individuals on a daily basis may live out the theoretical conceptions of race and racialization. The following section of the text provides a brief review of literature that has focused on the ways in which the concepts of race and racializations have played out in educational settings. The review of literature is not limited solely at presenting the experiences of individuals and/or traditionally marginalized groups; some of the issues that affect school programs aimed at assisting traditionally marginalized groups are also presented. For example, the impact of government legislation and school board practices are discussed in this section of the literature review.

Although the process of racialization has been identified as ideological in nature, it should not be limited solely to the realm of ideas (Connelly, 2000; Miles, 1989). In his ethnographic study examining the peer relationships and the significance of 'race' among 5 and 6 year-old south Asian females in an ethnically diverse, inner city elementary school in England, Connelly (2000, p. 503) elaborates on this point by stating,

[T]here is a complex dialectical relationship between ideas and practices such that the signification of certain groups at any particular period will not only be grounded in the specific social relations that exist but will also come to inform and shape the

development of future social relations, institutions and processes....all those beliefs, behaviours, practices and processes that contribute, either directly or indirectly, to the racialization of certain groups can be designated as racist....It is not just overt racist attitudes and discriminatory and exclusionary practices that constitute racism, but all of the more subtle ideas and processes, however indirect and unintentional, that tend to maintain and reproduce the racialization of the individual. (p.503)

The study cited above identifies how much of the ideological discussions that surround the issue of race and racialization are not based solely on intellectual discourse. Instead the study demonstrates how certain members of the populace (in this case elementary age south Asian females living in England) are faced with the practical realities of racism and racialization. These realities are manifested in the language used by, and the interactions that occur between these young females and their peers. It is exhibited in how these young south Asian females are made to feel 'different' from their peers based on skin colour, and differing ethnocultural practices. According to the Connelly (2000), designation of 'difference' is often fluid and dependent upon "social relations" that may in turn be tied to geography, culture and class.

Another example of the importance of examining lived experiences pertaining to issues of antiracism in educational settings is presented in a study conducted by Rushton (2001). In his narrative case study, Rushton (2001) chronicles the experience of one pre-service teacher through her internship in an inner-city school. Particular emphasis is placed on presenting the teacher's point of view through inclusion of her oral and written reflections and interviews conducted over the course of her year-long internship. The findings of this study highlight how the pre-service teacher may experience "a sense of the

culture shock” (Rushton, 2001, p.147) upon entering a racially diverse school environment. According to Rushton (2001), the pre-service teacher in his study provided accounts that initially expressed her confidence in what she had learned in her teacher preparation program and her desire to be the ‘best teacher possible’ to her students. However, her initial feelings of confidence in her capabilities and skill sets and the university teacher education program were tested during her internship. At times she questioned her ability to understand and deal appropriately with the life experiences encountered by traditionally marginalized students. In addition, she expressed concerns about the preparation and support received from the university program administrators. In discussing his findings Rushton (2001) states “teaching in inner-city schools can be extremely difficult” (p.157) because part of the ‘reality’ for teachers includes a lack of adequate funding and supplies and concerns regarding violence and racial tensions. As noted by Duffy (2004), many educators currently in the school system and most teacher training programs place little emphasis on questions such as how to teach in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms.

In her article on how Canadian schools handle the needs of newly arrived, culturally and linguistically diverse students, Campey (2002) asks whether certain “Canadian values conflict with their [visible and linguistic minority] families’ religious and traditional values” (pp. 44). The article draws attention to the fact that immigrant parents who lack “formal education themselves may find schools and educators intimidating – particularly if there is a language barrier” (Campey, 2002) and are therefore less likely to participate in and advocate for changes within the education system that may provide additional support to their children.

Recently there has been an increased interest expressed by school boards and some administrators in the need for participation by the parents of culturally and linguistically diverse students in school board activities and initiatives such as school councils and parent-teacher associations. According to Pauline Tam (2004), her discussions with Ottawa school board representatives and community advocacy groups, parental participation is critical because currently there is a lack of cultural and linguistic minority representation on the school boards and this paucity of participation often results in culturally and linguistically diverse students' needs being unmet.

Looking at the issues of levels of participation and antiracism policy development and implementation, Wideen and Barnard (1999) conducted a two-year study that combined policy analysis with interviews with teachers, school district personnel and administration and in class observation of teachers working with ethnoculturally diverse immigrant students. The study (Wideen & Barnard, 1999) was conducted in order to (1) examine the implementation of educational policies in British Columbia aimed at assisting practicing teachers who face increasing "cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity brought about by recent trends in immigration" (pp. 2); and (2) assess the degree to which existing policy serves or fails to serve the needs of ethnoculturally diverse schools and communities. Initially the authors (Wideen & Barnard, 1999) assumed that policies would be of assistance to teachers who were attempting to cope with diversity in the classroom. Instead they concluded that despite the development of multicultural policies at national, provincial and school district levels, there continues to be a lack of funding and resources earmarked for providing the training needed to implement, monitor and support the policies created.

[G]iven the apparent limited commitment of resources to policy implementation and support, one could legitimately ask whether the policy is being developed to deal with ‘the problems deriving from an increasing cultural and linguistic diversity,’ or whether it is merely a form of window dressing which allows members of government to say ‘we have dealt with that problem.’ On this view, policy development might be said to serve a kind of symbolic function...such policy may be worse than no policy at all because it creates the illusion that the problems of systemic racism, discrimination, et al. have been satisfactorily resolved.” (Wideen & Barnard, 1999, p.11)

The preceding excerpt highlights the extent to which school-directed policy development and implementation initiatives and more specifically antiracism policy initiatives require not only the legislative commitment, but also the financial commitment of government representatives and agencies. Without adequate legislative and financial support school directed antiracism policies and programs are unlikely to result in significant institutional changes that benefit students.

In his examination of why a disproportionate number of visible and linguistic minority students continue to fail and drop out of schools, Duffy (2004) points out that although the Ontario provincial government has increased the amount of funds aimed at assisting these students, school boards retain control over how those funds are to be distributed. He adds that funds earmarked for programs like ESL are often re-distributed by school boards to cover other needs (e.g. smaller class sizes) that have been identified as urgent by the government and the general public. Along with low levels of community, parental/guardian and student participation, and concerns about teacher preparedness,

competition for government resources continues to hamper the degree to which the development and implementation of antiracism initiatives are successful in schools.

2.5 – Establishing the foundations for a conceptual framework

As stated earlier in this chapter, much debate exists regarding how racism and antiracism is defined and discussed among researchers and educators (Dei, 1998; Diamond, 1998; Miles & Torres, 1998, Troyna, 1993). For example, some researchers have discussed the idea that race based categorizations have no biological foundations (Diamond, 1994; Miles, 1989), while others have focused on the socio-economic implications associated with racism and social inequality (Mukhopadhyay & Henze, 2003). Also highlighted in the literature is the notion of the organization as a unit comprised of individuals whose varied understandings of a particular issue and whose differing motivations, values and goals have an effect on how work gets done (Greenfield, 1993; Gulka, 1993). Coupled together, the preceding points begin to establish a framework for the examination of the antiracism policy development process. More specifically, this framework takes into account the individual's understandings regarding race and antiracism approaches, and his/her personal motivations for participating in the policy process. This particular framework moves away from looking at policy making as a rational, deliberative and easily definable process and begins to consider the kind of complexity that can emerge during the antiracism policy development process. It is this framework that will be elaborated upon in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Conceptual Framework

When I first began thinking about a conceptual framework for this study, I focused primarily on the ‘traditional’ conceptualization of the organization as rational, objective and linear vs. an ‘alternative’ approach that highlighted the role of the individual in the organization and the resultant ways in which individual perceptions, values and goals can impact organizational practices and procedures. Upon reflection, I find this original framework to be too simplistic and dare I say incomplete in its focus. It is simplistic in the sense that proposing an alternative model that looks primarily at the individual does not necessarily account for the existence of the impact of organizational bureaucracy. My original conceptualization of the alternative model is incomplete because by focusing attention primarily on the individual, I fail to account for how change might occur in a system where the individual is expected to act as part of a collective. The following section is intended to address these shortcomings and to present my revised conceptualization of the alternative model of the policy-making process. Moreover, this alternative model takes into consideration the value conflicts that often exist when discussing issues of race, racism and racialization.

A review of the literature related to policy development and the role of school board and community group representatives alerted me to a number of concepts that offered the potential for providing a more complete understanding of the policy development process. For political and contextual reasons it makes sense to describe various elements that comprise a school system from a perspective that stresses interdependencies and potentially varying goals (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Stone, 1997, Lipman, 2002). As cited in Gulka

(1993), Murphy and Hallinger have argued: “educational organizations can properly be regarded and explained from a systems perspective with a people orientation” (p3).

Various organizational theory and educational administration writers and researchers have posited that organizations and social systems may be described as a triad of cultural, political and technical variables that interrelate (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Stone, 1997). In contrast, many of the theories or frameworks devised by those concerned with the issue of policy development and analysis have chosen to depict the policy-making process in a sequential, logical, hermetic and purposive manner (Downey, 1988; Rist, 1994; Stone, 1997).

Traditional administrative theory relies on the existence of a cycle of action that is based on rational, deliberative, discretionary, and purposive decision-making. In this approach, administrators’ decisions are said to flow from facts and follow a cycle that includes specific, sequential steps or stages: (1) issue definition; (2) situation analysis; (3) identification and classification of alternatives (4) deliberation; and (5) choice (Hill & Hupe, 2002; Bosetti, Landry & Miklos, 1989; Downey, 1988; Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Stone, 1997).

Although the process of developing policy is often discussed in terms of “stages” or “phases” or even “sub-stages”, it is also important to acknowledge that this process ignores the possibility for ambiguity that exists within each step (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Mawhinney, 1995). In setting the framework for their discussion of policy formulation and implementation, Hill and Hupe (2002) provide an overview of their understanding of what is meant by the term policy.

Policy involves behaviour as well as intentions, and inaction as well as action.

Policies have outcomes that may or may not have been foreseen. While policy refers to a purposive course of actions, this does not exclude the possibility that purposes may be defined retrospectively. Policy arises from a process over time, which may involve both intra- and inter-organizational relationships. Public policy involves a key, but not exclusive, role for public agencies. (p4)

The preceding explanation presents the idea of policy as a process that is at times ambiguous and open to the unexpected. Policy is characterized by the impact that context, circumstances and personal, group and organizational influences may exert on the policy-making process. The explanation offered by Hill and Hupe (2002) also sets the stage for understanding how policy content and the resulting impact on the intended audience may be altered subtly or significantly, or may even be negated completely during later stages of the policy process.

Presenting the steps or 'stages' of policy formation has often overlooked the impact of individual and/or group values and goals on the effectiveness of the policy development process and strategies (Greenfield, 1993; Stake, 1994). For example, simply identifying, understanding, defining and addressing an issue like antiracism in schools may vary significantly among key participants in the policy development process. As Greenfield (1993) emphasizes (see the epigraph on p.1), it is the individual that lives and acts, not the organization. It is therefore, at least in part, the experience of individuals that we must seek to understand if we are to capture the policy-making process.

The continuing penchant for thinking about organizations as independent living entities or rational systems discounts the fact that there exists within organizations a certain

complexity, within which humans may act in contradictory or conflicting ways. Additional insight into the task of changing organizations and their practices may be gained by first, understanding and acknowledging “the varieties of reality that individuals see in existing organizations, and secondly, upon their acceptance of new ideas of what can or should be achieved through social action” (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p.16). Therefore, greater attention should be paid to the differences in objectives among the various stakeholders in an organization and we should begin to look at these in relation to differences in power, position, personality/person and access to financial and personnel resources.

More specifically, in the case of antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development it seems appropriate to investigate what events and which actors initially generated action on a particular policy initiative and why. Other points for consideration include the manner in which the policy development process unfolds and the interactions, discussions and possible negotiations that occur among the key participants during the policy development process. This study’s investigation of the origins of antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy allowed for an in-depth, situated examination of how antiracism approaches in education are understood and actually taken into consideration when developing a policy that is directly aimed at addressing issues of oppression, discriminatory practices and ‘race’ in the education system.

Knowledge of the basic facts about a given social situation such as the role of the school board in the development of antiracist and ethnocultural equity policy is important. However, what is also needed is knowledge of how people in the policy development process understand, define and generate strategies for addressing antiracism and ethnocultural equity in schools. Exploring the basic ideas of policy development and the

individual's perceptions and understandings of the process may provide information about strategies, processes and discussions that may help or hinder policy development and our understanding of the policy-making process.

According to Creswell (1998, p.61-62) the case study method allows the researcher to 'study social institutions' and interpret 'the meanings of social life' among its members. The case study perspective is capable of privileging the role of the individual (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993; Stake, 1994). Emphasis can be placed on the individual as one of many who literally constitute an organization. However, emphasizing the importance of the individual does not negate the importance of other factors like social setting and external pressures that may be exerted during the policy development process. The interplay of the individual, the issue under examination, understanding and discussion of race-related issues, and internal and external variables (e.g. predominant social rhetoric, personnel and budgetary constraints) is likely to make for a complex 'reality' at the school board level.

3.1 - 'Reality' in the educational setting as complex

Portraits of some of the individuals who participated in the policy-making process and the way(s) in which their knowledge of race, racialization and antiracism approaches informs policy development may be clustered around three broad sets of questions. Each of these clusters is relevant to policy formulation and within each cluster opportunities exist for the presentation and utilization of case study research.

One set of information needs for this study focused on the historical aspects of developing the OSB Peters Policy. This cluster of questions, revolved around the policy maker(s) being able to (a) define and understand the historical context of the problem at hand and (b) develop an adequate response in the form of a policy document with clear

goals. So questions like who was involved in developing the policy formation phase and what procedures or steps were used in directing the policy development process were asked of the participants.

A second set of questions can be clustered around the actual task of creating the policy. This group of questions considers the conceptual and practical complexities that policy makers may have to address as they attempt to define and develop an adequate solution to a problem or issue.

A third cluster focused on participant understandings of how race, racialization and antiracism are understood, discussed and perceived at the school board level, and the degree to which participant understandings may have impacted the policy development process and the subsequent product. It is this cluster of questions that may help examine the potentially differing interpretations of antiracism and its impact in school policy development. This segment helps in presenting the reader with information on the OSB's community and organizational receptivity to policy and any potential programs as well as the degree of organizational stability and cohesion during policy formulation. Also considered in this section is the impact that individual values and expectations may have had on the process and product and the kinds of negotiation, contestation and compromise that may have been required among individual stakeholders in order to create a policy.

As a result of my ruminations on how best to elucidate my thoughts on the roles, understanding and actions of the individual within the creation of an antiracism policy in an urban school board, I modified my conceptualization of the alternative model to create a more humanistic and narrative-oriented mode of inquiry for examining policy development. The term humanistic emphasizes the role of the individual in developing an antiracism

policy, while the narrative aspect refers to the retrospective and reflective nature of the commentary provided by the individuals who participated in developing the antiracism policy. My conception of the humanistic and narrative oriented mode of inquiry draws from several different sources that touch upon the organization, the role of the individual in the organization and in the policy-making process, in particular: (a) Greenfield's notion of the individual as impacting the way in which organizations work; and, (b) the existence of contested meanings and understandings of how to define the theoretical aspects of antiracism approaches and the idea of race and racialization as lived experience.

Combined or looked at individually, the preceding points make for a more layered and complex appreciation of what qualifies as antiracism approaches and an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy. Debates in antiracism approaches and race and racialization may fall under 'value conflicts' in that individual differences engender negotiation, contestation and discussion.

My conceptualization of the humanistic and narrative-oriented mode of examining the antiracism policy-making process generated for me a number of questions. For example, how does one begin to account for or potentially accommodate the effect that the 'individual' may have on policy development in the school board? Has the policy development process been shown to meet the needs of the target audience, in this case the various stakeholders within the school system? Is it necessary or do we take a leap of faith that the end product (the policy) will satisfy the needs of most, if not all stakeholders? Furthermore, can action regarding the introduction of antiracism approaches in educational settings occur when understandings of what constitutes racism and racialization differ? What then is the impact of the conceptualization of antiracist policy development and

pedagogy and the subsequent implementation and evaluation of said policy and pedagogy, within the context of schools? A number of the aforementioned questions may be outside the scope of this study, but they remain relevant to the investigation of the individual's role in the antiracism policy development process. As such, some of the questions listed above may warrant future investigation.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Having already presented the research purpose and questions and discussed some of the literature related to the core research questions and my conceptual framework, I now turn to the methodology. The methodology section has been organized to provide the reader with an understanding of the tools and procedures that were used to conduct this case study of the OSB antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development process. Also included in this section are discussions about the methods used for examining the participant commentary and the ethical considerations and limitations that are associated with conducting this case study.

4.1 - Interview Objectives

“Case study research shares an intense interest in personal views and circumstances” (Stake, 1994). To conduct a policy case analysis is to attempt to understand the “antecedents of an existing policy - how it came into existence, the conditions of production that gave rise to it and the individuals involved in its creation” (Downey, 1988, p.76). Sommer and Sommer (1997) have stated “the case study focuses on the processes of change with attention to the role that individuals play in promoting or hindering a new program” (p.195). The case study method of inquiry makes it possible to conduct an “embedded analysis” (Creswell, 1998, p.63) that involves the selection of one aspect of the case for presentation. In this instance the case study approach was used in charting the evolution of an Ontario school board’s antiracism and ethnocultural policy. Policies have a history that reflects the traditions and ideologies of a past and to be aware of these traditions and ideologies is to be cognizant of the forces and inhibitors of change.

4.2 - Procedure

Initially, a review of the OSBs Peters Policy was conducted. With the most recent Peters Policy as the starting point, previous incarnations of the document, along with materials cited in the policy were also reviewed. Content analysis of the Peters Policy and related materials (e.g. board minutes and procedures,) was also conducted. Additional materials reviewed included provincial policy statements, guidelines, and memoranda addressing antiracism and ethnocultural equity. The documents reviewed trace the history of the antiracism policy for the OSB.

As a result of reviewing the public documents, the sample selection then occurred in two parts during which a letter asking for participants was forwarded (Appendix 1) via email to senior board officials who were identified in the board minutes as having been present at the ratification of the most recent OSB Peters Policy. Community groups that participated in developing the antiracism policy were also identified and subsequently contacted. These initial participants were asked to provide the names of individuals' at all levels – senior officials, trustees, teachers, and community group members who were involved in the policy development process. Knowledgeable individuals who were not involved in creating the policy were also asked if they could identify individuals who may have been present. Potential participants identified through this process were forwarded a letter asking for their participation in the study (Appendix 1). In cases where no response was received, follow up telephone calls were placed to the person. More detailed information regarding the sample population is provided later in this section.

Interviews were conducted in person with interested participants at a time and location of mutual convenience for the researcher and the study participants. If in person

appointments could not be arranged, the interviews were conducted via telephone. Prior to conducting the interviews all participants were provided a copy of the consent form outlining the research purpose and outlining the terms of participation (Appendix 2). Since this study sought to understand the origins of a policy and required individuals to divulge information that may be construed either negatively or positively, it was important to maintain confidentiality.

Prior to the confirmed interviews and at the start of all interviews, participants were assured that their identities would be treated confidentially through the use of pseudonyms “on all data forms and in any public reference” (Westheimer, 1998, p.153-154). In all cases, participants were informed, verbally and in writing of their right to: (1) refuse responding to questions that they deem inappropriate or too sensitive for inclusion; (2) review, verify and erase material from the interview transcript; (3) withdraw consent at any time during the research process. Interviews lasting up to sixty minutes were conducted with seven participants. Table 1 provides a listing of the individuals who consented to participate in the study and information regarding their respective linkages to the OSB, development of the Peters Policy and/or community based organizations.

Table 1. List of Study Participants

Participants*	Community/School Links				
	Pre-Merger Board	OSB Policy Development Process	OSB Community Advisory Board	OSB Teacher Advisory Committee	Community Association(s)
<i>Mr. Nomos</i> - Principal, former high school teacher	✓	✓	✓		
<i>Mr. Newly</i> – community group manager	✓	✓			✓
<i>Mr. Hyskool</i> – high school teacher				✓	
<i>Ms. Long</i> - former elementary and middle-school teacher	✓	✓	✓	✓	

Participants*	Community/School Links				
	Pre-Merger Board	OSB Policy Development Process	OSB Community Advisory Board	OSB Teacher Advisory Committee	Community Association(s)
<i>Mr. Sollovochey</i> – community advocate	✓	✓	✓		✓
<i>Mr. & Mrs. Couple</i> – community advocates	✓	✓	✓		✓

As indicated in Table 1, the study participants' backgrounds and links to the school board, community and antiracism policy development process varied. Further information and more detailed commentary regarding participant backgrounds, their understanding of racism and antiracism, and their respective role in the Peters Policy development and/or implementation process is provided in Chapter 6. However, Table 2 (below) presents biographical sketches for the study participants that elaborate on each person's school and/or community linkages identified in Table 1 and his/her involvement in the antiracism policy development and/or implementation process.

Table 2. Participant Biographical Sketches

Participant Name	Biographical Sketch
<i>Mr. Nomos</i>	A Principal and former high school teacher with the OSB, Mr. Nomos spent approximately 2 years in the role of lead facilitator during the policy development process at a pre-merger school board. Following the provincial government-mandated amalgamation of several Ontario school boards, Mr. Nomos continued to lead the antiracism policy development process for the newly formed OSB. Mr. Nomos self-identified as a visible/linguistic minority who came to the role of lead facilitator because of his professional and educational interest antiracism education. Mr. Nomos remained in the role of lead facilitator until he assumed a Vice Principal position.
<i>Mr. Newly</i>	As a newly arrived immigrant, with a background in Education, Mr. Newly became involved in the pre-merger school board antiracism policy development process led by Mr. Nomos. Following the school board merger, Mr. Newly continued to participate in the antiracism policy development process that would eventually lead to the creation of the OSB Peters Policy. Mr. Newly self-identified as a visible/linguistic minority who was interested in the topic of antiracism education but also the possibility of developing possible professional contacts.
<i>Mr. Hyskool</i>	As a teenager, Mr. Hyskool moved to Ontario and began attending an OSB middle school. Upon graduation from a B.Ed. program, Mr. Hyskool began and continues to work as a high school teacher within the OSB. His involvement in the Peters Policy development process has been more recent than the other participants and has occurred primarily as a participant in the OSB Teachers Advisory Committee. Mr. Hyskool self-identified as a visible/linguistic minority whose experience as a new Canadian immigrant has contributed significantly to his decision to become involved in antiracism education initiatives.

Participant Name	Biographical Sketch
<i>Ms. Long</i>	A retired elementary and middle school teacher and current OSB Community Advisory Board member, Ms. Long experiences within a pre-merger school board dates back to the 1960s. Prior to the formal call for the creation of an antiracism policy for all school boards Ms. Long had begun to accumulate experience as an antiracism representative for her school and the local teachers' association. Ms. Long describes herself as someone who has generally always been cognizant of her visible/linguistic minority status, however an incident that occurred while she was an elementary school teacher approximately 25 years ago precipitated her decision to take a more active role in terms of introducing antiracism principles into the classroom.
<i>Mr. Sollovochey</i>	A long time community advocate (both within his particular visible/linguistic and broader local community), Mr. Sollovochey participated in the antiracism policy development process prior to the school board mergers and continued his involvement with the OSB policy development process and the OSB Community Advisory Board. During the initial policy development process, Mr. Sollovochey represented a community association, however, subsequent to the merger his involvement in the OSB policy process has occurred primarily under the guise of interested community member. More recently, Mr. Sollovochey has decided to scale back his level of participation in the OSB Community Advisory Board in order to focus on some of his other community advocacy work.
<i>Mr. & Mrs. Couple</i>	Community advocates who have been involved in antiracism and equity initiatives spearheaded at the local, municipal and federal levels. Mr. & Mrs. Couple participation in the antiracism policy development process pre-dates the creation of the OSB. They began participating in the antiracism policy process led by Mr. Nomos as representatives of community organization(s) and concerned parents who had children enrolled in the local schools. Following the creation of the OSB they continued to participate in the board's antiracism policy development process and the OSB community advisory board. Like all of the other study participants, Mr. & Mrs. Couple are members of a visible/linguistic minority community.

Two interviews were conducted via telephone, one of which involved interviewing two⁴ individuals simultaneously, while all others were conducted in person at a location of the participants' choosing. As a result, the location for interviews often varied. As noted earlier in this document, I had intended to include senior board officials as part of the study but despite repeated efforts I was unable to garner their participation in the study.

Questions asked during the interviews sought to "explore their [the interviewees'] understandings of specific events, beliefs, practices, norms and behaviours that have contributed to the formation and alternatively, events, beliefs, practices, norms and behaviours that impeded" (Westheimer, 1998, p.158) the development of a particular

⁴ Further discussion regarding the variation in the interview format is provided in the 'Examining Participant Voices' section.

Ontario school board's policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity. During the interview a form that outlined the primary questions to be asked of all participants was used (Appendix 3). Depending upon participant responses, additional questions were asked in order to obtain further information and clarification of particular responses provided during the interview. Immediately following each interview, the audio taped conversations were transcribed and analysis of the transcriptions was conducted.

Initial analysis of each transcript was conducted with the aim of preparing individual summary sketches of each participant based on the researcher's immediate perceptions. I felt that inclusion of my initial perceptions about each participant would help the reader better understand some of the issues or points that I considered salient as I embarked upon a more formal analysis of the transcript data. A comparative analysis of responses based on the identified core research questions was also conducted. Participant commentary was presented using a narrative format.

4.3 - Instrumentation

A case study allows the researcher to use a range of data collection sources that includes the use of interviews, observations and document research, to name but a few (Creswell, 1998; Frankel & Wallen, 2002). In this case study I used a combination of content analysis of the antiracism policy document and related materials (e.g. board minutes), and interviews with key participants involved in developing the antiracism policy.

Interviews provide an excellent way of exploring complex feelings and attitudes...It allows the researcher to pursue half-answered questions and to encourage more thorough and detailed responses...They can be used to assess beliefs and opinions as well as personality characteristics. They may reveal both

manifest (obvious) and latent (less obvious information conveyed by hesitations and nonverbal responses like avoidance of eye contact, restlessness) contact (Sommer & Sommer, 1997, p.105-107).

The preceding quote illustrates the extent to which interviews can be helpful during case study research. As stated by Fontana and Frey (1994), “interviewing is one of the most common and most powerful ways we use to try to understand our fellow human beings” (p.361). The inherent flexibility of the semi-structured interview facilitated my presentation of a standard grouping of questions that allowed for “exploring complex feelings and attitudes”; the interview format also afforded me the opportunity to request elaboration on points raised during discussion. Integral to the interview process was the ability to further probe phenomena and events “in terms of terms of meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2).

An interview schedule that outlined the day, time, location and main questions to be asked during the interview was prepared and used in all interviews (Appendix 3). The use of this interview schedule allowed for the supplemental recording of notes during the interview. The interview questions were “open-ended and informal in that the questions are designed to stimulate and trigger natural responses” (Fisher & Echols, 1989, p.7). The initial questions asked focused on obtaining background information such as demographics and length of employment or affiliation with current and/or previous boards.

Other questions were organized to elicit responses that relate to the core research questions identified in Chapter 1. The interview questions focused on ascertaining the relationship between participant experiences of racism and their involvement in the policy

process, policy origins, participant roles and responsibilities, and participant understandings of antiracism and equity issues in schools. Specific interview questions included:

- What was your specific role (if any) in the creation of the (a) original and/or current school board policy; (b) pre-merger board policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity?
- To the best of your knowledge what do you think prompted the development of the (original and current) *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Policy*?
- Who were other key individuals (e.g. board trustees, teachers and/or community group representatives etc.) involved in developing the current and/or previous policy? What were their roles in the process?
- How would you define (a) racism; (b) antiracism?
- Based on your experience(s), in what way(s) were racism and ethnocultural inequity present in the school board and/or pre-merger boards? If possible, please provide examples.
- How did you gain your knowledge of antiracist pedagogy and ethnocultural equity issues (e.g. courses, books etc.)?

All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and analyzed for “insights, observations and recurrent themes” (Fisher & Echols, 1989, p.7). Transcribed interviews were forwarded to the respective individuals for their approval. It was understood that in approving a transcript, a participant could edit or change the document, or withdraw from the study. Only approved transcripts were used in the study.

4.4 - Ethical Considerations

Since this study involved speaking with individuals at length, it was imperative to ensure that all study participants were clearly informed of their rights as participants. Therefore, all participants were asked prior to any discussions to provide their written consent by signing a form that outlined their roles and responsibilities and those of the researcher during the study. The consent form also outlined how material provided by the study participants would be used during and after the study. For example, all participants were notified that their names would be removed from all data collection forms and pseudonyms would be provided. Additionally, all data collected from participants would be held in confidence, names would not be used in any publications that describe the research; and throughout the study participants retained the right to withdraw from the study and/or request that data collected about them not be used either in part or in whole.

4.5 - Examining the Peters Policy and Participant Commentary

According to Roman and Apple (1990), the research process often fails to acknowledge and discuss the roles of researcher and researched and the way that power relationships may limit choices, actions and subjectivities. It is also important to note that the interview is not a neutral tool, because it is the interviewer that determines the structure of the interview. "The interview produces situated understanding grounded in specific interactional episodes" (Stake, 1994, p.243). Hence, the *Examining Participant Commentary* section includes a brief discussion addressing my initial perceptions about each participant following their respective interview(s).

Further analysis of the interview data involved reviewing each participant's transcript and preparing a brief summary of his/her statements that relate to the policy

development process, his/her role in the process and his/her understanding of antiracism approaches in education. Upon completion of the individual transcript review, all transcripts were then reviewed a second time in order to identify possible categories for sorting and understanding the data. Throughout the interview phase and subsequent transcript analysis process, I continued to explore and review the research conducted on antiracism, policy analysis and educational administration. Investigating research in these areas provided a foundation for understanding some of the issues, concerns and complexities of antiracism policy formation for the educational system.

As part of the analysis process, a review of the OSB documents was conducted in order to establish a timeline of events and activities associated with developing the OSB's current antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy. Creation of a timeline provides a context for presenting and understanding key dates and events, internal and external to the board that may have impacted the policy development process.

Attention was also paid to the roles and efforts of the selected school board personnel and general members convened to address and develop strategies for antiracism and ethnocultural equity in the OSB. A review of some of the similarities and differences of the study participants' knowledge of antiracism approaches in education and how they came to acquire their knowledge of, and interest in antiracism issues was conducted. Also examined were the participant understandings of the process that was employed to develop the OSB antiracism policy. Specific examples from discussions with the participants were used to "re-examine common practical and theoretical understandings" (Westheimer, 1998) of antiracism and ethnocultural equity in schools, policy development, and educational administration. Participant commentary was relied upon in presenting a narrative of

processes and complexities associated with educational policy formation in general and antiracism policy formation in particular.

4.6 - Epistemological Limitations

The nature of the case study methodology and the scope of this particular study require that the issue of study limitations be considered and acknowledged (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Frankel & Wallen, 2003; Stake, 1994). Limitations of conducting this kind of research include: the retrospective nature of the study, the potential for participant reluctance and inability to speak directly and honestly about issues of race and antiracism, researcher bias in collecting and analyzing the data, and the issue of generalizability of the study findings.

Despite its limitations, the case study method is helpful because it provides a framework for conducting an analysis of the policy development process. The case study can be used to produce a portrait of key participants' perceptions and values about antiracism and antiracism policy development. The case study can also help in discussing the issue of the hidden complexities of people's views on race and antiracist policy development and therefore may illuminate knowledge of policy-making in general and antiracism policy-making in particular.

The retrospective nature of this study does raise questions about the degree of accuracy that may be attributed to participant recall of events. In order to balance the information provided by participants, I also reviewed policy related documents (e.g. OSB board minutes) and created a timeline of events that were associated with the development of the OSB antiracism policy.

Furthermore, as previously noted, use of the interview in a case study is not a neutral tool and as such it results in situated understandings that are dependent upon the interactions that have taken place. Although creation of the narratives depends heavily upon the participant response, it is the researcher that decides what is to be asked, as well as what is to be presented and how. The reader should therefore, have the opportunity to learn how my role as interviewer/researcher may have influenced or informed the shaping of questions and the presentation of narrative responses. As a result, I have included comments that provide the reader with an understanding of how my initial perceptions about each of the participants, and my approach to the research process may have affected the study and creation of the narrative that is this study.

Another point of concern was the fact that the issue of generalizability is a difficult one to avoid in case study research. A case study expects readers to comprehend the researcher's interpretation and presentation of data as well as to arrive at their own interpretations. As much as I would have liked to provide comprehensive explanations of the actions and intentions undergirding individual behaviour, I could only depend upon participants to provide accounts or stories of what they may have seen and done. Thus a key element of constructing a report of a case study was to "describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can vicariously experience these happenings and draw their own conclusions" (Stake, 1994, p.243).

Instead of thinking solely in terms of generalizability obtained through systematic reduction of the unique to causal factors and the ease with which a particular study may be replicated, case study research opens up the opportunity "to expand and enrich the repertoire of social constructions available to practitioners and others" (Donmoyer, 1990, p.182).

Essentially, the case study method allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth analysis of a particular problem, process, situation or event.

Chapter 5: Creating a timeline and analyzing the OSB Peters Policy

In Ontario, discussion at the Ministry level about a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity in the school setting first emerged in 1987 when “a provincial advisory committee produced a report entitled *The Development of a Policy on Race and Ethnocultural Equity* that was intended to be a draft model policy document on race relations for school boards” (Ontario Ministry of Education & Training, 1993 p.46). This document was eventually followed up with an amendment to the Education Act in 1992 and the subsequent release of *Program Memorandum No.119* that required all Ontario school boards to develop and implement a plan to address the issue of antiracism and ethnocultural equity in their respective regions. More specifically, the document stated the following:

Every school board shall develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity, as well as a plan for implementing its policy. Boards shall then submit their policies and plans to the Minister for approval and implement changes as directed by the Minister. Boards’ implementation of their policies will entail reviewing their operations and making fundamental changes in many aspects of their operations”.

(Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993 p.46)

These plans were to be developed based on particular guidelines that had been outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (1993) *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation*. The guidelines stated that all boards were required to submit their policies and five-year implementation plans for approval by the Ministry “no later than March 31, 1995” and that “implementation of these policies must begin by September 1, 1995” (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993 p. 47; Sefa Dei, 2003; Brathwaite, 2003). Since the release of the preceding

ministry documents, departments and positions that were meant to oversee strategy, policy and program development and implementation in the area of antiracism and ethnocultural equity have been created and all have been disbanded.

The original policy was developed in 1993, at which time the New Democratic Party (NDP) was in power. Following one term in office, the Ontario Progressive Conservative party (PC) assumed provincial control in 1995 and remained in power for approximately nine years. It was during the PC terms in office that a number of departmental changes occurred and these changes had links to the creation of school board antiracism policies. It was also during this time, 1997 to be exact, that the PC government mandated the amalgamation of several previously separate school boards across the province. The OSB emerged as a result of those mergers.

Although the Ontario provincial government led by the NDP had developed a policy and accompanying guidelines to be used by school boards across the province, the process for individual school board antiracism policy development and subsequent implementation encountered various roadblocks. Table 3 provides a timeline of some of the major events and/or changes that have taken place since the introduction of Program Memorandum No. 119 (Appendix 4).

Table 3. Peters Policy Timeline

NDP Mandate	1992	Bill 21 stipulated that "boards develop and implement an ethnocultural equity and antiracism policy, to submit the policy to the Minister for approval and to implement changes to the policy as directed by the Minister" (Ontario Ministry of Education and Training, 1993).
	July 1992	Position posting for the role of Assistant Deputy Minister, Anti-racism, Access and Equity
	July 13, 1993	Policy/Program memorandum No. 119 (1993) categorically required that "In accordance with an amendment made in 1992 to the Education Act, every school board shall develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity, as well as a plan for implementing its policy."
	1993	One of the pre-merger school board establishes an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy

	May & June 1994	Establishment of regional symposia by Ministry staff to assist school boards in policy development. The forum was to provide "the opportunity for discussion and clarification of issues".
	March 31, 1995	Deadline for submission of school board policies to the Ministry of Education and Training for review and approval.
PC Mandate	1995	Another pre-merger school board establishes an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy
	1995	Progressive Conservative Party elected in Ontario
	1995	Ontario Anti Racism Secretariat dismantled
	1995	Antiracism, Access and Equity Division of the Ministry of Education and Training dismantled
	1995	Formation of the Antiracism and Equal Opportunity Branch established within the Elementary/Secondary Operations and French Language Education Division of the Ministry of Education and Training.
	1995	The Antiracism and Equal Opportunity Branch and the Elementary/Secondary Operations and French Language Education Division of the Ministry of Education and Training removed.
	1997	No formal entity (i.e. government office) exists to address antiracism
	1997	District school board mergers are mandated by the Ontario Government
	1997	The Ontario School Board (OSB) is created
	2001	OSB ratifies the Peters Policy

As evinced in the timeline above, despite the 1992 provincial government mandate that antiracism policies be created in all Ontario school boards, the process of creating the Peters Policy has not been straightforward. Changes in government departments tasked with ensuring the development, implementation and evaluation of the *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity Policy* have been frequent and significant. For example, as indicated in the timeline, the government division that dealt specifically with antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy issues, the *Antiracism, Access and Equity Division*, was disbanded in 1995 and a comparable entity has yet to be established (Brathwaite, 2003; Dei, 2003). Dissolution of a body that was expected to facilitate the smooth introduction of antiracism policies in the education system raises questions as to the level of tangible and intangible support that was being offered by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training and the Ontario provincial government as a whole.

Issues that potentially hinder the successful introduction of antiracism approaches into the education system also exist at the school board level. For example, although school

boards are expected to have someone dedicated to their antiracism initiatives, these 'antiracism and ethnocultural equity officers' are often responsible for overseeing a range of additional board programs such as literacy. Furthermore, 'antiracism and equity officers' are also expected to develop and administer various programs and workshops aimed at board staff, but these 'officers' are expected to do so with limited funding. For example, the OSB has an 'antiracism and ethnocultural equity officer' who is responsible for providing in-service training workshops to various levels of staff. Despite this individual's mandate to offer various workshops, the number of workshops and number of personnel that are able to participate in the workshops is often hampered not just by a lack of financial support but also by the availability of an appropriate location in which to conduct meetings or provide workshops. Moreover, the 'officer' must also contend with the school board's reticence in providing staff with the requisite time off during the school day. The board's hesitancy in providing board personnel with the time off during the workday results in many antiracism and ethnocultural equity training programs or workshops being offered after school. Attendance at these after school programs is primarily voluntary and participation by the target audience is often low.

In terms of the Peters Policy itself, the document identifies its main objective as the need to promote equality of access and treatment to all learners irrespective of their ethnocultural background (OSB, 2001). Furthermore, the two-page document affirms the OSB commitment to ensuring the development, implementation and continued evaluation of its policies, and practices. The OSB did create a procedure and implementation plan document that outlined core objectives, a plan of action and desired outcomes, necessary resources, and individuals and/or groups responsible for meeting the specific objectives and

timelines (OSB, 1997). The implementation plan document was also divided on the basis of core subject/issue areas such as leadership, school-community partnership, curriculum, and student languages. One of the items identified as an expected action/outcome was the preparation of an annual report by schools and departments regarding the policy implementation process and progress. In the case of the OSB, schools and departments were expected to begin generating these reports as of 2001. However, based on my attendance at several community advisory group meetings, I learnt that creation of these documents is currently done informally and infrequently, if at all.

During these meetings I also became aware of the OSBs plan⁵ to (1) establish an equity committee in each of the board's schools, and (2) create monitoring mechanisms that would track and ensure compliance with the board identified priorities, programs and services aimed at introducing antiracism practices within the education system. No such mechanisms have been created or are even being developed. Currently, the board does have positions and groups in place that are expected to address and facilitate the introduction of antiracism approaches into schools. Examples of these positions and groups include a (a) term-limited, board-paid, antiracism and equity officer, whose responsibilities include coordinating and serving as the primary contact on antiracism issues, as well as other program areas, (b) a community advisory group that is comprised mainly of volunteers, (c) and the teachers' advisory group. With the exception of the salaried 'officer', the groups noted above receive minimal funding (several hundred dollars) from the board. In addition to the OSB's general failure to institute many of the outcomes outlined in the policy and

⁵ As originally decreed by the Ministry of Education and Training, the OSB created and submitted an antiracism policy, procedure and implementation plan. The plan listed board outcomes, actions and timelines. The equity committee and the monitoring mechanisms were to have been in place by 2001.

implementation plan, concerns may also be raised about how the issues of race, racism and antiracism have been defined in the document.

Found at the back of the Peters Policy implementation plan document is a glossary that defines some key antiracism and ethnocultural equity terms. The definitions presented were taken from the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy guidelines document that was created by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (1993). Included in this list of terms are definitions for *antiracist education*, which is discussed in terms of the need to incorporate the varied perspectives of traditionally marginalized populations into the education system. As defined in the OSB document (2001), antiracist education seeks to eliminate education policies, practices and procedures that foster racism, and racist attitudes and behaviours. Through the process of incorporating antiracist education approaches into educational policies and practices, teachers and students are expected to be provided the skills needed to critically examine racism and its origins, and to identify and challenge it.

Also included in the glossary is the term discrimination, which is defined as a way of making distinctions about people, and using unfair or discriminatory practices against certain individuals and/or groups, based on their physical characteristics, and ethnocultural and linguistic background (OSB, 2001). The term is further divided into two types of discrimination (a) direct discrimination and systemic discrimination. Interestingly, a review of the document did not reveal a definition for 'racism'. Instead, definitions have been included for equity, multicultural education and prejudice (OSB, 2001). During my review of the Peters Policy, I also noticed that the document does not include a guiding definition of racism or antiracism.

In considering the literature reviewed for this study, antiracism is discussed in terms of the need to acknowledge and address the institutional and systemic nature of racism in educational settings (Dei, 1998; Henry, 2000; Stanley, 2001). Members of the educational community are expected to question existing organizational and educational practices and create teaching methodologies and materials that draw educator and student attention to inequitable power structures and relations (Dei, 1998; Lee, 1994). In general, individuals are expected to take action and introduce equitable organizational and pedagogical practices (Dei, 1998; Lee, 1994). Based on the literature, one may state that transforming the education system to one that is antiracist and equitable is dependent upon the system-wide integration of antiracist concepts and practices, the development of antiracism policies and the operationalization of said policies.

Although the Peters Policy does identify objectives and outcomes, the lack of clearly articulated definitions for racism and antiracism in this antiracism policy document raises questions about how racism, antiracism and antiracist approaches in education have been, and are currently, understood, discussed and enacted within the OSB. The next chapter examines and presents the personal understandings of racism, antiracism and the antiracism policy development process of seven individuals who participated in the OSB antiracism policy process.

Chapter 6: Examining and Presenting Participant Commentary

Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.132) state that the ‘data analysis’ phase of a research study includes “making connections among the stories”. The process of analyzing the data gathered during a research study may also be used to identify the ways in which the stories told or narratives presented may be dissimilar or in conflict with each other. Identifying the ways in which the data may connect or disconnect can be used in transforming the ‘raw data’ gathered from different sources “into a form that communicates the promise of a study’s findings” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p.145).

As noted by Stake (1994), “case study research shares an intense interest in personal views” and, as is noted above, use of the interview format in a case study cannot be considered a neutral investigative tool. The “personal” does not only apply to the study participant, it also applies to the researcher conducting the study. The interviewer’s area(s) of interest, tacit and explicit knowledge, and perspectives will invariably influence the case study interview and the subsequent analysis and presentation of data. As a result of the interviewer’s influence on the case study interview, the idea of the completely objective researcher is largely mythical. In order to avoid misunderstanding the researcher’s role as being ‘objective’, I think that it is also important to recognize that as a researcher, I too am implicated in any analysis and subsequent presentation of the data gathered for this study.

As noted above, my research on the policy development process utilized at the school board level was guided by a particular set of research questions, however, as I navigated my way through the research process, I found that other points of interest began to arise. For example, I began thinking about the extent to which participants align themselves with particular community based associations or organizations. Other areas of interest that

emerged for me during the research process dealt with the extent to which students' lived experiences are accounted for in the policy development process, and the degree to which the antiracism policy reflects the diversity of the OSB community.

The additional points of interest outlined above will likely have had some influence on how I elected to read and present the participant commentary. In order to examine and present the participant commentary, I rely upon (a) the study participants to provide accounts or stories of what they may have seen, done and why; and (b) my own experience of interacting with the participants and analyzing their data.

6.1 - Hearing and reading the participant

It was never my intent to *make* the interview commentary fit, and to examine participant commentary solely through the lens of my core research questions. I wanted to avoid utilizing an approach to commentary analysis that was too rigidly tied to the need to code comments based on the individual core questions. I believe that to review the interview transcripts based primarily on core research questions shifts the focus away from the participant perspective to that of the researcher's desire for orderly presentation of findings. As an alternative I began to think in terms of each participant transcript as a story – that each person had his/her own story that needed to be read and presented on its own terms. In recounting these individual stories or narratives, it is still possible to examine the ways in which the participants responded to the core questions while acknowledging the ways in which their commentary may diverge or raise even more complex questions around issues related to antiracism and ethnocultural equity in the education system.

However, in keeping with my desire to acknowledge my role as researcher and presenter of the participant accounts, I think that it is also important to include my own

understandings of the participant commentary as it relates to the passages selected for presentation in the participant comments section. This practice is part of my desire to be transparent about my role as co-participant in the research process, but this practice also accounts for my inherent inability to be a dispassionate and detached researcher and objective presenter of the text.

The portraits I present are subjective in nature, in that I attempt to be faithful to what the respondents want to say. Furthermore, the portraits are dependent upon how I see and decide to present the participant commentary⁶. Therefore, I endeavour to acknowledge this fact by interweaving my understandings of the comments and/or passages selected for inclusion in the analysis of comments section. In deciding to present my personal understandings along with those of the participants, I recognize that the readers' understanding and interpretation of the text may differ significantly from my own.

6.2 - First impressions: A researcher's perspective

I conducted an online search of the OSB website in order to identify materials related to the Peters Policy. During my search of the OSB website, I found an online archive of the OSB minutes dating back to the year 1997. It was through my review of the OSB website that I first obtained information about the Peters Policy and identified the names of individuals who were involved in the policy development process. I also contacted the school board office to determine whether it would be possible to obtain documents that predated the online documents. In contacting the school board I was notified that it was possible to review the complete holdings of board minutes that dated back to the early 1980s. My search then took me to the board offices, where I was provided access to the

⁶ In some cases, participant commentary may have been edited in order to remove verbal stumbles and hesitations.

archived minutes. Happily, the person responsible for sorting and maintaining the documents had already pulled the books that dealt specifically with the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy, thereby decreasing the amount of time that I needed to sift through the volumes of data.

My search through the documents proved successful in that I was able to retrieve information on discussions that occurred at the board level regarding antiracism and ethnocultural equity. The information gathered also covered discussion of antiracism and ethnocultural equity that took place within the committee that was created to develop the policy. Additionally, because the OSB is a product of the merger of previously separate school boards, I was able to obtain information on the work that had been undertaken by the previously independent school boards on their respective antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies.

Next, I tried to obtain contact information for the members of the school board and committee on antiracism identified in the earliest documents found. Due to the number of years that have passed since the original discussions, it proved rather difficult to trace the whereabouts of the majority of those who participated in the early policy development process. Fortunately, I obtained the contact information for the individual who served as facilitator during the policy development process in one of the merged school boards. This former facilitator was one of the seven people who agreed to be interviewed for this study. The following section highlights my initial impressions regarding the individuals who participated in the study.

6.2.1 – “Mr. Nomos”

Mr. Nomos is now a senior school administrator with another school board. I initially emailed Mr. Nomos to provide him with information about the study and to ask whether he might be willing to participate. Mr. Nomos agreed to participate but due to logistical issues (work related duties and pending holidays) our discussion had to take place via telephone during the month of July.

My impression of the discussion with Mr. Nomos was one of relief. Relief that I had been able to speak with him and relief that he had been willing to respond to all of my questions. The discussion was conversational and informal in tone and as someone who had been involved in the earliest stages as lead facilitator of the OSB Peters Policy development process, Mr. Nomos was able to provide a fair amount of information about the process, his role in the process, the people who participated in the process and the aim of the policy. He spoke at length about the policy development process and appeared particularly proud of having been able to act as facilitator/consultant for a fairly large group of volunteers that included administrators, teachers, community groups and individual community members. The group worked on a consensus model and according to Mr. Nomos conflict regarding decision-making in the group was minimal.

Following the discussion with Mr. Nomos a number of months passed before I was able to find and confirm another participant for the study. Emails were sent to all school board trustees and senior administrators, as well as to some teachers and community group members who were identified as having participated in the process during my discussion with Mr. Nomos. Despite my emails and phone calls, I continued to encounter difficulty in finding individuals willing to speak with me. In late July I had the opportunity to contact a

teacher with the board who suggested that I attend the upcoming meeting of the community advisory group to the school board. It was during this meeting (held in September) that I became aware of several individuals and organizations that have or had a relationship with the board and the development of the antiracism policy. I obtained my second participant by contacting one of the community agencies identified in the meeting.

6.2.2 - *“Mr. Newly”*

I spoke with Mr. Newly in late October and my conversation with him provided a somewhat different perspective than that of Mr. Nomos. Although Mr. Newly had been present during many of the school board meetings that occurred while Mr. Nomos served as facilitator/consultant, Mr. Newly was not affiliated with any particular group. He was still relatively new to the country and the city and decided to attend based on a friend's suggestion. His reasons for attending the meetings seem to center on familiarizing himself with the policy process and getting to know some people in the community. Since then, Mr. Newly has gone on to assume a supervisory position for a community agency whose initiatives are aimed at creating a more tolerant/inclusive environment for visible and linguistic minority students in the district. The agency in question also has links to the OSB.

I would describe Mr. Newly's comments as connected to his experience as a member of an ethnic and linguistic minority group, as an immigrant, parent and community advocate. He spoke of the differences between 'here' and his country of origin as it relates to issues of diversity, of the challenges faced by many immigrant parents and students currently in the system, and about the systemic or institutional nature of the racism that exists in the education system.

6.2.3 - *“Mr. Hyskool”*

The week following my discussion with Mr. Newly, I had the opportunity to speak with a high school teacher who is involved in the development and implementation aspect of the antiracism policy through his work with a teachers’ committee. As a teacher for the board for several years, Mr. Hyskool’s perspective differed from the other participants in that his first encounters with the school board were as an immigrant student. This experience as a visible and linguistic minority student has had a significant impact on Mr. Hyskool’s decision to become a teacher and on his interest in antiracism approaches in education. The discussion with this participant was possibly the most animated in terms of tone and timbre. Mr. Hyskool spoke passionately of his views on antiracism and ethnocultural equity, the role that he thinks school board administrators and teachers do and should play in implementing their school board’s antiracism policies, the difficulties of enacting antiracism policy in the high school setting, and the sense of frustration he feels about not being able to move the issue of antiracism and ethnocultural equity forward in the educational system.

6.2.4 - *“Ms. Long”*

As one of two female participants in the study, both of whom are visible minorities, Ms. Long brought a varied history to the discussion. Ms. Long was identified and subsequently contacted via email after her name appeared in several public school board documents. A retired teacher at the elementary and middle school level, she has over 30 years experience teaching and has been involved in initiatives to improve the school experience of visible and linguistic minority children for over 20 years. Ms. Long’s experience covers involvement in the teachers’ association, work as a peer facilitator on

issues related to antiracism and ethnocultural equity on behalf of the board, and as a member of a community advisory group dealing with issues of diversity. My discussion with Ms. Long provides a window onto the past in which antiracism and ethnocultural equity were not even considered worthwhile topics of discussion, and the present. She has been involved in various capacities throughout the life of the current antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy.

Ms. Long was the voice of experience - she had been present for the early years of antiracism and ethnocultural policy development and witnessed the changes, or lack thereof that have occurred in the school board over the years. Her recounting of details covered areas that included the early policy development process that was led by Mr. Nomos and her experience with other pre-merger boards, the community advocacy process as it relates to antiracism and ethnocultural equity, teachers as a potential part of the problem and her views of the changes in family dynamics and the effects this has had on students.

6.2.5 - *"Mr. Sollovochey"*

When I interviewed the fifth participant in the study, he had a limited amount of time to speak and therefore provided little depth and breadth. Mr. Sollovochey has been involved with the antiracism development policy process at the OSB since its inception and he was affiliated with one of the pre-merger school boards. His role has generally always been that of community group advocate.

Mr. Sollovochey is not a proponent of using the consensus model in the policy development process; instead he wanted the new board to use a more directed approach. After many years, Mr. Sollovochey has decided to scale back his participation in community groups and to refocus his attention on other ways of making a difference for the visible and

linguistic minority population in the area, emphasizing the particular concerns of his ethnocultural group.

My impression of Mr. Sollovochey is that of a man who questions the role that a community advisory group to the school board can actually play within the existing board structure. He raises concerns about board support, the community advisory group level of influence on school board policy and, dare I say, to some extent the viability and very survival of the advisory group itself and the implications of limited school board support for the Peters Policy.

6.2.6 - *"Mr. and Mrs. Couple"*

The last interview differed from the other interviews conducted for this study. It was a telephone interview conducted with two participants. As noted in the methodology section, I had intended to speak with participants on an individual basis; however in this instance an exception was made. Mr. and Mrs. Couple were identified and approached to participate following an informal discussion with them at a school-linked community advisory group meeting. During that informal discussion they had mentioned that they have been involved with OSB antiracism and ethnocultural initiatives since amalgamation, and prior to that they had participated in the antiracism policy development process that was initially led by Mr. Nomos.

As with all other participants, a formal letter of introduction was forwarded to their attention requesting their participation in the study. Having agreed to participate in the study, Mr. and Mrs. Couple, who are married, stated that because they had both taken part in the policy development process, they would be willing to speak with me at the same time.

Due to logistical issues, it was determined that a telephone interview would be most appropriate.

Although the interview was conducted with both Mr. and Mrs. Couple, the majority of the commentary provided came from Mrs. Couple. She spoke at length about the policy development processes used at a pre-amalgamation board and the OSB. Her commentary was detailed with references intermittently being made regarding specific approaches employed by the facilitator (Mr. Nomos) and the evolution of the current school-linked community advisory group that grew out of original policy development process.

However, in my estimation possibly the most interesting comments provided by Mr. and Mrs. Couple pertained to their views regarding the term antiracism itself. Mrs. Couple spoke rather forcefully about the need to step back from focusing on what she perceived to be a highly charged negative term - "antiracism". Instead, she advocated the need to emphasize the importance of "equity". Additionally, Mr. and Mrs. Couple spoke of issues such as the higher rate of suspension among visible minority youth in schools and the need for increased community and particularly parental participation among traditionally marginalized groups. Both Mr. and Mrs. Couple expressed the need for parents to become more active not only at the policy development process level but at the school board level as a whole. Mrs. Couple added that she did not feel that issues such as looking and feeling different from the largely non-visible minority school board administration and teachers could *and* should continue to serve as an obstacle to parents becoming more involved in school based antiracism and ethnocultural equity initiatives.

6.3 - *Participant Voices: The knowledge we bring*

Whereas earlier sections of this chapter focused on my initial perceptions following my interviews with each participant, this section pays particular attention to participant responses. Primarily, I use the commentary of each participant to present him/her as an individual, school board employee and/or community representative.

In order to provide some degree of order to the presentation, I have elected to segment the individual portraits based on how some participant comments present points that can be linked back to the overriding research questions regarding (a) personal understandings of race, racism and antiracism and how the participant came to gain his/her knowledge of antiracism approaches in education; (b) the individual's understanding of racism and how those understandings affect participant involvement in the policy process; and (c) personal understandings of the policy development process as it relates to the Peters Policy.

6.3.1 - *Mr. Nomos*

Mr. Nomos's interest in antiracism approaches in education is due in part to his self-identification as "person of colour", his academic training and professional experience. "Being a person of colour, maybe that had something to do with it to. I don't know, you know I really don't know how, but it did seem to be an interest of mine". In terms of his academic experience Mr. Nomos noted that much of his knowledge on antiracism was gained through his coursework and to some extent through his interactions with his wife who is an attorney.

It was basically in early childhood [education] . . . I took a couple of courses on power and culture and that sort of stuff at McGill and...issues of gender...and how

that related to the elementary school experience. That was part of my entry into it I guess.

Although Mr. Nomos self-identifies as a visible minority, he did not provide an account of how his status and/or experiences as a visible minority may have factored into his decision to become involved in issues related to antiracism in education. Instead his comments focused primarily on his professional development. From a professional training standpoint his involvement in the antiracism policy development process was in keeping with the professional training and his personal interests. Referring specifically to his role as lead facilitator during the antiracism policy development process Mr. Nomos recounted the following:

I remember when this position came up I had just put in a stint at the board. Previous to that I had ...[been teaching] ESL to kindergarten. I did ESL kindergarten ... started off a program for a friend of mine who I had worked with before and she came in to me and said, "Your job is being advertised". And I thought "I don't know what you're talking about."

Mr. Nomos noted that he had been happy in his ESL role but when this professional opportunity presented itself he was drawn to the position not only because of his personal interest in the issue of antiracism but he was also drawn to what he described as "an interesting role". For Mr. Nomos, this role served as "[a] great training opportunity and experience and it was important work, I had a commitment to [it] and . . . I thought I might be able to do something around it..."

Mr. Nomos was appointed to the facilitator role at a pre-merger board in late 1994. As the facilitator, Mr. Nomos was required to organize and lead the provincial government

initiated endeavour of creating an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy. The position afforded Mr. Nomos “a fair amount of autonomy” in determining how to lead the policy development process, however, he was required to work within certain established organizational structures and provide reports to senior administrators⁷.

After spending a few years in the role as lead facilitator, Mr. Nomos had gained the knowledge and experience that could lead to a more senior administrative post. During his third year in the facilitator role, Mr. Nomos decided to apply for a Principal position and he was “appointed to become a principal of an inner city school”. As acknowledged by Mr. Nomos, there were “...significant benefits for me as an administrator coming out of that [facilitator] process”. One such benefit was the opportunity it afforded him to work with ethnoculturally diverse communities. The knowledge and experience gained during his years as lead facilitator of the antiracism policy development process meant that he was able to gain “insight on work in schools as a principal of a school”.

Mr. Nomos’s comments allude to his personal interest in issues related to educational equity, but also evident is the extent to which his decision to assume the facilitator role proved to be a professionally sound decision. One may surmise that his current role as a senior board administrator is in part dependent upon the experience he gained as facilitator in the policy development process and his subsequent role as Principal of an ethnoculturally diverse school.

6.3.2 - *Mr. Newly*

Making connections served as a motivator for Mr. Newly to become involved in the policy development process. As a new immigrant to the country, he was trying to establish

⁷ Refers to the “Mr. Allan” [Superintendent] and “Mr. Johns” [Principal] at a pre-merger board responsible for overseeing the antiracism policy development process.

connections within the community and as an educator by training he was interested in developing an understanding of the provincial education system.

I was a fresh graduate when I became a refugee, fresh graduate from a teaching college [in my original country], so when I arrived here I had that background and I was trying to get into teaching. So...this was the first kind of initiation [to] the schools here. It was one of the first activities, community activities I participated in, for me, in Canada.

Mr. Newly did not necessarily seek out this particular policy development initiative, but when a friend suggested he participate, he did so. Mr. Newly's initial involvement in the group stemmed from a friend's suggestion that he participate and his personally motivated decision to familiarize himself with the workings of the Ontario education system and his area school board.

"...[T]hey had meetings for the community groups, for individual citizens, like for everybody that wanted to participate. So, I was invited by a friend of mine who was ... at the time was acting as an individual...my background was in education and I was interested in education and I was new to the town... I am new to the country so, so I get involved."

As someone who wanted to obtain a broader understanding of issues that related to the Ontario education system, Mr. Newly took advantage of the opportunity to work on different areas of the OSB Peters Policy development process. During the interview, Mr. Newly stated, "I wanted to know each subject although I was leaning towards the one that related to ...professional development. I was interested in training, in getting into training."

His primary areas of interest may be identified as deeply personal in nature, in that he was most attracted to the discussions of professional development and training.

In addition to his lack of knowledge regarding the Ontario education system structures and professional requirements, Mr. Newly might also be considered a novice in terms of his exposure to racism and antiracism approaches in education.

My first introduction to racism was my personal experience in Canada. I encountered it in the college that I first went [to] and also in the workplace that I worked like not the deep racism but you know. . .the slur, like the racial slur kind of thing, but my first introduction actually to antiracism and what it looks like and what is racism and all of the knowledge it was from the process of the policy development. When I was doing my Masters degree, I actually took a course. I read a lot of books, . . .all those articles...

So, basically I could say I learned antiracism in Canada. I didn't know it before... So I had a notion, like I knew, I am from Africa so . . .I know South Africa and what was happening ...when I was growing up.

For him racism became a more personal and lived experience upon his immigrating to Canada. Although a person of colour, he had never personally, or possibly consciously, come face to face with the lived experience of racism until he became a member of Canadian society. Interestingly, upon reflection Mr. Newly did note that despite his original proclamation of the non-existence of racism in his home country, he does in fact believe that racism did exist there but that it was never really acknowledged.

Overall, Mr. Newly's personal experience as a newcomer and refugee to Canada and more specifically Ontario, along with his background in teaching prompted his decision to

become involved in developing an antiracism policy for one of the pre-merger boards and later the OSB. Furthermore, like Mr. Nomos his decision to participate in the antiracism policy development process does appear to have proven beneficial from a professional standpoint as well. One may infer that his exposure to the policy process and interactions with school board and community group representatives helped him develop skill sets that have been put to use in his current role as administrator for a community advocacy organization.

6.3.3 - Mr. Hyskool

Although he spoke of his experience as a newly arrived teenager entering the Ontario public school system with a degree of humour, “Mr. Hyskool’s” understanding of antiracism approaches in education and interest and involvement in the OSB Peters Policy development process is directly tied to his personal experiences. He acknowledged that his interactions with others in the school system directly influenced his decision to become an educator and to push for changes to the education system that takes into account the diversity of its constituency.

It started in 1984 when I immigrated to Canada . . . and I couldn’t speak a word of English and I was stuck in a Grade 7 Spec Ed. class with no ESL support or anything like that, so I found it very weird that kids were licking their liquid paper and there was absolutely no control in the classroom.

My mom was not informed of what kind of class I was placed in until parent-teacher interviews in January when the Science teacher, who I still remember and keep in touch with asked her “why is he in this classroom, do you know what kind of classroom he is in?” and then she came home and said “well, the Science teacher

thinks that we should get you out of this classroom” but I had had enough changes for a period of four months so I said I am staying in this classroom for the rest of the year [laughter]. Basically what I felt was a lot of discrimination from peers and teachers for my first four years and it all disappeared suddenly, and amazingly probably in Grade 10 when my accent started to disappear, that was probably the beginning part of my interest in this subject area...

Mr. Hyskool’s experience as a new immigrant trying to deal with a new language, a new culture and a new school has played a role in his decision to become a teacher and an advocate for antiracism education approaches in education. In addition to his lived experience as a new immigrant student, his interactions with a Grade 10 teacher [Mr. Barker] shaped his interest in antiracism education. As noted by Mr. Hyskool, Mr. Barker “...happened to be [from the same country as me] and it’s just funny when you see yourself represented on the other side and what a shift that makes”. Mr. Barker’s presence in the classroom and his willingness to act as a mentor provided Mr. Hyskool with a level of support and understanding that had been otherwise lacking. As a result of his personal experiences as a visible and linguistic minority, Mr. Hyskool began his teaching career working with students identified as lacking adequate language skills in their native language, as well as in English.

[T]hey’re students who are academically behind in their native tongue at least two years compared to their peer age group....So my first year was working primarily with minority, with new immigrants to Canada and I took [the] ESL [additional qualification] Part 1 in order to better prepare myself for that first year teaching

experience andthree years ago I also started my M.Ed and I tailored all of my courses towards this subject matter, primarily to my interest.

Since that initial experience teaching ESL, Mr. Hyskool has taught general academic courses in what he describes as a fairly affluent urban area school. Unlike his own school experience, there are few visible and linguistic minority students in the school and despite an increase in numbers, ethnoculturally diverse students “are still very much a minority within the school...It’s very homogenous”. As a result of low numbers, the visible minority students in the school often do not have access to programs and services, such as additional ESL courses that might enhance their learning experiences.

Mr. Hyskool’s personal experiences coupled with awareness of the situation in his own school continue to fuel his interest in establishing a more equitable educational environment. More specifically, over the past three years Mr. Hyskool has been involved with the antiracism policy development and implementation process within the OSB. As a member of a teacher’s council focused on antiracism policy and program implementation, Mr. Hyskool assists in the development and presentation of professional training for teachers across the school board on issues related to antiracism approaches in education. Currently, Mr. Hyskool has growing concerns about the future of the teacher’s council. In Mr. Hyskool’s estimation the teacher’s council lacks financial and organizational support. Despite the lack of organizational support, he continues to participate in their activities. One may surmise that past experience as a student and his current experience as an educator continues to drive his desire to have changes occur in the education system and in the experiences of visible and linguistic minority students.

6.3.4 - Mr. Sollovochey

Mr. Sollovochey's involvement in introducing the antiracism policy predates school board amalgamation. As a member of a local visible minority community association he worked with a pre-merger board (Elson Board) as it embarked upon creating its antiracism policy. His ties to the Elson Board⁸ were directly linked to his involvement with his ethnic minority group association.

My involvement started with the "Elson Board" of Education roughly about 1994 - 95, [it] might have been even earlier and so this involvement at that time preceded amalgamation of the boards...[I] worked on community representation, so I was on the advisory committee as the representative for my [community] Association which meant that after the committee meetings, I reported back to my [community] Association and other members represented the Jewish Community Association, the German Community Association, the Chinese Community, so we had a community representation.

In addition, to being very active in his community association, Mr. Sollovochey is also a member of several other community and advisory committees at the local and national level. However, as noted earlier during the interview, Mr. Sollovochey stated that he had decided to scale back on his involvement in school board led initiatives, in part because of his political involvement elsewhere.

Although my discussion with Mr. Sollovochey was relatively short, in my estimation his decision to participate in the policy process is tied to his participation in various community advocacy groups, particularly his ethnocultural community association. Seemingly the thread that exists across the kinds of organizations that

⁸ A pseudonym for a pre-merger school board.

he has chosen to be affiliated with is their emphasis on improving opportunities and quality of life for visible and linguistic minorities at a local as well as at a national level.

6.3.5 - *Ms. Long*

As previously noted Ms. Long is a retired teacher whose interest in advocacy stems from her status as a visible minority person, being aware of the civil rights work of the 1960s and her experiences as a classroom teacher. In Ms. Long's case, it is the personal aspect of experience that serves as a catalyst for action. After receiving her teacher certification in 1964, Ms. Long began her teaching career in Ontario. Two years into her teaching career, an incident occurred that served as a 'teachable moment' not only for her Grade 3 students but the moment has also informed her approach to teaching over the years.

I was teaching Grade 3 at the time. I don't know whether I was walking in the hall or what, I heard the kid say "Have you got the nigger teacher?" or "You've got" something to that effect, so I immediately went into the washroom and I said "Excuse me, I heard a word that I don't approve of in reference to me and I'd like to know who said it and clear up that I am not a nigger." And the boys, you know, I wouldn't have gone into the boys washroom even three years later, but at that time I was pretty young and I just thought "I gotta deal with that and I gotta deal with it now"... anyway they were just, their mouths dropped open.

I explained to them that "I was a Negro and I said or you could say Black teacher, I don't mind that but the word nigger is not a word that that we appreciate or we use and I do not want to hear that word in the school" and then I went on to give them a lecture on how much pride I have in who I was...you know their mouths

slowly closed and they started to nod their heads and you know this is a learning situation. Their attention was just like riveted because it was so real for them and because it was part of my background... and I was able to tell them all of that and so on.

As recounted by Ms. Long, the preceding incident was her “awakening” regarding the need for teaching students about ethnocultural diversity. As a Black teacher she began to feel compelled to include discussions about ‘race’ and inequality in her classroom teaching. In her own words she felt the need to “...start talking about it and making it real.” As stated by Ms. Long, “...this was before Black History month came in and so I used to make my sharing a sort of a sharing that we would do right in September...it was this inculcating into the curriculum”. Ms. Long began the practice of using the Language Arts program as a way to engage students in discussions and presentations about themselves and their family histories.

In addition to applying practical classroom exercises like classroom presentations on family history and culture, Ms. Long has also worked on antiracism issues within the context of initiatives created within her school board. As a result of work on the board driven initiatives, much of Ms. Long’s formal knowledge or education regarding antiracism approaches in education was obtained through her involvement in board committees, workshops, and courses. Over the last few years, Ms. Long has worked as recording secretary for the community advisory group to the board. Additionally, prior to her retirement from teaching in the late 1990s, Ms. Long had spent approximately twenty years participating in various antiracism initiatives that were established at her pre-merger board. For example, she has served as an antiracism representative for a teachers’ association

eventually assuming a senior position on the teacher antiracism and ethnocultural committee.

It is possible to infer that Ms. Long's personal and professional history, particularly the incident with the Grade 3 students, propelled her into action. That moment in 1964, when she decided to respond to the students' negative race-based comments seems to have fuelled Ms. Long's interest in and her role as a teacher and member of the antiracism committee. Furthermore, her position as educator and antiracism committee member has provided her with opportunities to gain knowledge about antiracism issues through attendance at courses and workshops.

With the [pre-merger boards] I took courses, we went to this course from about 9 until 4 everyday and so that gave us some of the background and allowed us to work through scenarios and role playing and really looking at it from a different points of view, it was a wonderful program. I was asked to go, I think I was asked to go to a professional development that was put on by [a local teachers association]. This was a weekend conference but it was on equity in the school system in Ontario but it was you know drawing from all of the boards around Ontario public boards...

Ms. Long's situation is a case where a particular event set the stage for much of her involvement in antiracism issues. Her professional role as teacher intersected with her designation as visible minority and this intersection has been a catalyst for her work as both a teacher and a retired teacher. More specifically, following the incident as a Grade 3 teacher, she no longer saw herself as being just a teacher.

Instead she saw herself as a 'Black teacher' with a duty to educate her students by "sharing" information about each other's backgrounds and origins.

6.3.6 - Mr. and Mrs. Couple

As visible minority parents with children in the school system, Mr. and Mrs. Couple felt compelled to act when they saw their children being affected by questionable school practices. This drive to speak up on behalf of their children, particularly their child who is learning disabled, served as a major reason for their initial involvement with the pre-merger school board.

There was a problem and we had to get into the system and it really helped.

Our involvement, this is in the early 70s, our older son came home one day and said that they were having "Slaves Day" we thought how insensitive they were, Mrs. Couple wrote a very nice letter to them, to the principal of the school you know and said this is not appropriate and to suggest alternative measures of fundraising, and so they ended it, they stopped doing that, in that school anyway. I still think they're still in some school, there are "Slave Days", I'm not sure... [Mr. Couple]

We started as parents and then later with this initiative [antiracism policy development process] we became involved I think in 93, you know we heard that this was coming and so we found out whom to contact and we contacted them and indicated that we would like to be involved. (Mrs. Couple)

From Mr. and Mrs. Couple's perspective, working on the antiracism policy gave them the opportunity to translate some of their efforts that were initially directed at helping

their children to have a more positive and equitable school experience to the broader student community. Mrs. Couple recounted how they often got books that reflected their ethnocultural background as a way to instil in their children a sense of self-worth. She adds that she joined the antiracism policy group as part of a particular faith community, while her husband, Mr. Couple, joined as part of a community association. In Mrs. Couple's view "coming on [the antiracism policy development group] gave us the opportunity to be able to transfer that knowledge which we gained raising our children as valuable human beings".

Mr. and Mrs. Couple's work on antiracism and ethnocultural equity is not limited solely to the education system; they have also participated in other municipal, provincial and federal initiatives aimed at creating more equitable systems for all Canadians, irrespective of ethnocultural differences. For example, they have worked with human rights commissions and race relations committees at different levels of government.

In addition to their children serving as a driving force for their work on developing a more equitable school system, their faith has also had an effect on how they understand and prefer to address societal imbalances that disadvantage traditionally marginalized students.

[We] both came from a Christian background and you know the whole notion of 'your brother's keeper'...and we are now both [members of a particular faith community], one of the principles of [this community's] faith is elimination of all kinds of prejudice and so that is, that is, the whole notion of the oneness of God and oneness of humanity...The importance of faith, we have an interest in people, in the welfare of others, so it comes naturally also it comes from faith. (Mrs. Couple)

In Mr. and Mrs. Couple's case, knowledge of antiracism approaches in education comes from lived experience as reflected in their decision to become involved because of their

children's experiences. In addition, Mr. and Mrs. Couple also view development of their knowledge regarding antiracism approaches in education as tied to participation in community driven initiatives and a commitment to understanding and living by their faith-based principles.

6.4 - Participant Voices: Defining antiracism

The following section presents excerpts from participant interviews that deal specifically with their respective views on how race and antiracism is understood and defined. Interspersed throughout each participant voices are my personal understandings about the commentary provided by the participant.

6.4.1 - Mr. Nomos on defining antiracism

Mr. Nomos initially found it somewhat difficult to define racism, stating:

[M]y definition I guess of racism had to do with I guess in that would be issues of stereotyping, I guess and misunderstanding prejudice. I can't give you a textbook definition of, about racism at this point in time. I think that, what, what I perceive is antiracist is, I'd have to provide a context around that because I believe, my context around antiracism has to do with education and my definition would have to do around, something around the fact that there are certain structures and practices that happen within schools.

As noted in this passage Mr. Nomos found the need for context to be critical to providing a definition. His immediate reaction was not to provide a broad sweeping understanding of racism but one that is couched in terms of the education system.

The conversation then led to a discussion of antiracist education and how one might define that term. In responding, Mr. Nomos defined antiracist education as a "process

whereby we continually sort of re-examine our, all of our practices within a school system and try and determine whether or not ...students are continually damaged by institutional procedures and processes that we have". In trying to further clarify his definition, Mr. Nomos proceeded to compare antiracist education with his understanding of multicultural education.

[F]or me anyways it was a profound sort of difference between multiculturalism and antiracist education, where we were trying to find systemic sort of barriers that precluded full participation of all students... Regrettably we are caught very much in the sort of food, fashion, fun sort of mindset with multiculturalism teaching...you see problems you try and uncover what the problems are, you try and provide a more equitable solution around that. And again you know it's a constant process, a way of thinking about how we educate our children.

His comments allude to some of the practices employed by multicultural educators, where emphasis was often placed on acknowledging differences in cultural practices as opposed to confronting the potential institutional and systemic barriers to successful performance that may exist for members of traditionally marginalized populations.

Mr. Nomos stated that he thinks that much of the work developing an antiracism policy for the school board was due in part to the changing demographics of the surrounding community. He said that he was not attempting to "...form a sort of Pollyanna version" of the antiracism policy development process, but added that the diverse demographics of the pre-merger board "was somewhat of a double-edged sword". In Mr. Nomos's view, the lack of ethnocultural and socioeconomic diversity in most suburban and rural school boards meant that overt issues that were attributable to ethnocultural or linguistic diversity were not

observed. The lack of ethnoculturally and linguistically diverse student populations in these schools resulted in "...having things sort of stay the same as they always were". However, Mr. Nomos stated that as "the cultural diversity of the [board] started to increase this was also a time where there was more proactive measures being taken in antiracism education".

[S]tudents were starting to recognize that they were underrepresented in the curriculum, school boards were starting to recognize that their teaching staff and their administration, administrative staff did not in any way, or did not appear to be reflecting the demographics of the community and all those sorts of issues.

Based on Mr. Nomos comments, one may conclude that the increase in ethnocultural diversity in the community facilitated the need for action at the school board level. If true, one may assume that had the demographics of "fairly homogenous middle class kids" identified by Mr. Nomos remained constant, the pre-merger board may not have felt the need to institute an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy.

6.4.2 - Mr. Newly on defining antiracism

Mr. Newly provides a fairly sweeping explanation of antiracist education:

You want to have the best education for all children and the best education for all children for me is antiracism education. Regardless of whether you are white, black, blue, whatever you are if you have an antiracism education on your back, you can succeed, you can and then you can contribute to society... [I]t has to be world-centric kind of education, where children we learn like and validate the importance of having diversity, diverse culture, diverse religion, diverse everything. So this stage is world education, it has to be, in every child in the classroom has to get engaged, that means, has to see himself or herself in what they are learning.

In examining Mr. Newly's comments, one may assume that he does not consider antiracist education to be an optional approach. Instead, Mr. Newly thinks antiracist education should be obligatory for all students. In a sense he views it as important in developing students "who are global thinkers and local actors... like they have a world view...are critical thinkers". In presenting his definition of antiracist education, Mr. Newly also touched upon the issue of defining racism. He provides a layered definition of what constitutes racism, one layer focuses on the issue of stereotyping and the second places greater emphasis on the issue of power distribution and relationships.

[Racism] could be like it's just something very simple, as prejudice you know.

When you could have prejudice, stereotypes against some people and this is very widespread. People have stereotypes you know. Even stereotypes related to occupations, stereotypes related to colour, stereotypes related to culture. The second level and the most important thing is racism related to power you know and that's the one that actually, this stereotype thing, I mean it doesn't do that much, it [racism related to power] can do harm to individuals.

The one to do with power, like racism based on power, like you want to you chose to be a racist. Regardless of whatever's driving you crazy to making you this person it doesn't matter, but you see that you want to keep the control, like the apartheid for example, to control over the people, resources, people ...and so someone has to do something about it.

From Mr. Newly's perspective the "someone" he refers to is not limited solely to the individual actor but to societal structures as well. "Either the system has to do something or the government has to do something or the employers have to do

something and no one seems to be doing anything.” Racism is primarily systemic in nature and as a result any antiracism approaches should require systemic changes.

6.4.3 - *Mr. Hyskool on defining antiracism*

Mr. Hyskool perceives racism and power to be intertwined and fuelled by preconceived notions of others - these preconceived ideas can affect one’s judgment.

I think with racism power ties to it, so someone who is a visible minority may have the same opinions, prejudicial feelings about let’s say their “White” quarterback in the school but they don’t have the same ability to hurt, harm, keep down that person, who is in the position of power, who is popular in the school, who has a lot of friends. So there is a power differential as well in racism.”

Racism is based on “somewhat of a preconceived notion of what that person is based on their colour, their background, their religion, their gender orientation and because of that perception you let it interfere with your judgment and in your dealings with that person and you do not provide as welcoming an environment to that person or to that group.

For Mr. Hyskool, antiracist education requires critical thinking and questioning of all aspects of the education system. Also central to his understanding of antiracist education is the need to create an inclusive classroom that integrates varied perspectives and materials. He calls for going beyond “...the one textbook written by the one author or the two authors that are approved by the Ministry of Education in Ontario”, adding that this approach to schooling is “a very, very limited form...and not education”. In fact, this form of school “...does not actually open minds”. He added, “basically [education consists of] critically analyzing the material in front of you and bringing everyone’s history that is in the

classroom, everyone's background, everyone's experiences from where they come, into the subject that you're teaching." For Mr. Hyskool antiracism requires that students see themselves represented in the curriculum and in the teaching and administrative personnel. He stressed the need for an antiracist curriculum that is not just about foods and festivals.

Mr. Hyskool concedes that although some initiatives have been taken within his school board, he finds them to be somewhat lacking in terms of the depth that is required to engender change.

[Y]es there have been some units developed that promote antiracism issues and so forth that aren't simply Eurocentric focused. Eid is coming up so we'll probably have a little, some schools will have a little assembly about it, or will have lunch provided by the Muslim students in the school. That's not antiracist curriculum, that's a great start and that and that's better than nothing, I'm not saying that they shouldn't do that.

Instead he calls for a curriculum that is "...analytical and critical of all the information presented to you". He expresses concern that emphasis on the importance of creating an educational system that is based on antiracist theory has faltered.

[I]nstead of calling it a racist act we call it bullying now, under an umbrella, this term bullying which covers up a lot of what is actually happening, so it kind of desensitizes the real issue... But I think the problem with the term bullying is it covers up what the real issues are, they're kind of dancing around the issues, to almost make it seem that the issues have improved at least the racism issues, the anti-homophobia issues, the gender issue.

Mr. Hyskool is concerned that antiracist issues have been overshadowed by other administrative agendas that help to deny the existence of racism and racializing practices in the education system. In directing attention away from antiracism, schools are able to gloss over the reasons that traditionally marginalized members of the population continue to trail others academically.

6.4.4 - *“Mr. Sollovochey” on defining antiracism*

The abbreviated nature of the interview with Mr. Sollovochey did not include in depth commentary regarding his personal definition of racism and antiracism. He made no specific comments regarding his definition of antiracism and/or racism.

6.4.5 - *Ms. Long on defining antiracism*

For Ms. Long, negative judgement, unjust stereotypes and inequitable practices are key characteristics of racist behaviour. Also of importance to Ms. Long is the need for people to be aware of their actions and the effect that they have on others. Moreover, she believes that people need to be made conscious of their actions by highlighting the things that they say or do. The ability to do so is central to Ms. Long’s vision of what constitutes racism and antiracist approaches.

I think racism is really based on prejudices and I would see it as being a judgment of someone based solely on their race and the judgment is usually a negative judgment, in other words racism is negative.

Because racism is inequitable, it’s been based on stereotypes and has this one aspect of “they’re no good and we’re better” and “so they don’t deserve the rights that we have because we’ve earned our rights” I think that antiracism breaks down the stereotypes, allows people to recognize that people who are victims of racism are

coming, are starting out behind the starting point and therefore programs like affirmative action have some credibility because you are starting from below the, behind the starting line...

Ms. Long believes that in order to break down the stereotypes and prejudice, “true antiracism” must begin with critical self-analysis, “you have to examine yourself and that’s a very personal thing”. The critical self-analysis that she refers to requires that individuals ask themselves difficult questions about how they came to make particular judgements based on negative stereotypes. More specifically, Ms. Long states that the self-reflection process involves asking questions like, “was it from my parents, was it from my interaction with other races that might have been negative, is it based really on stereotypes and breaking down those stereotypes and looking at equity”?

For Ms. Long confronting the person who is racist is necessary in order to generate dialogue and self-critical thinking, and individual behaviour is central to her understanding of racism and instituting antiracist practices. However, her understanding of issues associated with racism is not limited solely to the individual; Ms. Long also takes into account the need for ethnocultural equity as manifested in affirmative action programs that are aimed at giving the traditionally marginalized members of society a fair chance, or through addressing faith-related issues and concerns in a fair and equitable manner. “I think that you don’t just look at antiracism, but you have to look at the ethnocultural equity side of it which means that you look at faith issues as well.” Ms. Long’s mentions the “faith-related issues” because she believes that oftentimes well-meaning teachers are placing some of their students in awkward situations. For example, she said that

...some teachers, are so gung ho and a lot of these teachers are young and inexperienced and they're telling everything about sex... and Muslim students are just overwhelmed, they're embarrassed, their parents don't want them to be privy to everything that is out there"; these students' needs are not being met.

Ms. Long believes that awareness and acknowledgement of antiracism is important, but ethnocultural equity issues must also be addressed. She believes that antiracism as a practice is based on the need to attack racism on different levels "not just the school systems but also looking at it in ways that we can educate society".

6.4.6 - Mr. and Mrs. Couple on defining antiracism

'Antiracism' is a term that Mr. Couple and particularly Mrs. Couple are uncomfortable with. According to Mrs. Couple the term has too many negative connotations associated with it and therefore her preference is to think in terms of creating ethnocultural equity. Mrs. Couple believes that discussions surrounding antiracism are more apt to focus on what she perceives as the "problem" instead of the "solution".

We were looking at the more positive side [which] was the ethnocultural equity and so if you move towards ethnocultural equity you would be moving from focusing on antiracism. Instead of focusing on the problem we [community advisory group] it was looking at [community advisory group] focusing on the solution.

One aspect of focusing on the solution involves moving away from discussions of "tolerance", "uniformity" and "acculturation, instead Mrs. Couple stresses the need for cultural diversity to be "valued, respected and validated".

Mr. and Mrs. Couple call for greater emphasis on the "positive" which is what they strove for while participating in the development of the OSB Peters Policy. As Mr. Couple

said, “the future generation that we are training, we have to train them to embrace diversity as not something that is novel but as something that is intrinsic in their very being.”

Mrs. Couple adds that racism can be defined in terms of people being assigned to particular groups. These groupings differentiate and more importantly the groupings serve as a means for determining who is to be ‘included’ or ‘excluded’ from meaningful participation in societal structures such as schools. Those who are excluded are oftentimes, marginalized and their sense of exclusion results in feelings of failure and of constantly having to fight and struggle for acceptance or at the very least acknowledgement from members of the ‘included’ group: “It’s that something which treats people differently, you have a superior and an inferior group and the superior group tends to dominate and as Mr. Couple says robs people of their soul and their intrinsic worth.” Mrs. Couple thinks “it [racism] keeps on kind of just grinding them into the ground rather than having them develop their potential”. As noted by Mrs. Couple, those affected by racism are in a constant struggle because they must continually “fight against something that they did not create just because of who they are. In our case it is because of colour, in some other case it’s because of faith, in some other case it’s because of national origin”.

Mr. and Mrs. Couple view the road towards change as one that depends on the participation of both the “superior” and “inferior” groups.

The thing that was brought up was that [the change process] has to be more accommodating, but the thing about this is it comes from both sides and so the people have to have that kind of courage to say that I am going to do something you know and so and so this is where the ethnic organizations come in, they have to be able to help some of these groups to make sure that representation is there. This is

why you have the people of colour who are teachers in the system can also help...It's not one person who has the responsibility, there are a number of players that have to really join together to make that difference.

Active participation must come from both sides and therefore the onus to work and enact change is also upon those who have been classified as 'excluded'.

6.4.7 – Summary of participant perspectives on antiracism

The participants' commentary reflects a range of perspectives. For example, Mr. Newly and Mr. Hyskool's understanding of race, racism and antiracism is grounded in the notion of that there are issues within the system as a whole that must be addressed in order for significant and meaningful changes to occur. For both men, the visible minority student experience in the education system is dependent upon the introduction of changes that should take place at differing levels.

Although only Mr. Newly and Mr. Hyskool spoke at length about the need for curricula and system changes, their sentiments about creating a more inclusive curriculum were echoed to varying degrees among the other study participants. As suggested by the participants, curriculum development should include making commonplace the practice of interweaving curricular material that is representative of an increasingly ethnoculturally diverse Canadian population. For the most part, participants did agree on the need to create and maintain a teaching and administrative body that is representative of the student population.

However, differences in personal understandings did emerge when participants were asked to define racism and antiracism. Instead of focusing on antiracism, Mr. and Mrs. Couple chose to frame their definition around the need to

emphasize the importance of equity. Furthermore, apart from Mr. Newly and Mr. Hyskool, the study participants tended to see the issue as one of individual prejudice or the need to accommodate diversity rather than viewing the issue of racism as being systemic or institutionalized.

6.5 - Participant Voices: The policy development process

The presentation of participant commentary now shifts to the policy development process and some of the discussion that occurred during that phase of the Peters Policy. The individuals interviewed for the study participated differently in the policy development process. As the board appointed facilitator, Mr. Nomos led a pre-merger board antiracism policy development process. Over the 2 ½ years that Mr. Nomos held the position of facilitator, he was responsible for steering the group of community group representatives, teachers, parents, students and fellow board representatives through the various phases of policy development. Mr. Newly joined the process as a member of the community not affiliated with a particular organization. Mr. and Mrs. Couple came to the process as representatives for particular community groups and as interested parents. Ms. Long was involved in the policy development process first as a representative for a teacher committee and upon her retirement she remained involved as a concerned citizen. Mr. Hyskool began participating in the policy process fairly recently as a member of a teacher committee focused on providing professional development opportunities on antiracism and ethnocultural equity to board personnel.

6.5.1 - Mr. Nomos on the policy development process

As the board designated facilitator for the OSB Peters Policy development process, Mr. Nomos played a critical role in determining the procedures and

direction taken during the policy development phase. However, decisions taken by the policy development group were required to comply with the expectations mandated and outlined by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training (see Appendix 4). When asked what precipitated the call for the development of an antiracism and ethnocultural policy in all Ontario school boards, Mr. Nomos provided his personal perspective.

My impression was that a lot of this came out of the Toronto area. So race and cultural issues out of Toronto because like many other things in terms of their issues that came out of the Toronto area had an impact on provincial policies. I think that there were a number of different things, but I think that the whole issue of employment equity and some of the issues that were probably coming out of central Ontario area were key to what was happening in schools at that point in time probably were the genesis that led to program memorandum 119.

Mr. Nomos's comments highlight how events and decisions that are taken in the province's largest city have a direct effect on provincial policy as a whole. In the case of the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy, Mr. Nomos believes that the push for school boards across the province to develop the policy could be linked to broader equity initiatives that had been advanced by the provincial government. In any event, his participation in developing the OSB policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity lasted approximately three years instead of the originally anticipated two years. During his last year of tenure in the role, the provincial government mandated the merger of several school boards. As a result of the

amalgamation process and because of the relationships that he had formed with various community workers, Mr. Nomos was asked to stay on an additional year to participate in the *Improving Education Committee* which “was supposed to be a process for working with the community workers”.

At the time of amalgamation they also brought in someone who represented another school board that had been part of the merger and at the time of Mr. Nomos departure this individual assumed the facilitator’s role. “[Mr. Curlew]...[Mr. Curlew] came in I think in the second year to represent [a previous board’s] interest and we had parallel sort of roles at the amalgamation they retained us and then when I was appointed [as lead facilitator], [Mr. Curlew] took over the role.”

However, the policy development process was not led solely by these two individuals, as creation of the policy was dependent upon the participation of a number of people. Over several months he worked alongside a varied group of people to “develop a policy and procedure”, during which, he notes that people became quite invested in that policy and procedure.

Even with the number of people that may have been involved in the policy development process at any given time, Mr. Nomos saw the inclusion of the various individuals and their viewpoints as positive because of the type of dialogue generated by their interaction. The benefits could be summed up in terms of: (a) providing a forum for discussion; (b) explicit demonstration of the school board’s commitment to the process; and (c) a sense of appreciation on the part of the community or more specifically the community members and groups that participated in the process.

The bottom line was I think that the greatest sort of benefit that we had was the network that was formed from constantly talking with each other. The teachers hearing from parents, the principals hearing from parents, the superintendents hearing from parents and students about their experience. So, again we don't want to look at this entirely with rose-coloured glasses, but I thought it was an important initiative and I will be quite honest, I invested three years of my life into that initiative you know. In terms of trying and the nice thing is that I found, in terms of the commitment from the board I was working for, they assigned me full time to this, they gave me a support staff, they gave me budget to work with, for training, for release time and all those types of things and I think those are important sorts of pieces that the community appreciates.

Mr. Nomos credits much of the success of the initial policy development process to use of the consensus model as part of any decision-making. He also recognizes that opting to use the consensus model as a tool in the policy development process may not have been readily embraced by all participants in the process.

The consensus model that we used was, I think it was a very powerful tool because one voice could stop us dead in our tracks. We never voted on anything over the course of the year and a half. It may not have been the most efficient model but what you do at the end of it is you have significant sort of buy in and ownership of the process. It was part of what the entire document pointed out to us. It was really an interesting way that they laid out the policy program memorandum 122.

Despite his satisfaction with how the policy development process unfolded, Mr. Nomos did acknowledge that initially people did come with pre-established agendas, "so we had to sort

of recognize that was what was going to be happening in that first couple of meetings”.

However, he did add that “when you have 110 people in there and you are trying to keep things moving, that is sometimes easier than when you have 6 people and you are trying to keep things moving”. Mr. Nomos did concede that there were times when he felt “...I’m the machine, I represent the machine” and in those situations he often felt that community representatives were better equipped to explain an issue or influence and set the direction of the proceedings. As stated by Mr. Nomos,

We had a role, we had a task, part of what I was supposed to do was to engage the community and to produce the policy and to do the training and those sorts of things and we did that, but again those are my perspectives and people within the group will provide you with other perspectives about what went on and how successful the process was.

In order to keep the policy development process moving along and to facilitate a degree of “ownership” among the participants, Mr. Nomos felt that they had to use the consensus model. As outlined by the provincial government policy development guidelines document, this notion of creating a partnership that involved school board representatives, parents, students and community organizations was considered central to the policy development process. Although Mr. Nomos found the consensus model to be a “powerful tool”, he does appear to have been unsure as to whether others found the process to be useful and “successful”.

6.5.2 - Mr. Newly on the policy development process

Not affiliated with any particular group, Mr. Newly initially attended the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development process for several school

boards. He eventually decided to focus solely on the process that was being undertaken by one pre-merger board because he saw its consensus-based or as he defines it 'more democratic' approach as inclusive.

The [pre-merger board] took a community approach where, they didn't care whether you belong to an organization or not, that was not the issue. They just want to get everybody, anybody they could get into the meeting. [Other school boards] took a different route where they had the committee that was doing this. They had representations from organized organizations, minority ethnic organizations. So if I were to go to them... I could be a participant but I couldn't vote. I don't know, I didn't get interested in that. It was like there was some, for me there was a barrier. Whereas [another school board] was open, an open kind of door... More people were showing up to the Board meetings.

This issue of the level of individual vs. community group representation was to be a major discussion point during the merger process. Mr. Nomos spoke of the "bickering and control concerns" that arose during the board merger process. His group of participants thought that their approach was "more democratic, more inclusive and they were adamant that the process not become like the approach used in other boards of education.

Actually I can remember, there was a lot of you know like bickering and control concerns and the "Barlow" Board⁹ people thought that they were more democratic, more inclusive and they didn't want the process to become like the one that was [followed in one of the pre-merger boards]. [T]here was a lot of talk about that and the people and when the meetings were happening a lot of people were saying 'ok we don't want to go to that, we want to maintain this type of process, you know open

⁹ A pseudonym for a pre-merger school board.

door policy, this is like a very important issue and it cannot be left with a very small group of people’.

Ultimately the Barlow group’s wishes prevailed and it was decided that policy development team members could choose to participate in the process as either an individual community member or a representative of a community organization.

Another point of concern for all the participants involved in the policy development process was the newly created board’s (OSB) decision to abolish the full-time facilitator role. According to Mr. Newly, despite the eventual introduction of another role that had responsibility for the Peters Policy, the OSB’s decision to abolish the facilitator position dampened the enthusiasm and drive of those who participated in the policy development process.

[P]eople were concerned that if you lose the position then the process will not continue. That implementing what people had agreed, like the policy, they say that no one is even going to do anything anymore. The people were concerned [that] the board have kind of like abandoned their commitment.

Ultimately, the OSB did create a new position, “what they call [antiracism] position”, but according to Mr. Newly “it was not as exciting as it used to be; it was more of a professional development and training and things like that, that they were providing to the school”. A sense of apathy and disengagement came to exist among members of the community, particularly within the communities that would benefit the most from the successful implementation of antiracism policies.

According to Mr. Newly, community interest in the process still needs to be re-kindled. Involvement and a re-commitment by different stakeholders in the process (e.g.

parents, community groups, etc.) are required. As Mr. Newly points out “everyone has to be engaged”.

First of all we have to have a report card and someone has to evaluate you know what transpired in those ten years. Other item is, minority groups have to become more involved, ...become more actively engaged in the school councils....From my work and from my personal level I don't see that a lot has changed. People are still really kind of disengaged for many reasons, it doesn't matter for the reasons, what matters is like they have to re-engage people. Like I mean the [community advisory group] is a good process. You can use, the school council is another...

Ten years have passed and significant positive changes in the educational experiences of visible and linguistic minority students have not materialized.

According to Mr. Newly, the slow speed at which change has occurred signals the need for a systemic review of the current antiracism policy and implementation plan.

Mr. Newly also calls for the re-ignition of interest among those who would benefit the most from changes. He believes that the [community advisory group] along with the school council are likely the best places to begin the drive to re-engage the public.

6.5.3 - Ms. Long on the policy development process

Ms. Long said that a formal antiracism policy was introduced by the Ontario provincial government in the early 1990s “I think it was a result of the Bob Rae government, the NDP [New Democratic Party] government, ...they had a commitment, I think more formalized than any government prior to them”. However, when the NDP lost the provincial election and the Progressive Conservative (PC) party came into power under the

leadership of Mike Harris changes occurred. In Ms. Long's school board, an antiracism policy was created and "compliance with that [policy] really did take". However, as she points out

[W]hen the Mike Harris¹⁰ government came in all of that seemed to go. One, there was no money for it, I don't even think there was a formal group or committee within the ministry of education directed at antiracism and ethnocultural equity, but there had been in previous governments.

According to Ms. Long, under the Mike Harris government school boards were under no specific obligation to ensure that an antiracism policy was developed and implemented¹¹. It is her belief that "there was no policy from the Ministry of Education kind saying 'this had to be done', so it was a choice by that time". Despite the lack of government oversight, the OSB did continue its work on developing an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy and implementation plan.

One important development that emerged out of the OSB's continuing efforts to develop an antiracism policy and implementation plan was the creation of the community advisory group to the board. The community advisory group was created during the latter stages of the government mandated policy development process. The advisory group was composed of representatives from school boards, volunteer teachers, school administrators, parents, community groups and general members of the public. The community advisory group was charged by the OSB to prepare a new antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy

¹⁰ Ontario Provincial Conservative party leader 1995-2003.

¹¹ Legislation regarding the development of antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy in Ontario school boards did remain in place under the Mike Harris government, however, the government divisions and branches that were tasked with ensuring compliance with the government mandated policy were dismantled by 1996. See Chapter 5 for discussion of the policy timeline.

that would be used in the recently merged school boards in addition to integrating a number of other policies.

[The year 1997] was amalgamation and was the year that the [community advisory group] really came together. I was the co-chair that year and that year we had task groups we covered, we must have had 60 to 80 people involved, which was really a huge number of people that were interested and worked on different committees.

We had a very exciting time because we had a policy group and so there was a group of teachers, not many, but some teachers, large community input, [Mr. Curlew] was on that committee as a consultant [on antiracism and ethnocultural from the board].

[Mr. Curlew] and Mr. Nomos acted as co-consultants for the first, I think the first two years of amalgamation. That was the beginning of sort of bringing policies together and they covered very much the same areas.

Over the course of a year the group reviewed and synthesized the pre-merger school boards policies and procedures “that was covered [in the boards] on particular areas and then brought back, came up with an encompassing statement for each of the different areas” that were eventually presented to the board for approval. Prior to submitting a comprehensive policy statement(s) to the OSB, discussions took place within a task group of the community advisory council regarding how to integrate the previously separate boards’ policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity: “[T]hey took it clause by clause and worked on the wording, the policy was then presented to the [community advisory group] and so we worked by consensus and we agreed that would be what would go to the board.” Upon completion of the review and synthesis process, Mr. Nomos presented the completed document to the senior administrators and the board for approval. According to Ms. Long,

“I believe that was a unanimous decision, that there was no real [disagreements], I think they may have asked a couple of questions about certain aspects of it but it was unanimously accepted as board policy.”

Over the years, Ms. Long has viewed the role of the community advisory group and its members as a source of information and advocacy for parents and students within the OSB community. The existence of the advisory council is crucial because it serves as a link between members of the community and the school board. In Ms. Long’s estimation, pushing for commitment from the board to ensure that the advisory group will continue to exist is necessary.

I think the role of the [community advisory group], is one that is informative to parents about what their rights are, what the board provides. In fact we wrote a letter to the Director [recently] to get their commitment to the implementation of the policy is still up there as number one and the Director wrote back via the Principal or the Superintendent involved in curriculum services with a positive answer and the fact that they were getting in-service for that, for the board staff and the board officer advised us that he had already given them one in-service and that he would give them another one...

The community advisory group’s continued existence is seen as critical to ensuring that concerns regarding antiracism and ethnocultural equity remain front burner issues within the OSB. However, Ms. Long’s sense that the role of the advisory group had been established as an information source for parents and the de facto advocacy group for the community have been tested in the last few years.

I think that we've, we didn't lose ground, but we may have been treading water for two years and part of that was the [community advisory group's] fault because we did not push the envelope in terms of making demands on [the board]¹² and we were, I felt we were floundering. So this year, I was really going to leave if we didn't do better, I felt I was really wasting time.

Ms. Long thinks that the last few years were difficult in part because of the individual who had assumed the role of antiracism officer. The antiracism officer [Mr. Greene] was relatively new to the teaching profession and to the board and Ms. Long felt that "this lack of history in terms of the teacher and school board community possibly hampered performance in the role". She adds that as a result of a "lack of history", Mr. Greene's performance in the role of antiracism officer was adequate but despite "...really trying, [Mr. Greene] didn't attract the teacher support that we have had in the past". Ms. Long also highlighted that Mr. Greene's difficulty in attracting support was likely a result of not feeling "...confident with teachers who were more experienced, who were older who were more involved in a lot of things that [Mr. Greene] hadn't experienced". Her views on the current antiracism officer, Ms. Newtoo, are rather different. Ms. Long thinks that although Ms. Newtoo is relatively young, she has more teaching experience and she "has a sense of self and confidence which is very contagious". Ms. Long now feels a greater sense of commitment to the community advisory group and the work that they would like to do in terms of seeing the Peters Policy implemented. Her interest in the advisory group and the process has been re-ignited which is due in part to the introduction of Ms. Newtoo, as well as other new board liaison personnel and administrators. Her excitement has returned

¹² Represented by the OSB appointed member who serves as liaison to the community advisory council. This individual is usually a teacher who has been appointed to a position that is similar to the original facilitator role that was held by Mr. Nomos. The position usually held for a two-year term.

because she feels that the emphasis is on implementing the antiracism and ethnocultural policy.

[A]t the end of last year we had a meeting with the Superintendent and there was a new Principal...we decided we needed to have this meeting to clear up what our goals were and that was how we decided that 'yes, we're focusing on the policy being implemented and we are focusing on the board's commitment to that. So we've got the commitment and we've got a new person to work with who's you know I think a little more assertive. And because we're working on policy I think we're going to push a little bit more for things like the media centre and the teaching workshops. I mean it wasn't like everything stopped, it did continue but it was inching along instead of striding along.

Overall, Ms. Long remains optimistic about what the community advisory group is capable of doing. She strongly believes in its ability to be a voice for the community and for the students regarding antiracism issues. Additionally, she believes that recent personnel changes and discussions with school board administrators have helped to re-invigorate her interest in the antiracism policy development and implementation process. She thinks that the commitment to make changes still exists in the school board and that the community advisory group is in a position to take advantage of that.

6.5.5 - Mr. and Mrs. Couple on the policy development process

As parents with children in one of the pre-merger school boards, Mr. and Mrs. Couple were involved in working on developing an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy in the early stages of the process. Both Mr. and Mrs. Couple were part of the group

of individuals who worked with Mr. Nomos to develop the pre-merger board's antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy. According to Mr. and Mrs. Couple, Mr. Nomos led the process and was responsible for managing the process that involved approximately 70-100 people. Work within the group was divided into smaller focus groups and these focus groups were tasked with discussing a range of issues.

From the focus groups we discussed various issues and came up 'what you think should be done' and kind of brainstormed about what should be done and from that brainstorming process we would prepare the reports and present to a plenary session and then Mr. Nomos would prepare the reports for the next meeting and then we went on and looked at, we looked at different things. We looked at things like leadership, board policies, school community partnerships and different things and from, it, evaluation, curriculum and it was from that that you, we had that way because you had to look at core objectives, what was the plan of action, the outcomes, resources and responsibility. After the conclusion of the focus group you know we came together again for a little while from I think September to December and developed this policy and implementation plan that you have a copy...

Mr. and Mrs. Couple's comments regarding the policy development process expanded on some of the points made by Mr. Nomos during his interview. Their comments presented the policy development process as structured in some respects but also flexible. For example, as noted in the previous excerpt, participants in the policy process were expected to work within focus groups; however decision making was done through a combination of brainstorming and consensus. Furthermore, they had the ability to work with several focus groups.

I worked on evaluation, administration, another time I worked on curriculum like I was in leadership, yeah policy you know and things like that... Sometimes it depends on which was appropriate, sometimes it's up to them and sometimes in the focus group we would move around. Even if you were in one particular focus group, the fact that when the group reported in the larger meeting then there are chances to talk within the focus groups itself usually have somebody who was a facilitator and then you'd have a recorder, and then you would record these things and bring them back and it was, I think initially it was really more brainstorming. All the ideas were there and sometimes there were repetitions and so forth so when it was brought, it was put together in the end it became you just pull out the salient points. You were able to kind of get all the ideas and make sure that everything was there, but not a monotonous repetition of ideas.

[E]verything would be arrived at through consensus, so, there were different views, we respected the right of people to air their concerns but whatever is decided on was through a consensus process. (Mrs. Couple)

During and following amalgamation, the policy development process changed somewhat. The use of a consensus approach to decision making was used but the creation of co-chairs¹³ for the different policy issues was introduced. Speaking specifically about what had initially happened within their pre-merger board, Mrs. Couple noted that

We had a structure and so each area has what's called a co-chair. On the curriculum we had a co-chair, on the policy we had a co-chair, full community partnership and things like that, we had different co-chairs for different things it was the co-chairs for the different areas...

¹³ Representatives from previously separate school boards were identified to serve as a chair.

She highlighted that the process may have been somewhat different for other school boards during the amalgamation process, however during amalgamation, their pre-merger board's co-chairs met with counterparts from other school boards to discuss their respective antiracism and ethnocultural equity policies.

We had a number of joint meetings, of which we examined the composition of this new entity. You know you have things like the committee would be, anyone who is interested in promoting the goals of the group. It would have broad participation where each person had equal status and it is also include a leadership structure. And then we developed mandates and terms of reference and we looked at the focus of the committee and that was to provide awareness around antiracism.

... [W]e looked at the support required, the budget and the reporting structure...and we had a series of meetings and eventually we developed a mission statement. We developed a name... the mission statement is what holds for today.

(Mrs. Couple)

Once again Mrs. Couple's comments demonstrate the presence of specific methods, like use of focus groups, joint meetings and tackling specific topics (e.g. budget) to provide order and structure to the discussion and decision-making process.

The final stage of the process of amalgamating the formerly separate school board's policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity involved presenting the newly created policy to the OSB administration. This stage in the process was considered crucial because the advisory group considered it imperative that the school board administration provides full support and commitment to enacting the principles, goals and strategies outlined in their report.

[A]fter we met and it was agreed that we had reached that process or reached that stage where amalgamation was a reality, we developed a presentation for the board, for the new board and presented on the amalgamation for the board's concerns. We had the name, the mission statement you know where we were going and so forth. You need to have the board commitment and the expectation on the part of the leadership of the board. Which means that the trustees, the Director of Education, the superintendent who runs it and the principal because if the principals are committed to doing this thing it will happen.

Mr. and Mrs. Couple recounted an antiracism policy development process that ultimately relied upon its acceptance by senior board administrators. Interestingly, Mr. and Mrs. Couple suggest that the practical success of an antiracism policy rests not solely with the board but with individual school principals. Based on their comments, one may conclude that they judge willingness and commitment on the part of the principals to be a critical factor in the adoption, integration, and monitoring of any antiracism implementation plan.

6.5.6 – Summary of participant perspectives on the policy development process

Participant commentary regarding the policy development process itself was fairly consistent. All participants spoke of the important role that the consensus approach to decision making played in developing the policy. Possibly more important is the positive manner in which they spoke of the decision to use a consensus model in determining direction and creating the policy and implementation plan document. Although some, like participants Mr. Nomos and Mr. Newly commented on the concerns voiced during the school board merger about

continued use of the consensus model, none of the participants interviewed for this study viewed the decision negatively. Instead, they saw the approach as a way to instill a feeling of inclusiveness and ownership of the policy development process.

Also apparent in the participant commentary is the importance of community and board participation and support in the policy development and implementation process. Concern about apathy on the part of community members (e.g. parents, students) and school officials was mentioned by most of the study participants. Participants like Mr. Newly, and Mr. and Mrs. Couple worry about the lack of visible and linguistic minority student participation and commitment. Possibly, this actual or perceived lack of commitment has helped to reinforce the participants' belief that the community advisory group to the board plays the vital role of resource and advocate for traditionally marginalized populations in the community.

6.5.7 – Initial findings

As mentioned throughout this text, three research questions were used to guide this study. More specifically, the questions focused on the relationship between participant personal experience(s) and their decision to become involved in the policy process, participant understandings of racism and antiracism and the policy development process itself. Examining the participant commentary with regards to the core research questions resulted in several findings. On the issue of participant personal experience(s) and their involvement in the policy process, it was found that personal experience did serve as a motivator and catalyst for the study participants to become involved in the development and/or implementation of an OSB antiracism policy. For example, Mr. Hyskool's specifically cited that his own

experiences as a newly arrived Canadian immigrant in the education system served as the impetus for him to become a teacher and fuelled his interest in antiracism education. His interest in antiracism education has since led him to participate in the OSBs teacher advisory committee that focuses on providing in-service training to OSB personnel.

Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Couple spoke of their children's experiences in the school board and how those experiences along with their involvement in other community advocacy initiatives led to their continued participation in OSB antiracism policy development and implementation initiatives. In the case of other participants such as Mr. Nomos and Mr. Newly, personal experience as visible/linguistic minorities did seem to play a role in their decision to participate in the policy development process, however, both participants were also motivated by their professional interests and goals. As the lead facilitator for the policy development process, Mr. Nomos was able to gain knowledge and experience that led to more senior posts within the board, while Mr. Newly was able to establish contacts within, and knowledge about the community that may have directly or indirectly led to his current role as manager of a community organization. However, in all cases what was found was a lack of discussion about the lived experiences of students within the OSB.

In the case of the second question on participant understandings of racism and antiracism it was found that participant definitions and understandings tended to differ. Possibly the most striking difference in terms of understanding and defining antiracism was voiced by Mr. and Mrs. Couple. As noted earlier in the chapter, Mr.

and Mrs. Couple both expressed a preference for using the term “equity” as opposed to antiracism. In their view the term antiracism focuses more on the “negative” while equity has a more positive tone.

Other study participants such as Mr. Newly and Mr. Hyskool focused on defining and discussing the institutional nature of racism. From their perspective racism is a system wide problem and as such the development, implementation and evaluation of antiracism policies should occur at all levels of the organization. To varying degrees all participants did have similar feelings about what the policy should achieve and what is meant by racism and antiracism but Mr. Newly and Mr. Hyskool’s comments tended to focus more squarely on the institutional and systemic nature of racism.

The third question focused on the study participants understanding of the policy development and implementation process itself. Based on a review of the study participant’s comments I found that for the most part the study participants had a positive view of the policy development process. With the exception of Mr. Sollovochey, participants found use of the consensus approach to decision-making appropriate and efficient. In Mr. Sollovochey’s view, the consensus approach to decision-making during the policy development process resulted in dilution of the policy statements.

In terms of the origins of the policy document, all study participants were aware that the policy had been part of the NDP government mandate dating back to 1992. However, they were also aware that subsequent provincial governments, and the OSB had not followed up on ensuring that the policy was being implemented.

As noted in Chapter 5, by 1997 the government departments tasked with specifically overseeing that the antiracism policy development and implementation process had been dismantled. Overall the participants were acutely aware that a majority of the stated policy outcomes and deadlines had not been achieved. For the most part, the study participants felt that the lack of policy implementation was a direct result of a lack of resources, funding and general leadership across government, school boards and individual schools. According to some of the study participants like Mr.

Hyskool, groups at the school board or school level that are expected to participate in the policy development and implementation process are often understaffed, underfunded and lack the resources needed to implement the policy. For example, Mr. Hyskool mentioned that although the teachers advisory committee is expected to develop in-service training for teachers across the OSB, they are expected to do so with only several hundred dollars of funding. Additionally, the school board has one person assigned to the role of antiracism representative, who serves as liaison and facilitator between board administration, teachers and the community advisory committee to the board, this individual is also expected to manage development and implementation in other programs across the OSB.

As noted above, examining participant commentary regarding the knowledge they bring to the antiracism policy development process, their understandings of antiracism and the policy development process itself have resulted in the identification of several findings. The findings outlined above are not only linked to the core research questions, they may also be discussed in terms of several broader themes that relate to antiracism policy development in education. Some of the

themes touch upon areas like the role of lived experience in the policy process, representation and the fictional nature of representativeness, the extent to which participation in the policy development process translates into implementation of the policy, and how organizational structures may both foster and hinder antiracism policy development and subsequent implementation. The preceding themes along with others will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7: Discussion

The process of studying the Peters Policy has provided a window, through which to view how organizations, in this case an Ontario school board, approach the issue of antiracism policy development. Having conducted this investigation of an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy, I feel that in addition to the initial findings presented at the end of Chapter 6, there are several key points that warrant further discussion. The following discussion is based on a combination of the literature review conducted for the study, the participant commentary and initial findings and my personal understandings and observations of how the literature and the commentary may or may not inform the OSB antiracism policy development process.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I believe that there are several points of interest that emerge from this study. The points of interest include (a) the role of lived experience in the policy process, (b) representation and the fiction of representativeness, (c) the importance of implementation, and (d) the role of loose and tight coupling in the policy process. The preceding points organize my discussion for the remainder of this chapter.

7.1 - Role of lived experience in antiracism policy development process

A point of interest that emerged for me following my review of participant commentary and the policy documents is the lack of attention that appears to have been paid to the issue of racism as lived experience. The policy document reviewed presents a number of surface level statements regarding what constitute racism, for example, the document cites the need for schools to demonstrate a commitment to antiracism and ethnocultural equity in terms of its policies, guidelines and practices. These policies, guidelines and practices are to be evaluated to ensure fairness and equity for all members of the school

community. For the most part, the policy and related documents reviewed together with the interview comments are relatively silent about the daily experiences of racism in school settings.

When actual occurrences of racism in schools were identified in the interviews, they were focused on the interview participant's personal experiences. In spite of this fact, having attended several community advisory group meetings, I noticed that specific reference to racism in schools has been limited. In fact the issues that were more likely to be discussed focused on forthcoming ethnocultural school activities such as Black History Month, a lack of adequate prayer rooms and monitors for some schools, or concerns about co-educational sex education discussions occurring in certain classes.

During his interview, Mr. Nomos noted that early on during the policy development process a separate forum that consisted of students was established. An individual from the main policy development team was responsible for leading the student forum and providing a briefing to the main policy team. In part this separate forum was created because the main policy team had wanted to increase student participation in the process and as stated by Mr. Nomos,

We found that whenever we brought the students in we they weren't really participating at the same level because again you've got lawyers and doctors and teachers and principals and everybody else, so we had a separate forum that met with the students prior to our formal meeting.

Mr. Nomos, added that the policy development team found that obtaining the students' perspectives often "helped to ground" the larger policy development team discussions. More specifically, the students' comments allowed them to better understand "what was actually

happening”. The student forum allowed the students to speak freely “...about the actual curriculum they were getting, the impressions of the curriculum”, which proved to be “...extremely valuable input” for the policy development process. However, this process of including students’ voices in determining policy direction, implementation and evaluation has not been sustained over the years. As mentioned by Ms. Long during her interview, a student arm of the advisory committee does exist, however in “the last two years it wasn’t as active as it has been in the past and we’re hoping that it will become more so”. Ms. Long acknowledged that meeting locations might hinder the extent to which the students as well as parents may be able to continue their participation in the process.

With regards to the OSB, discussions of students’ lived experiences in the educational setting are generally limited to second-hand accounts. For example, Mrs. Couple spoke of the disproportionate number of suspensions that are handed out to visible minority students, particularly black students. She also highlighted that there is a lack of awareness among school personnel regarding the life experiences and difficulties faced by visible and linguistic minority students.

[Y]ou know there are incidents of harassment and things like that and also if you look at some of these...children who come as refugees and the lack of understanding of some of the pain which they come with and it’s interpreted as aggression....[A]lot of the black youth have complained that they are treated differently and you know they have unfair kind of, I say level of suspensions and things like that and things like the safe schools act.

Mrs. Couple speaks about the harassment that visible and linguistic minority students may have to face in the educational setting, and the lack of awareness on the part of school

administrators and educators regarding some of the difficulties students may have had to face in the past. She notes that although “schools are putting on these shows or they’re making an effort to respect that diversity, we still have a long way to go”.

Mrs. Couple’s comments do highlight that students are being affected as a result of racializing practices. Mrs. Couple’s comments suggest that students are harassed and penalized unduly and as a result of these inequitable practices, students respond with aggression and/or apathy. She believes that although efforts by schools to be more inclusive are being made in some areas, there remains a lack of understanding about the issues that concern and influence visible and linguistic minority students’ school experiences. Mrs. Couple’s comments allude to the need for educators to develop a greater awareness of the social and academic impact that they may have on a student’s well being.

In considering the study participants’ accounts of racism in school settings, their stories were often powerful and were linked to how they became involved in antiracism issues. For example, Mr. Newly spoke of his experiences of racism as a new immigrant, Mr. Hyskool spoke of the difficulties he encountered as a newly arrived student and Mr. and Mrs. Couple spoke of their children’s experiences and their personal interactions with school administrators. Participant accounts, however, rarely reflected the situations that are currently being experienced by students. It appears that from a policy perspective, the intended audience, students, have not played a significant role in helping to establish a more equitable school environment.

7.2 – Representation and the fiction of representativeness

A second point that surfaced during my review of the study participant commentary and the antiracism policy documents surrounds the issues of representation and

representativeness in the policy-making process. One of the study participants (Mr. Hyskool) spoke about the education system as 'the institution of schooling'. In part the phrase institution of schooling refers to the decision-making hierarchies that can be found within any educational organization. For example, in the case of the OSB, the community advisory group to the board does not have the power to approve any policy; instead the ability to ratify a proposed policy such as the antiracism policy rests with the senior board members.

In Mr. Hyskool's estimation the institution of schooling has particular power structures that do not reflect the community demographics. These power structures that Mr. Hyskool speaks of are not representative of the community at the board level, at the administrative level or at the classroom level. The lack of varied ethnocultural representation within the system in turn affects how quickly progress is made in terms of antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy enactment. For Mr. Hyskool, existing power differentials do not allow for an environment that is amenable to introducing curricular practices and administrative procedures that are equitable for all students, particularly those who are members of traditionally marginalized groups.

As a response to the current representational disparity found in educational organizations, participants like Mr. and Mrs. Couple, Mr. Newly and Ms. Long cited the need for parents and/or guardians, as well as community groups to take a more active role in school board activities. The participants' comments reflect some of the ideas and suggestions that are currently being raised by researchers and those interested in antiracism and ethnocultural equity approaches in education. For example, school boards and some administrators are calling for greater participation by parents of ethnoculturally and

linguistically diverse students in various school board activities and initiatives such as school councils and parent-teacher associations (Campey, 2002; Tam, 2004). Based on Tam's (2004) discussions with school board representatives, the lack of participation by ethnoculturally and linguistically diverse parents is thought to result in cultural and linguistic minority students concerns and needs not being addressed. As noted by one of the participants in this study (Mr. Hyskool), students who require ESL are often put in special needs classes and because the parents and/or guardians may not possess adequate English language skills themselves, they are often unaware of this placement and its consequences.

Similarly, Campey's (2004) article on the response of Canadian schools ability to provide assistance to new ethnocultural and linguistic minority students, discusses the fact that the parents of these children may not have received a formal education and as such these parents may find interacting with teachers and school administrators a daunting experience. Campey (2004) notes that parents who are intimidated by the thought of having to interact with school administrators and teachers are less likely to proactively call for changes within the education system. This particular suggestion is in accordance with remarks made by one of the study by participants.

[M]inority groups have to become more involved, they have to become more involved in those issues. They have to become more actively engaged in the school councils... so the school councils should be an area where minority groups and the people who are mostly affected by designed to help by these policies...[F]rom my observation from my work and from my personal level I don't see that a lot has

changed. People are still really kind of disengaged for many reasons; it doesn't matter for the reasons, what matters is they have to re-engage people. (Mr. Newly)

Mr. Newly's comments above identify the need for individuals to become actively engaged in the not just the policy-making process, but in the educational system as a whole. Despite Mr. Newly's and other participants' comments regarding the need for increased parent and community participation, there is another issue related to representation that warrants discussion.

The question of representativeness or whose views are represented in the policy-making process also require examination. If one claims that there are underlying racialized assumptions associated with the OSB antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development process then it may also be assumed that individuals from within a given community do not necessarily have the ability to accurately represent the interests of their racialized group. For example, just because Ms. Long identifies herself as Black does not automatically grant her the right to speak on behalf of the community's Black population. Furthermore, one may question whether an individual has the ability to speak to the experiences of racism for their racialized group despite their lack of membership in a community organization. I would like to suggest that by subscribing to the preceding assumptions, participants in this study, may themselves be subscribing and re-inscribing an existing set of racialized social and institutional practices. Although re-inscription of existing racialized social and institutional practices was likely unintentional, the outcome of individual participation in the policy development process that is not necessarily tied to a particular community organization could raise questions about the legitimacy of the policy process, any resulting recommendations, or action and evaluation plans.

Some participants such as Ms. Long, and Mr. and Mrs. Couple did acknowledge that there has been a distinct lack of participation from various ethnocultural and/or race-based community organizations in the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development process. However, despite this awareness regarding the lack of community organization participation, the policy is considered representative of an imagined community of 'others'. The practice of re-presenting the community's understanding of racism as homogeneous, discounts the existence of differing conceptions and definitions of race, racialization and racialized practices within and across segments of the local population.

7.3 – The implementation impasse

The next key point focuses on the extent to which participation in policy development may or may not translate into implementation. The Peter's Policy does include identified outcomes and associated timelines for achieving the outcomes. Based on a review of the study participants' comments regarding implementation of the policy, it appears that limited progress has been made in terms of policy enactment. For example, all participants mentioned that members of the policy development team were involved in creating an antiracism handbook that includes lesson plan ideas and activities for the classroom. However, during attendance at one of the community group meetings, I learned that schools were generally given one copy of the manual for their school library. It is rather puzzling that a policy that calls for all teachers to receive pertinent training and resources related to antiracism has not resulted in all teachers being given individual copies of the document, and training on how best to integrate the document into their lesson planning.

A second example of how policy development does not necessarily translate into policy implementation or enactment relates to the stated requirement that all schools are

expected to have a teacher serve as an antiracism representative. Teachers that are selected as their school's antiracism representative are expected to participate in various initiatives, for example, the community advisory group to the board and the teacher's committee. According to Mr. Hyskool, for the most part teachers who have been assigned the role of antiracism officer are not even aware of their responsibilities.

I would say half of the [antiracism representatives] don't know that they're really the [antiracism representatives] and there isn't really much information or communication provided to them or feedback back and forth, so it's very much I feel like we're working in isolation.

Based on Mr. Hyskool's comments and my interactions with the community advisory group members, I learned that few of the teachers selected as antiracism representatives take part in the policy development process or in policy implementation activities.

Another outcome identified in the policy document deals with the expectation that all schools and departments create an annual report regarding their implementation of the antiracism policy. Schools and departments were expected to begin submitting their annual reports as of 2001, however, based on information obtained during my attendance at the community advisory group meetings, the OSB has yet to enforce this particular requirement.

On a positive note, Mr. and Mrs. Couple stated that progress has been made on meeting one of the objectives identified during the policy process. All OSB schools are now expected to acknowledge faith days that reflect the diversity of the student population. Members of the policy development team worked on creating the Faith Days Calendar and as noted by Mr. and Mrs. Couple, "one thing I must say is now being scrupulously being implemented is the faith days". Mrs. Couple also added that because of the OSBs decision to

implement the faith days policy, students are no longer marked as absent if they are away for faith related days. The school board's decision to acknowledge different faith days without penalty to the student is viewed as an attempt by the school board to be more aware of the ethnocultural diversity.

The study participants' comments along with my observation of the community advisory group meetings and review of the policy documents, highlights that oftentimes individuals involved in creating policy lack the authority to ensure that the 'plan of action' and outcomes are achieved. Most members, of the policy development process do not possess the ability to penalize those who do not adhere to the policy directives. The lack of decision-making and resource allocation authority represents a major stumbling block in the policy development and subsequent implementation process.

As noted by Mr. Hyskool, although the teacher's committee is partially responsible for developing antiracism workshops and other related training and learning opportunities for their peers, they have no input in determining the amount of funds that will be available to conduct proposed programs. As a result of their incapacity to direct resource allocation and overall school board strategy, the teacher committee is severely limited in their capacity to meet policy objectives.

The lack of authority regarding resources and board strategy does not solely affect teachers. Study participants who were not teachers also spoke of the limitations associated with being members of the community advisory group to the board and/or parents. For example, referring to implementation of the policy, Mr. Newly along with Mr. and Mrs. Couple discussed the importance of senior school administration and individual principal support for any initiative.

[I]t's my observation that it depends on the school principal, whatever direction that the school principal wants to take, the school takes that direction... [T]here have to be some expectations, it looks like the policy is now apart from [the community advisory group], the curriculum, the board level, and the [antiracism representative] position. (Mr. Newly)

Mr. Newly then added that he felt that there were few links between the groups. As he points out the community advisory group and even the antiracism representative "cannot say 'OK, you guys you have to bring this to the school', they can advise them, they can provide resources to them and that's it". Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Couple said "you need to have the board commitment and the expectation on the part of the leadership of the board". They also noted that what is also needed is a strong commitment from "the trustees, which means the Director of Education, the superintendent who runs it and the principal, because if the principals are committed to doing this thing it will happen".

Essentially, the study participants expressed concerns about a perceptible disconnect that exists between the antiracism and ethnocultural policy, the implementation of said policy and the different organizational levels and individuals within the educational system that need to be involved in enacting the policy. As one study participant suggested, maybe what is needed is

[E]valuation of principals and vice principals and things like that regarding the extent to which they support policies of ethnocultural equity... [H]aving the director and so forth being evaluated regarding the extent to which they promoted [the policy and its implementation]. So, you know it has to affect people's careers for them to say 'OK. OK, I'll do it'. (Mr. Couple)

Interestingly, Mr. Couple's suggestion that the antiracism policy outcomes be incorporated into any ongoing teacher and administrator performance evaluation processes, has also been identified as a core objective of the OSB antiracism policy. A review of the policy development and related implementation documents showed that this particular policy was expected to take effect as of 1997. In spite of the stipulated timeline, participant comments and my observation of the community advisory group meetings showed that individual performance evaluations have not been tied to the individual's adherence to and achievement of the antiracism policy objectives.

In spite of the study participants' views that there is a degree of disconnect (a) between the policy development process and implementation of policy objectives, (b) various levels of the OSB and stated ideals vs. achieved practices in the OSB, and (c) the levels of authority ascribed to certain individuals and/or roles in the OSB, some work has been done with the aim of meeting the stated antiracism policy initiatives. For example, the teachers' committee's work on providing some antiracism training workshops, mentioned by Mr. Hyskool and the creation of a teacher's handbook mentioned by Mr. Newly, and Mr. and Mrs. Couple address the OSBs requirements that in-service training programs be developed and initiated. Furthermore, the introduction of the faith days policy, as mentioned by Mr. and Mrs. Couple addresses the OSB's call for instituting policies that create a more culturally sensitive environment.

Although it is beyond the scope of this particular study, I think that the fact that some antiracism activities and programs are being initiated raises a question about what is meant by implementation. More specifically, might it be possible or even more accurate to think of antiracism policy implementation as a process that entails differing levels or degrees of

participation? For example, although the teachers' committee is partially responsible for developing workshops and other training opportunities for their peers, they do not have control over the amount of funds that will be made available to them. As mentioned earlier, the teachers' committee's lack of resource allocation authority directly impacts the quantity and potentially the quality of programs that can be implemented.

7.4 - The organization as a 'loosely coupled system'

In order to understand more about "loosely coupled systems" one must turn to the work of Karl Weick (1993). As mentioned earlier in the Literature Review, Weick's (1993) discussion of educational organizations as loosely coupled systems refers to several different points including a network of connections across the organization that may be interconnected to varying degrees, and the existence of differing levels and degrees of coordination within the organization.

While the descriptors of loosely coupled systems may appear to be negative, it is also important to acknowledge that Weick's (1993) discussion of loosely coupled systems includes several advantages. Weick (1993) states that loosely coupled systems may also help educational organizations by allowing: (a) organizations to continue to exist through rapid environmental changes; (b) local adaptations and creative solutions; (c) sub-system breakdown without damaging the entire organization; (d) greater self-determination by individual members of the organization; and (e) limited and relatively inexpensive coordination. As a whole, loose coupling is not necessarily synonymous with weakness, rather the idea of loose coupling also implies a level of "impermanence, dissolvability, and tacitness all of which are potentially crucial properties of the 'glue' that holds organizations together" (Weick, 1993, p. 44).

When compared to the bureaucratic model of organizations, loosely coupled systems allow one to pose more interesting and possibly difficult questions about how organizations function. The concept of loosely coupled systems serves as a sensitizing device. Unlike the bureaucratic model of organizations that assumes that an organization's work is driven by clearly articulated strategies and plans, viewing the organization as a loosely coupled system "sensitizes the observer to notice and question things that are generally taken for granted" (Weick, 1993, p. 44) and unnoticed. The concept of loosely coupled systems is not a one-dimensional model of organizational forms and effects, it is a model that allows one to discuss the nuances that may exist in organizational settings surrounding the issues of stated ideals and outcomes, suggested and actual practices, and intentions and outcomes.

If educational organization's may be understood as loosely coupled systems, then the lines of responsibility, levels of interaction and commonalities among the various actors on how best to achieve organizational goals may no longer be clearly definable and may not be achievable in expected forms. Thus, the school board level, which is comprised of a range of individuals and groups: students, teachers, senior board administrators and school officials (e.g. principals) to name but a few, may or may not have common goals. These individuals may share a minimal set of values and resources to enable the ongoing operation of the school, but diverging values and the limited availability of resources may also result in conflicting goals and demands. For example, teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels work apart from the other members of the school board hierarchy and the individualistic nature of their work may result in a lack of communication with fellow organizational members. "These features loosen the coupling between teachers and between administrators and teachers. It also loosens the coupling between the individual and the

larger organization (Earle & Kruse, 1999, p38).” The valued goal(s) of one person and/or group, such as a teacher or a community advisory group may not necessarily reflect the goals of other individuals or groups in the organization. Consequently, acknowledging the potential for partisan motivations as the impulse for school-based change initiatives ca further highlights the nature of loose coupling in school boards.

Wideen and Barnard (1999) in their study of British Columbia educational change initiatives noted that although the province called for implementation of the new antiracism policies, “virtually no visible efforts are currently being made to assist districts, schools and teachers with the implementation of the new policies that have been developed (p. 8)”. The authors contrast this with the fact that changes to the British Columbia Science curriculum in 1997 received financial support for province-wide professional workshops from the Ministry of Education, in order to “encourage improvements in pedagogy” (Wideen & Barnard, 1999, p. 8). Wideen and Barnard’s (1993) findings demonstrate several aspects of loosely coupled systems, one of which is the limited degree of coordination that appears to exist between the different organizational levels in regard to particular and differing educational initiatives.

In the case of Ontario, the creation of an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy was mandated by the NDP provincial government; as found in B.C. however, limited resources have been allocated for the provision of professional training and ongoing evaluation of antiracist policy implementation and effectiveness. Contrast this with the political and financial support that literacy and numeracy initiatives have received from the province, and school districts. It is understandable, therefore, that frustration levels for educators like Mr. Hyskool and his fellow teachers who are committed to facilitating the

integration of antiracism approaches into educational practice is increasing when similar practices occur in Ontario. Although he (Mr. Hyskool) concedes that there are certain programs and/or initiatives that do seem to occur intermittently such as the creation of alternative schools, there is a prevailing sense that for the most part a lot of these initiatives are at a 'very superficial level and does not address the core issues'. Work on different aspects of the antiracism policy initiatives occurs slowly, if at all, and links between organizational levels are weak.

Related to the issue of weak linkages between organizational levels and groups is the role that power differentials play in achieving stated ideals and outcomes. As noted by Mr. Hyskool, power differentials exist between the community advisory group and the board, and the teachers and board administration. Mr. Hyskool added that over his years of teaching, he has witnessed a shift from overt acknowledgement or at least discussion of the Peters Policy in general to a point where antiracism and ethnocultural issues are "masked" and displaced by increased levels of discussion around the issues of bullying or literacy. Policy and programs are more often linked to standardized testing, improving test scores and accountability issues. This shift has resulted in antiracism being pushed off the map; it has fallen to the wayside.

In part, Mr Hyskool and other study participants, like Mr. Newly, feels that this shift is a result of weak linkages and the lack of power held by the community advisory group in comparison to the board. Mr. Hyskool feels that community group members need to be more savvy in terms of how they interact with the board and in their ability to apply appropriate amounts of pressure on the board to foster policy and curricular changes. Mr. Hyskool has also witnessed an increasing disconnect between the OSB antiracism and

ethnocultural equity policy and the mechanisms that have been developed to facilitate policy implementation. For example, the 'teachers' council' was mandated to create professional training programs for board personnel that would facilitate the achievement of board stipulated actions and outcomes in the area of antiracism, but they lack organizational support. According to Mr. Hyskool this year is critical to the survival of the teachers' committee because the board expects the group to justify their existence; however, they are expected to do so without sufficient financial resources. The teachers' committee may be given enough money for refreshments or a room for meetings, but the board has taken away support for a key annual workshop presented by a leading antiracism education advocate. Essentially, the OSB still expects the teachers' committee to demonstrate its usefulness and to demonstrate how it has met its mandate without supplying the appropriate resources. The lack of sufficient resources provided to school board groups tasked with fulfilling stated policy objectives raises questions not only about the 'loosely coupled' nature of the organization, but also about the extent to which policy can and does translate into practice.

The fundamental question may not be about what structures need to be in place to ensure that policy translates into practice; rather we may ask why we should even embark upon an antiracism policy development initiative for school boards. If we think of the policy-making process as a forum that allows people to speak of their concerns, then we need not focus as much on whether action and expected change are slow to occur. The notions of antiracism and equity are in some ways perpetual and always in front of us as something to be achieved. As such, striving for an antiracist society has no end point and although equity may elude us, this elusiveness does not mean that it is not worth striving for.

Chapter 8: Concluding Remarks

Central to this study is the notion of how race is discussed and perceived in the literature on antiracism. The study also called for the participants to be retrospective and reflective of their involvement in developing and/or implementing the OSB antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy. The literature reviewed for the study emphasizes the different debates that have and continue to occur among scholars and practitioners interested in the issues of race, racialization and antiracism. Interviews with the study participants present a portrait of how individuals involved at the school board, school, and community level understand and discuss racism, antiracism and antiracism approaches in education. Furthermore, the participant interviews sought to examine how these individuals' understandings of racism and antiracism affect their approach is to the process of developing an antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy aimed at making a difference in students' lives.

My approach to the study was based on a humanistic and narrative-oriented inquiry. This particular mode of inquiry is based upon Greenfield's (1993) idea of the need to work towards a redefinition of educational administrations as a 'humane science'. As such, my approach to understanding the literature, policy documents and participant commentary was not reductive, nor did it ascribe to a putative image of reality. Important to me were the conversations, not the micro-politics vs. macro-politics of the organization. My focus was on paying particular attention to the narratives that was generated through participant retrospection and reflection.

As a whole, common threads could be found in the study participants' comments, one of which was the continued need for an antiracism and ethnocultural

equity policy. However, not all participants agreed on how best to achieve policy objectives. Some participants, like Mr. and Mrs. Couple, and Mr. Nomos, discussed the importance of having teachers and school administrators assume more active roles in ensuring that schools are equitable places for all. While others, like Mr. Hyskool and Mr. Newly, called for systemic changes and increased participation by parents and community-based organizations. Some participants positioned themselves as strong proponents of antiracism approaches, while others like Mr. and Mrs. Couple felt more comfortable discussing the issues in terms of equity. Additionally, the majority of participants found the consensus approach to decision-making during the policy development process to be appropriate, although one participant, Mr. Sollovochey, disagreed.

What they all agreed on was that work still needs to be done – that a disproportionate number of visible and linguistic minority students continue to encounter negative attitudes from administrators, teachers and fellow students alike. Moreover, the participants think that students continue to struggle academically. Their continuing struggle to succeed as students is set within an organizational structure that often has competing goals, objectives and agendas (Greenfield & Ribbens, 1993).

This study of the OSB antiracism policy demonstrates several key points. First is the idea that there are underlying racialized assumptions associated with the OSB antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development process. Specifically, these assumptions include the idea that: (a) individuals from within a given community have the ability to accurately represent the interests of their racialized group; and (b) although personal

accounts of racism among members of the policy making team may be powerful, these accounts may not reflect the experiences and concerns of the intended audience, primarily students. For example, some of the study participants such as Ms. Long, and Mr. and Mrs. Couple acknowledged that there has been a distinct lack of participation from various ethnocultural and/or race-based community organizations in the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy development process. As evidenced in the study participants' comments, participation in the policy development process is often motivated by personal experience. However, despite participant awareness regarding the lack of community organization participation, and the role of personal experience as a motivator, the policy is considered representative of the community as a whole. The limited number of ethnocultural groups represented in the policy process raises questions about whose views are heard, acknowledged and incorporated during the policy process. Re-presenting the policy development team's understanding of racism as homogeneous discounts the existence of differing conceptions and definitions of race, racialization and racialized practices within and across segments of the local population.

Also demonstrated in the study is the fact that participants in the policy development process often express diverse perspectives and understandings. As a result of diverse participant perspectives, it is unlikely that the group's position regarding policy procedures and outcomes will be homogeneous. Since, constituent groups may have divergent perspectives, negotiation and compromises are often required during the policy development process. This study of the OSB policy process demonstrates that there is a need to begin understanding the antiracism policy development as inherently dependent upon the participation of individuals who will likely possess differing aims, interests, and

experiences. Acknowledgement of the divergent participant perspectives in antiracism policy development should serve as a cautionary tale of assuming too quickly that students' concerns and intragroup diversity (e.g. ethnicity, gender, religion, and socio-economic differences) are reflected in the policy development and implementation process. Disregarding intragroup diversity in the policy development and implementation process may result in the creation of antiracism policies that "objectify students in the sense that the complexities of their identity are collapsed into a single characteristic (Leistyna, 2002, p.12)."

The final key points relate to the overall functioning of the policy development team and the school board itself. Using Weick's (1993) notion of educational organizations as loosely coupled systems provided a framework for understanding how: (a) participation in policy development may not necessarily transition into policy enactment and; (b) limited or slow coordination between and across groups in an organization need not affect overall functioning of that particular organization. More specifically, Weick's theory helped to illustrate and explain how and why members of the OSB antiracism policy development team have not been involved in ensuring policy implementation. Even when personally motivated to participate in the discussion and development of the antiracism development policy, the participants appear to have become absorbed in the process of making policy and not enacting it.

Taking into consideration the points outlined above, one might ask the question, has this policy been framed from an antiracist perspective? Keeping in mind the literature reviewed, the participant commentary and the policy document(s) that were examined, it would appear that the Peters Policy falls short of the OSB's claim that it is an antiracism

policy. If antiracist education calls for an “educational transformation” (Dei, 1998, p.310) in terms of knowledge and school practices, then, the Peters Policy has not met either criterion. The Peters Policy states many of the tenets put forth by antiracist education advocates, such as introducing more ethnoculturally diverse materials into the curriculum, but for the most part the policy has not translated into daily practice. Instead, visible and linguistic minority students continue to struggle academically, antiracist concepts and practices have not been integrated into the education system and antiracism policy related initiatives continue to compete, often unsuccessfully, with other programs for resources (Dei, 1998; Leistyna, 2002; Lipman, 2002; Mawhinney, 1995; Wideen & Barnard, 1999).

It is important to note that while I may have criticized both the policy and the policy development process, my aim is not to dismiss the work in antiracism and ethnocultural equity that has and continues to be done by various stakeholders. In fact, by analyzing the policy development process my intent was to examine the complex social, organizational and to a lesser extent, political conditions that are central to antiracism policy development and implementation.

Analysis of the OSB antiracism policy process has shown that the individuals who elected to participate in creating an antiracism policy (or who at the least were willing to discuss their involvement in the policy development process) genuinely hope for, and have a personal stake in creating a more inclusive educational environment. Moreover, this analysis demonstrates how further examination is required regarding: (a) how personal experiences, agendas and investment in the introduction of antiracism approaches in the education system motivate participation in the antiracism policy development and implementation process; (b) how organizational structures can foster an environment that

welcomes dialogue and creates policy, but alternatively, how the same organizational structures can serve as obstacles to enacting policy; and (c) the issues of representation in the policy process and whose voices are ultimately re-presented *in* the policy.

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Appendix 1

Request for research participants

Mr./Ms. Participant
Ontario School Board
Urban City, Ontario
A1A 1A1

Dear Mr./Ms. Participant,

My name is Sandra Parris and I am currently enrolled in the Master of Arts Program in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. As part of the program, I am required to conduct a research project and submit a thesis on an area of interest. I am presently seeking participants for my proposed study on the origins of the current *Peters Policy* of the Ontario School Board (OSB). The project is under the supervision of Dr. Timothy J. Stanley, Graduate Studies Programs, University of Ottawa.

The purpose of the research is to conduct a case study and examine the manner in which the OSBs *Peters Policy* first originated and to ascertain the process that instituted the development of the policy document. Furthermore, the research will also investigate the roles and perceptions of key individuals involved in the policy development process. The usefulness of this study rests with its potential to generate insight into the policy development process in general and antiracism policy initiatives in particular. As one of the individuals involved in developing and/or ratifying the antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy at OSB, your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary. Should you decide to participate you will be asked to take part in at least one audio-taped formal interview session that should last approximately 30-60 minutes during which you will be asked a series of questions about your role, understanding of the origins of the OSBs antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy, the policy development process itself and your role within it. The interview will be scheduled at a time of mutual convenience. You may also be asked to take part in follow-up telephone discussion that will provide clarification and/or elaboration of statements made during the formal interview session.

Information garnered during the interviews will be used for the purpose of preparing and submitting an M.A. (Education) thesis at the University of Ottawa. The data obtained and a summary of findings may also be presented at a student symposium, conferences and/or in written publications such as journals and abstracts.

All information shared during the interviews will remain strictly confidential. Your confidentiality will be respected by the omission of all data that may identify you (i.e. name, position title etc.). Confidentiality will be assured through the use of pseudonyms in the

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Research participant signature:

Date:

Appendix 3

Interview Protocol

Project: Investigating an antiracism policy: The case of an Ontario School Board

Time:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer: Sandra Parris

Interviewee:

Position of interviewee:

Project (Brief Description):

The following case study is an examination of the origins of an Ontario school board's antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy. Additionally, the study will look at the policy development process itself and the roles and perceptions of key board members in the process.

Interview Schedule

Background Information

1. What do you see as the purpose of school? What role should schools play in the lives of its students?
2. How long have you served on the Ontario School Board and/or pre-merger board(s)?
3. Where has this experience been gained (e.g. major urban centres or surrounding environs, rural location etc.) Please elaborate.
4. What role(s) have you held during your years with Ontario School Board, and/or pre-merger boards?
5. As (**antiracism officer/community advisory group member/teachers committee member**) what do you do? What is the mandate vs. the actual work done? What factors work in favor or against achieving your mandate?

Core Questions

1. To the best of your knowledge what do you think prompted the development of the (original and current) *Peters Policy*?
2. What is the problem that the policy (**and the consultant**) supposed to address?
3. As a member of the pre-merger board was there a similar antiracism and ethnocultural equity policy? If so what event(s) and/or individual(s) prompted its development?

4. What was your specific role (if any) in the creation of the (a) original and/or current school board policy; (b) pre-merger board policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity?
5. Who were other key individuals (e.g. board trustees, teachers and/or community group representatives etc.) involved in developing the current and/or previous policy? What were their roles in the process? Who else might I speak with that was involved in the policy development process?
6. How would you define (a) racism; (b) antiracism?
7. Was racism a problem in Ontario School Board, and/or pre-merger boards?
8. Based on your experience(s), in what way(s) was racism and ethnocultural inequity present in the school board and/or pre-merger boards? If possible, provide examples.
9. How did you gain your knowledge of antiracist pedagogy and ethnocultural equity issues (e.g. courses, books etc.)?
10. In your view, does the *Peters Policy* adequately address the issue of antiracism and ethnocultural equity in the Ontario School Board district schools? How have you made this determination?

Appendix 4

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 119

Issued under the authority of the Deputy Minister of Education

Date of Issue: July 13, 1993 **Effective:** Until revoked or modified

Subject: **DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES ON ANTIRACISM AND ETHNOCULTURAL EQUITY**

Application: Chairpersons of School Boards and Minority-Language Sections¹
Directors of Education

Introduction

The Government of Ontario is committed to the goal of assuring high-quality education and equitable educational outcomes for all students in English- and French-language schools. The government also considers it essential that students be prepared to function effectively in an increasingly diverse world.

There is growing recognition that educational structures, policies, and programs have been mainly European in perspective and have failed to take into account the viewpoints, experiences, and needs of Aboriginal peoples² and many racial and ethnocultural minorities. As a result, systemic inequities exist in the school system that limit the opportunities for Aboriginal and other students and staff members of racial and ethnocultural minorities to fulfil their potential. Educators therefore need to identify and change institutional policies and procedures and individual behaviour and practices that are racist in their impact, if not in intent. In this regard, antiracist and ethnocultural equity education goes beyond multicultural education, which focuses on teaching about the cultures and traditions of diverse groups.

Background

In 1987, a provincial advisory committee produced a report entitled "The Development of a Policy on Race and Ethnocultural Equity" that was intended to be a draft model policy document on race relations for school boards. This report was validated province-wide.

In the winter and spring of 1993, the ministry conducted a series of round-table discussions with school boards, which provided information on their activities, perspectives, and needs in the areas of antiracism and ethnocultural equity. Information received at these meetings has been used in developing the present policy directions and requirements.

Legislative Requirements

In accordance with an amendment made in 1992 to the Education Act,³ every school board shall develop a policy on antiracism and ethnocultural equity, as well as a plan for

implementing its policy. Boards shall then submit their policies and plans to the Minister for approval, and implement changes as directed by the Minister. Boards' implementation of their policies will entail reviewing their operations and making fundamental changes in many aspects of their operations. Some of the changes required will take place immediately; others will take place over time. The document entitled *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Equity in School Boards: Guidelines for Policy Development and Implementation* has been produced to assist school boards in the development of their policies and implementation plans.

Several of the requirements for school board policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the sections of boards. French-language school boards and French-language sections will develop policies and implementation plans that respect Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and Parts XII and XIII of the Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter E.2. Sections may submit their policies and implementation plans as part of the overall board submission.

Timelines for Development, Approval, and Implementation of Policies

The ministry recognizes that school boards are at different stages in the development of policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity and in the implementation of related activities. Boards that already have related policies in place shall review and revise these policies to ensure that they meet the requirements outlined in this memorandum. These boards may begin submitting their revised policies and implementation plans to the ministry for approval in **October 1993**. School boards that are currently developing policies and implementation plans shall submit them to the ministry for approval as soon as they are completed.

Boards shall submit their policies and their implementation plans to the ministry **no later than March 31, 1995**.

Boards shall begin implementing their policies on antiracism and ethnocultural equity upon receiving approval from the ministry. Implementation of these policies must begin by **September 1, 1995**.

Requirements for Policies and Implementation Plans

School board policies and implementation plans shall be comprehensive and shall be designed to integrate the principles of antiracism and ethnocultural equity into all aspects of education programs and board operations. The policies and plans shall reflect a commitment by board administration and staff to identifying and addressing systemic inequities and barriers affecting Aboriginal peoples and racial and ethnocultural minorities in the planning and delivery of education programs and services.

Policies and implementation plans shall address the following ten major areas of focus:

- board policies, guidelines, and practices

- leadership
- school-community partnership
- curriculum
- student languages
- student evaluation, assessment, and placement
- guidance and counselling
- racial and ethnocultural harassment
- employment practices ⁴
- staff development

The implementation plans shall:

- be five-year plans;
- contain clearly stated annual objectives and outcomes for implementation at both the system and the school levels;
- contain a plan of action to identify and eliminate racial and ethnocultural biases and barriers in board policies and practices and in the planning and delivery of educational programs;
- involve partnership activities with local communities, including Aboriginal groups, diverse racial and ethnocultural groups, and other education partners;
- contain mechanisms for evaluating progress, including an accountability mechanism for all of the school board staff.

The policy development and implementation processes shall be conducted in the language of the board. Boards and sections are encouraged to find alternative communication strategies when members of the community involved in the development of the policies and the implementation plan do not speak the language of the board.

At all stages of implementation, a high priority shall be assigned to broadening the curriculum to include diverse perspectives and to eliminating stereotyping. In the implementation of the policies, it is essential that staff members are made aware of the issues and are given opportunities to develop skills in dealing with racism.

Approval of Policies and Implementation Plans

Board policies and implementation plans are to be submitted for approval to the appropriate regional office of the Ministry of Education and Training within the specified timelines. The ministry will review the policies and implementation plans and determine whether or not they satisfy the requirements for approval. The ministry will use the document *Antiracism and Ethnocultural Ecruity in School Boards* when evaluating boards' policies and implementation plans.

Monitoring of Implementation

There shall be community and student involvement in monitoring policy implementation. School boards shall submit annual progress reports to the appropriate regional office of the