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Examining the Under-Representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario Professoriate: Policy Implications for Faculty Recruitment and Retention

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EXAMINING THE UNDER-REPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL SCHOLARS IN
THE ONTARIO PROFESSORIATE: POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR FACULTY
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

by
Karen A. Roland

A Dissertation
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Examining the Under-Representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario Professoriate: Policy Implications for Faculty Recruitment and Retention

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ABSTRACT

This case study was designed to investigate the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, examining: 1) the current lack of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, and 2) the retention of these scholars within the system. To advocate social justice for this community, these issues were examined through an Aboriginal epistemic lens to develop principles with which to inform recruitment and retention policy and practice in the academy.

Specifically, this study focused on the following areas: 1) the context of the participants' educational experience as Aboriginal students; 2) participants' perspectives about why Aboriginal scholars stay, or conversely why they leave, the Ontario professoriate; and 3) social justice and equity – implications for recruitment and retention policies in the academy. A transformative policy process is proposed which resulted from the grounded theory flowing from the data collected, and the extant literature.

As an organizational tool for transforming the process of policy development and implementation in the academy, the policy process proposed utilizes a circle archetype relevant to many Aboriginal worldviews. The policy circle process is comprised of four integrative stages: the 'Beginning' stage; the 'Consultation with Expert Knowledge' stage; the 'Taking Action' stage; and, the 'Reflection' stage.

Based on the findings of the study, equity principles which inculcate the tenets of respect, honour, truth and wisdom are proposed as guidelines for Aboriginal recruitment and retention policies in the academy. The rationale for proposing this change as a means of promoting social justice and equity, as well as to address the under-representation of

Aboriginal scholars in the academy, is based on the perceived necessity of universities to assume their leadership role as socially responsible 'agents of change.'

Finally, the study suggests that there is a continued need to develop and implement strategic educational policy reform in Canada to: support the success of Aboriginal students, to promote and facilitate the participation of Aboriginal educators and Elders in developing curricula and pedagogy which respect and honour Aboriginal epistemologies, and to spur provincial and federal governments' provision of support in terms of investment of time and funding for the development of Aboriginal postsecondary programs.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family. To Mick, thank you for always believing in me, this has given me the strength and courage to reach inside myself, and to go the distance! To Kaitlin, thank you for sharing your beautiful mind and keen intellect with me – I have grown under your tutelage. To Matthew, thank you for teaching me about the world and how we all experience it differently, you have enriched my life. And finally, thank you to my Mother, who from the start has been the constant supportive presence through which I have learned about the world, and by her example, how to navigate it with kindness and integrity.

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CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions assume a significant role in the communication of value and respect for cultural diversity in Canadian society. Therefore, efforts to foster social justice and equity require that members of the educational community confront racism and marginalization at the institutional level. At work within the system of education are politically driven processes which are based on dominance and control – hegemony. Politicians and policy-makers continue to decry the health and wealth of the nation based on the outcomes of standardized testing scores, and our national ability to compete in a globalized and knowledge-based economy. Given this, it is important to acknowledge the power that education, as a social system in Canada has to influence the access citizens have to the life chances and opportunities that education may provide in reaching their fullest potential.

The impact of Eurocentric hegemony in Canadian educational policy is particularly meaningful in the context of the experience of Aboriginal students in Canada. The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996), describes education as "the transmission of cultural DNA from one generation to the next.…which cuts across the diverse history, environments and cultures of the different Aboriginal communities in Canada" (p. 1). Stonechild (2006) underscores the importance of education to the Aboriginal community by referring to education as the "new buffalo" (p. 1). He explains that in the past, Aboriginal peoples considered the buffalo a gift from the Creator as it provided all needs for the Aboriginal peoples (e.g., food, shelter). And, he suggests that as the 'new buffalo' education may build capacity to ensure a strong and robust future for Aboriginal peoples

in Canada. He indicates that while national policies to attract Aboriginal students have been somewhat effective, there remain critical barriers to making higher education culturally relevant and equitable for members of the Aboriginal communities in Canada.

The comprehensive *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* noted in its 440 recommendations, that there is a compelling need to change the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada (Hurley & Wherrett, 2000). Given that education transmits social values, it is critical that institutional policies within the academy foster social justice and equity to support all members of Canadian society. The relevance of this for the inquiry was the investigation concerning the efficacy of employment equity policies in the academy, specifically recruitment and retention, to promote social justice and equity for Aboriginal scholars in the academy. Graveline (2003) in speaking about her experiences in academe as an Aboriginal scholar presents what may be considered the crux of this inquiry, "As an Aboriginal woman I do not feel Included or Free. Seventeen years a full-time academic with different institutions across disciplines Pressuring me to acculturate Disciplining me for resisting Has taught me otherwise" (p. 203).

Employment Equity programs at Ontario universities are diverse in terms of their scope, and the reported strength they have to enact change to create a representative workforce. There are 22 universities in Ontario, 19 of which are publicly funded (Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, 2008). Of the 22 universities, 18 include their institutional employment equity policy online, and every university, with one exception, also includes an 'equity' statement as part of their faculty job advertisements. This study investigates the impact the revitalization of university employment equity

policies may have to identify and remove barriers. To promote social justice and equity this 'revitalization' will centre the experience and knowledge of Aboriginal scholars in the development, implementation and review of equity policies. Ultimately, the goal of this revitalization is a respectful environment in the academy that honours Aboriginal scholarship, and fosters the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

The following sections in this chapter provide an introduction to the study including an overview of the background to the study, the statement of the problem investigated, the purpose of the study, and the theoretical framework that grounded the inquiry. Also presented in this chapter are the research questions, the significance of the study, and finally definitions of the key concepts along with delimitations and limitations. In conclusion, an organization of the dissertation is provided.

Background to the Study

The background to the study presents an overview of employment equity legislation relevant to the demographic shifts in Canadian society. This discussion of Canadian demographics includes a presentation of current statistical data with regard to population and labour force representation rates for the Aboriginal population in Canada.

Since the 1992 report, *Opening Doors: A Report on the Employment Equity Consultation* and subsequent federal legislation of the Employment Equity *Act*, 1995, equity has been a key consideration for postsecondary educational institutions in their planning and goal setting from both an educational as well as an employment perspective. This focus on equity in the academy has happened in tandem with a shifting societal perspective of equity from a stance of equality where everyone is treated the same, to the

recognition of equity as meaning that differences are acknowledged and accommodated. "This recognition of difference within the school system [may create the inclusive spaces which] recognize that inclusion and diversity are partners, equity is not 'sameness,' and integration is not assimilation" (Roland, 2008, p. 63). These ideological shifts may have a profound significance for the next generation in terms of greater access to postsecondary education. In terms of employment equity, increased access to postsecondary education may result in members of marginalized groups, such as Aboriginal peoples, considering academia as a career possibility.

Across Canada Aboriginal peoples have been identified as particularly under-represented at Canadian universities (Holmes, 2006; Metcalfe, Mazawi, Rubenson, Fisher, MacIvor, & Meredith, 2007; University of Windsor Employment Equity Committee, 2002, 2006). Under-representation in the professoriate by members of employment equity designated groups (including Aboriginal peoples, women, persons with disabilities and members of visible minority groups), has significant implications for the academy. Due in part to demographic and immigration shifts, the implications are that the academy will require institutional adoption of policies and practices to address employment equity in order to diversify the professoriate. As suggested by Creswell (2003), this inquiry encompasses a political action agenda, seeking to inform employment equity policies and practices relevant to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal peoples in the academy.

Equity practices in hiring and retention are critical issues for the future of the Ontario professoriate, especially given the forecasted changes in the academy which include a dramatic increase in faculty retirements. A report by the Association of

Universities and Colleges of Canada indicates that nationally, there may be close to 21,000 additional faculty members needed during the next decade (Offman, 2009). Added to this unique demographic event affecting the professoriate is the potential for growth in the number of students attending university. According to the Council of Ontario Universities (2001), there will be 90,000 or more potential students participating in universities by 2010. In consideration of the potential impact of demographics on the academy in terms of student participation rates and workforce (professoriate) diversity, it is important to review the relevant data reported in national censuses.

Statistical data from the 2006 and 2001 national censuses point to significant factors associated with Canadian demographics which may in fact influence both student participation rates and workforce diversity. The Canadian population and workforce statistics based on 2006 and 2001 national censuses data (Table 1) illustrate the representation rates for Aboriginal peoples relative to both the total population and the workforce. This data indicates that Aboriginal peoples represented approximately 3.8 percent of the total 2006 Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2008b), and 3.3 percent of the total 2001 Canadian population (Government of Canada, Human Resources Skills Development Canada, (HRSDC), 2004). Additionally, Statistics Canada (2008b) reports a dramatic 44.9 percent change in growth rate in the level of representation for Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian population from 1996 to 2006. Also, from 2001 to 2006, Statistics Canada (2008e) reported the increase in Canadian Aboriginal population was 20.1 percent. These growth rates are particularly significant when compared with the percentage growth for the total Canadian population from 2001 to 2006, which was reported as only a 5.4 percent increase.

Table 1. Total Population and Workforce Population based on 2006 and 2001 Canadian Census

List of Variables	Total Population (Canada)			Aboriginal Peoples (Canada)		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
[1]2006 Total Population	31,241,030	15,326,270	15,914,760	1,172,785	572,095	600,695
[2]2001 Total Population	29,639,030	14,564,275	15,074,755	976,305	476,700	499,605
[3]2006 Labour Force (15 years and over)	17,144,205	9,019,530	8,124,675	517,375	263,945	253,430
[2]2001 Labour Force (15 years and over)	16,961,080	8,942,050	8,019,030	436,485	223,545	212,945

(Source: [1]Statistics Canada, 2008d; [2]Government of Canada, HRSDC, 2004; [3]Statistics Canada, 2008c)

Statistics Canada (2004) in analyzing the 2001 national census data attributed the increase in the Aboriginal population reported due in part to the high birth rate for this population, with the median age of the Aboriginal population reported as 13 years younger than that of the non-Aboriginal population. The other reason suggested for the increase in Aboriginal population reported may be due to increased awareness of Aboriginal identity, and the fact that fewer reserves were incompletely enumerated. This continued growth amongst the Aboriginal population of Canada may have significant implications for the potential pool of future candidates in the Ontario professoriate. This

is especially significant given the predicted levels of retirements in the professoriate and increases in levels of student participation.

However, in reviewing participation in the labour force, the representation of Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian labour force (15 years and older) is approximately 3.0 percent (Statistics Canada, 2008c) based on the 2006 census data, and comparatively, 2.6 percent based on the 2001 census data (Government of Canada, HRSDC, 2004). The fact that these representation levels remain relatively low is an important point to consider when analyzing the representation rates of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate. In light of these demographic projections, and an environment that claims to focus on the promotion of social justice, university employment equity programming is not only the morally right thing to do, it is also makes sense in terms of efforts to ensure the academic workforce is representative of the diversity in the Canadian population.

Statement of the Problem

In addition to the national census population reports, the Government of Canada Human Resources Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) (2004) prepares a specific *Employment Equity Data Report* (EEDR) based on Statistics Canada data obtained from each national census. This data provides a snapshot of the labour market, and specifically, the representation of members of the designated groups within the Canadian, provincial and local labour markets. For instance, the EEDR based on the analysis of the 2001 national census data indicated that nationally, an estimated 5 percent of Aboriginal peoples were in middle management positions compared with 9 percent for the total population. Furthermore, 9 percent of Aboriginal peoples were employed in professional occupations, a percentage significantly lower than the 15 percent observed for the total

population (Government of Canada, HRSDC, 2004). This labour force availability or workforce representation data, is utilized by universities for employment equity purposes to determine the level of workforce representativeness. Universities compare their institutional workforce representation rates for each of the four designated groups (based on data obtained through an institutional workforce census), with that of the Statistics Canada labour force availability data.

Labour force availability is an important aspect of employment equity data analysis. Labour force availability reflects the availability of members of the employment equity designated groups by occupational grouping as well as geographic location – nationally, provincially, and as available, census metropolitan areas (cities). To determine workforce representativeness, employment equity data collected by universities is broken down into categories or occupational groups specified by the Government of Canada – these groupings or categories are called Employment Equity Occupational Groups (EEOGs). There are 14 EEOGs which are comprised of a national taxonomy of job descriptions and titles under a National Occupational Code (NOC). In this research inquiry, NOC #4121, University Professors (which falls under EEOG #3 Professionals) was of particular interest.

As indicated in Table 2, the *Employment Equity Data Report* based on 2001 Census data reported in "Workforce population showing representation by employment equity occupational groups and unit groups (2001 NOC) for Women, Aboriginal Peoples and Visible Minorities" indicated a national labour force availability of 0.7 percent, for Aboriginal Peoples in NOC #4121; specifically, of the 52,160 persons available in the

workforce nationally in this category, only 340 self-identified in the 2001 census as an

Aboriginal person (Government of Canada, 2004).

Table 2. **2001 Workforce Population showing representation by Employment Equity Occupational Group #3, Professionals and Unit Group #4121 – University Professors (Canada/Ontario)**

Employment Equity Occupational Group #3, Professionals Unit Group NOC #4121 University Professors	Total Workforce Population 15 Years and Older (100%)	Aboriginal Peoples Workforce Population 15 Years and Older (100%)	
	No.	No.	%
Canada Total	16,961,075	436,485	2.6
Professionals	2,588,165	40,015	1.5
NOC #4121 University Professors	52,160	340	0.7
Ontario Total	6,512,565	92,200	1.4
Professionals	1,063,305	9,115	0.9
NOC #4121 University Professors	19,355	95	0.5

(Source: Government of Canada, 2004)

Given the evidence provided in the literature that the Aboriginal population is the

only group within the Canadian population with a rising birth rate, may alone suggest that

this is an issue of national prominence. However, coupling this demographic shift with

what Fenelon (2003) states is a belief that "colleges and universities act in objective ways

that are guided, in large measure, by an unrelenting quest for truth" (p. 87), requires that

social policy address, as an issue of integrity and national consciousness, the existing hegemonic barriers that limit access to academic careers, as well as the retention of Aboriginal scholars within the professoriate.

In reviewing a sample of Ontario University workforce representation rates it would appear that many universities have a representative faculty workforce for Aboriginal peoples based on comparison with national labour force availability data. However, this comparison is problematic given the current low level of availability as indicated by the labour force representation rates for Aboriginal peoples. For example, the University of Windsor based on its 2001 workforce census reported a representation rate of 0.9 percent for Aboriginal peoples in its faculty which exceeded the national labour force availability rate; however, this 0.9 percent translates into only four individuals who self-identified in this category among a total of 462 faculty members. It is precisely for this reason that this research study sought to examine the under-representation of Aboriginal peoples in the Ontario professoriate through a collaborative inquiry with Aboriginal scholars.

Purpose of the Study

The under-representation of Aboriginal scholars was the central issued examined in this inquiry, specifically, the study sought to explore the following core issues: 1) the current lack of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, 2) strategies to increase the retention of these scholars within the system, and 3) the policy implications of these issues for recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars in the academy. These issues were examined through an Aboriginal epistemic lens in an effort to provide a *voice* for members of the research community as well as to develop a grounded theory of principles

to inform employment equity policies and practices in the academy. In particular, the study examined the issues that influence the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, from the perspective of Aboriginal scholars currently employed within, as well as those who have left the employment of the Ontario professoriate.

The inquiry also examined a transformational educational policy development process, which as articulated by Battiste (2002), necessarily comprises an examination of education and knowledge production, specifically looking at: 1) how transformation may occur through the adoption of Aboriginal knowledge for both the institution as well as the students; and, 2) how respectful and inclusive spaces [for members of the Aboriginal community] may be created within education. As Anyon (2006) proposes, to address those "social forces that impinge on educational equity, it is necessary to identify the oppressive policies and practices, and document their effects" (p. 22). Within this context, educational institutions – universities in particular, have the opportunity to become social communicators of respect for cultural diversity in Canadian society.

Theoretical Framework

This study was grounded in critical theory as the aim of the inquiry was to actively collaborate with members of the Aboriginal community in an effort to institute change, and most importantly, to empower the members of this community (Creswell, 2003). Kincheloe (2005) suggests that critical theory, foundational to critical pedagogy, embraces and acknowledges the political places operating in the context of schooling which through systemic hegemony oppress and marginalize those considered outside of mainstream. Kincheloe also claims that schooling, from a critical theory perspective,

acknowledges the multi-faceted landscape of human experience (social, cultural, cognitive, socio-economic), and the polity of these contexts in terms of equity and social justice. Kincheloe's statement that "education is not neutral" (p. 11), and that educators who support the dominant power structure are in fact supporting the status quo is compelling, especially in providing a theoretical basis for the inquiry.

This would suggest that critical theory is, as Kincheloe (2005) asserts, concerned with those members of society who experience marginalization. The acknowledgement of these 'margins' recognizes the political nature of education, and the references of critical theory to cultural pedagogy as Kincheloe states, "the ways dominant cultural agents produce hegemonic ways of seeing" (p. 58). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) argue that curriculum is in fact a form of intellectual property, the quality and quantity of which is often tied to hegemonic dominance. This hegemony has implications in creating social stratification which Bourdieu (1985) describes as processes of 'categorization or classification' in 'making-explicit' social place and identity:

> Knowledge of the social world and, more precisely, the categories which make it possible, are the stakes, par excellence, of political struggle, the inextricably theoretical and practical struggle for the power to conserve or transform the social world by conserving or transforming the categories through which it is perceived (p. 202).

Bourdieu (1985) suggests that 'cultural capital' may explain why schools are able to reproduce the culture of certain groups, such as the dominance of Eurocentric ideologies in the Canadian school system, at the expense of others. He refers to this as

the institutionalized state of cultural capital, relevant to the unequal academic success

noted for students from different social (cultural) classes in a society. In the educational

setting this means that cultural capital, or the power and authority possessed by the

dominant group, also provides legitimacy for hegemonic practices within systems of

education (Bourdieu, 1985; Young, 1987). Of particular interest in this inquiry, is the

examination of this process of hegemonic legitimation, and the consequences that result

in terms of marginalizing the members of some groups within educational settings. This

is especially important given that education has been identified as a system that transmits

social and cultural values. This struggle to confront and eradicate oppression unfolds

within a political milieu which is based on a 'social order' ascribed by the classification

or categorization of culture (Bourdieu, 1985; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).

By uncovering the power structures that oppress and marginalize, this study is

concerned with the empowerment of individuals (Creswell, 2003). Therefore, two

complementary approaches to social justice research are used as a framework to

understand inclusion and exclusion in education (Ryan, 2006). The first approach Ryan

describes focuses on ensuring the *voice* of students and members of the community

(including parents), in social justice research investigating inclusionary and exclusionary

practices in education. The second approach to social justice research examines the

impact the lack of socio-economic and other resources has in disadvantaging or

preventing what Ryan refers to as social advancement for some groups, or members of

society. Combined, Ryan posits that these approaches form a conceptual framework of

social justice research that shifts the understanding of inclusion and exclusion in

education away from a stance that blames the individual, to a focus on the examination of

systemic processes that create and perpetuate inequitable social conditions and relationships.

Conceptually therefore, the study sought to integrate Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and the power this confers to the dominant group, along with the aforementioned understanding of social justice in terms of inclusion and exclusion focusing on processes of systemic inequity, in the analysis of data collected concerning the complexity of the lived experience of the research participants. This was a crucial aspect under-pinning the stance of the inquiry. In examining social policy in an educational system, Hampton (1995) points out that the integrity of culture is based in large part on the means of education. Furthermore, he asserts this is particularly relevant for Aboriginal peoples given that "the bicultural enterprise of Indian education has been directed at two alternately competing and complementary goals: assimilation and self-determination" (p. 8). And, as Kincheloe (2005) asserts, cultural production can be a compelling form of education. Therefore, this qualitative inquiry was undertaken with a commitment to assist in the empowerment of Aboriginal peoples as a marginalized and oppressed group; "to honour the principles of respecting, valuing and bringing to the foreground the lived experience and Indigenous knowledge of those being studied" (Rose, 2001, p. 27).

Of specific interest in this critical theory approach was the attempt to contribute to the critical empowerment or emancipation for those members of the Aboriginal community who seek equity and social justice in order to gain control of educational decisions (Kincheloe, 2005). This need for critical emancipation was reflected in the recommendations of the RCAP (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996) which indicated that "Aboriginal communities must have the opportunity to implement their

vision of education….Aboriginal children are entitled to learn and achieve in an environment that supports their development as whole individuals" (p. 8). Ryan (2006) also suggests that many researchers concerned with inequity and disadvantage in education share the viewpoint that social justice is achievable only with the direct involvement and inclusion of the *voice* of students and their parents.

Therefore, the utilization of a critical theory approach was imperative to support the social justice premise of the study which sought to expose and address what Kincheloe (2005) asserts is the oppressive power of Eurocentric knowledge as the dominant view of the world. As a result, the knowledge claim orientation of the study sought to move away from an assimilationist perspective by empowering the Aboriginal community. Empowerment was actualized by incorporating the *voice* of the community in identifying, as well as participating in the development of principles to inform policy and practice relating to faculty recruitment and retention in the academy. In addition to being fair and equitable, these principles should foster a positive and welcoming climate which is reflective of the Aboriginal community's expectations.

Research Questions

Specifically, the following questions guided this inquiry:

1. What factors do Aboriginal scholars identify as influencing their sense of inclusion and/or exclusion in the Ontario educational community, and to what extent do they believe that these factors have an effect on the pool of future Aboriginal scholars?

2. What factors do Aboriginal scholars identify as fostering their retention in the Ontario Professoriate?

3. What factors do Aboriginal scholars identify as the reasons why they leave the Ontario Professoriate?

4. What recommendations can Aboriginal scholars provide to guide the development of inclusive recruitment and retention policies and practices in the academy?

5. Can equitable recruitment and retention policies and practices in the academy have a positive influence on the current under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate?

Significance of the Study

The issues investigated in this study are relevant to the academy, as well as the Aboriginal peoples of Canada. As the population of the Aboriginal community continues to grow, and as professional opportunities in academia develop, it is necessary, in the interest of social justice and the production of new knowledge, to embrace policies and practices to positively influence the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal peoples in academia. Battiste (2002) shares a viewpoint of Indigenous knowledge, and reflects on the impact this way of knowing may have for educational reform:

Education for wholeness, which strives for a level of harmony between individuals and their world, is an ancient foundation for the educational processes of all heritages. In its most natural dimension, all true education is transformative and Nature centered….Educational reforms must end the fragmentation of

Eurocentric educational systems imposed on First Nations students and facilitate

the goal of wholeness to which Indigenous knowledge aspires (p. 30).

Battiste's (2002) challenge that educational reform end the 'fragmentation' of

Eurocentric hegemony, reaffirms the need to examine the power of educational

leadership and policy development from a critical theory perspective.

Solomon & Rezai-Rashti (2001) assert that educators play an important function

in the transmission of social and cultural norms, and that given the increased race and

ethnocultural diversity in Canadian schools and communities, there is an inherent need

for educators to become "social re-constructivists" (p. 1). They suggest educators must

reverse rather than reproduce marginalization in our schools. This 'reconstruction' may

come about by nurturing a sense of educational community actualized through caring and

responsive leadership, in an effort to develop equitable policies which then translate into

inclusionary practices. The development of inclusive practices that will transform the

academy may involve, as Ermine (as cited in Ford, 2006) suggests, an opportunity for the

West to acknowledge the "mono-cultural monopoly" (p. 1) currently presented by its

institutions of learning. In reviewing the government response to the *Report of the Royal*

Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), the need to acknowledge, consult and

collaborate with Aboriginal peoples is strikingly obvious.

Therefore, as clearly articulated in the RCAP (Indian and Northern Affairs

Canada, 1996), when embarking on this research study which has policy implications, it

was necessary as a researcher to strengthen the voice of Aboriginal people in the

translation of issues into policy changes. While this study focused on the Aboriginal

Community, it is evident that the entire academy would benefit from equity policies and community building initiatives that foster an inclusive and welcoming environment. The study will provide an important policy framework for universities to adopt with regards to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars.

Definition of Key Concepts

Aboriginal Peoples

The Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies (CAAS) (2007) states that "language frames our relationships" (p. 27), and in consideration of this, careful thought went into determining the terminology used in this study. The terminology *Aboriginal peoples* is used in this study because of the fact that this means original people, and that it is a legal term used in the Canadian Constitution, and most importantly, it recognizes "Indians, Inuit and the Métis" (p. 27), which resonates with the inclusionary premise of the inquiry. Other terms were considered but not chosen for the following reasons: First Nations because of the greater political connotation; Native which is specific only to claiming place of birth; and finally, the term Indian which refers to people defined and governed by the *Indian Act* which can be considered controversial given the underlying legal and political meanings (including the exclusion of Inuit and Métis peoples, and those who have become non-status Indians through discriminatory provisions of the *Act)* (CAAS, 2007)*.* Therefore, for the purpose of this research the term Aboriginal peoples will be used throughout. However, the exception to this rule is in honouring the terminology used by other scholars when citing their work.

Aboriginal Scholars

For the purposes of this inquiry, Aboriginal scholars are defined as current or former members of the Ontario professoriate who self-identified as being a member of the Aboriginal community. Furthermore, current or former membership in the Ontario professoriate is defined in terms of the following academic roles: faculty member (including sessional instructor), administrator/counsellor, and/or graduate student (a key element of this role involving some teaching responsibility).

Under-Representation in the Professoriate

In addition to the current level of under-representation of Aboriginal scholars employed in the professoriate, there is evidence of another factor which may influence future employment levels – the reported lower levels of participation in postsecondary education by Aboriginal students. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, under-representation in the Ontario professoriate will include an examination of the reasons for the overall lack of representation of Aboriginal scholars currently participating in the Ontario professoriate, including identification of those factors which may influence the future employment pool of Aboriginal candidates.

Defining Community

To effectively examine the issues which may influence the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars, it is necessary to consider the effect a sense of inclusion or exclusion in the educational community may have on students, particularly, Aboriginal students. Magrab (1999) suggests community occupies both a psychological as well as a physical plane of existence. Community involves the complex interplay and interaction of human relationships, and is derived from a feeling of 'belonging' in the context of a

diverse range of societal groupings. As individuals we belong to many different communities based on family, culture, ethnicity, race, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, etc, and:

> …membership in these communities has a profound effect on the epistemological lens an individual uses to participate in the wider society; and, this lens has an influence on the level of engagement in society by providing a context for the concepts of: Personal identity – Where, and how do I fit into this society? Social responsibility – What are my responsibilities to the society? And societal role based on perceived levels of power – Do I have a *voice*? Am I heard? (Roland, 2008, pp. 55-56).

Given the importance of 'belonging' in creating inclusive spaces within the educational community, the epistemic divide between Western and Aboriginal epistemologies must be acknowledged. Furthermore, Ermine (1995) asserts that a Western "fragmentation" (p.103) of self-world is in direct opposition to the holistic Aboriginal epistemology which seeks to "…understand the reality of existence and harmony with the environment by turning inward" (p. 103). It is arguable that this epistemic viewpoint may have profound implications and relevance in terms of the development of policy and practices with which to foster community building in systems of education to reflect respectful interconnectedness, rather than imperialism.

Delimitations and Limitations

Several factors constitute the delimitations and limitations of the study. The delimitations include: researcher reflexivity, as well as issues encountered during the

sampling process. The limitations of the study included the participant retention rates and issues associated with the online data collection process.

One of the delimitations or limits of this study involved the outsider status of the researcher. Therefore, it was imperative in this study that the researcher recognize all participants as partners; this recognition was closely tied to the ability of the researcher to use a reflexive analytical lens to challenge her personal bias and epistemology. As Luttrell (2000) suggests:

> We listen and make sense of what we hear according to particular theoretical, ontological, personal, and cultural frameworks and in the context of unequal power relations. The worry always exists that the voices and perspectives of those we study will be lost or subsumed to our own views and interest." (p. 499)

Therefore, to ensure authenticity in terms of the *construction* of research data through evaluation and analysis, a member-checking process was used to verify data interpretation and meaning.

Another delimitation of the study pertained to issues encountered during the sampling process. Success with the purposive sampling process was directly related to the ability of the researcher to demonstrate a respectful and sensitive approach in contacting Aboriginal scholars to request their participation. As was anticipated, Aboriginal scholars who had left the employment of an Ontario university were the most difficult to contact. However, through thoughtful and persistent networking, the sampling for this group of Aboriginal scholars was successful.

As a limitation of the study, the ability of the researcher to be sensitive and reflexive was associated with participant retention rates. To ensure active participation, the researcher maintained contact with all participants, however, even with numerous follow-up contacts, two participants who had agreed to participate in the study did not in fact do so. And, of the seven participants originally confirmed as participants who had 'left' the Ontario professoriate, one individual did not respond to follow-up contact, and another participant removed herself from the study due to the fact that she did not fit the participant profile as a former member of the Ontario professoriate. However, this change was not problematic since the 14 active participants met the original proposed sample size of 10 to 14 participants for the study.

The online data collection methodology proved successful with the aforementioned participants reporting an appreciation for the ease in using the online methodology, as well as the accessibility of the online format. However, a limitation of the study involved assurances of cultural sensitivity in the use of this online methodology. Any issues presented with the online format were discussed with the individual participant to ensure a respectful approach to data collection, and one that honoured the Oral Tradition for some participants. A few other minor limitations to the study arose in utilizing the online focus group interview methodology, including: 1) efforts to enhance the synchronistic aspect of online dialogue; 2) a minor technological glitch; and, 3) an anticipated decrease in participation rates over time.

Efforts to enhance the synchronistic aspect of the online dialogue were addressed by providing participants with the opportunity to join the discussion during 'live' online

focus group interview sessions. These 'live' sessions were held at specific dates and times, and during these interviews sessions the researcher was online at all times, and posted new discussion questions at regular intervals. Telephone interviews proved to be an effective tool with which to enhance participant dialogue. Additionally, a minor technological glitch arose which neither the researcher, nor the Information Technology Services Department (ITS) were aware of until the study had commenced – this was the fact that the weblog site would 'time out' after approximately 30 minutes. This issue was eventually resolved. And lastly, as anticipated, there was some decline in online participation rate as the study progressed (see Appendix A). Telephone interviews were used to supplement the data collection process, and as a method to augment the participation rate.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter I (this chapter) provides a background or context for the study, as well as the statement of the problem being investigated, and the purpose of the inquiry. The theoretical framework, research questions, and significance of the study are also discussed. The chapter concludes with the definition of key concepts along with a discussion of the research delimitations and limitations and the organization of the dissertation.

Chapter II examines relevant literature in order to provide a contextual foundation for the research. Specifically, the review explores the current under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate by examining factors which may influence the future employment pool of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate. The chapter

begins with an examination of the influence of hegemony in education, and the impact Eurocentric ideologies in the Canadian education system may have on a sense of inclusion or exclusion in the educational community for members of the Aboriginal community. As well, the review of the literature explores how the educational system might 'bridge' the epistemic divide between Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemologies by considering that while multiculturalism is celebrated as part of the Canadian national ideology, it does not 'unpack' the cultural tensions and discrimination that is prevalent in the Canadian education system.

Also presented in Chapter II is an examination of the link between education, social justice and the academy. This includes an examination of equity versus equality, relational distributive justice, and the potential for backlash against equity policies. Also a discussion concerning the processes in the Canadian education system which continue to support and foster oppressive and colonial practices is presented to examine the impact of social policy on Aboriginal education. The chapter also provides a description of the policy implications that are inherent in addressing systemic discrimination, and the historical attempts that have been made to transform education policy in Canada. Universities, the professoriate and equity are discussed relevant to employment equity policies and practices. The purpose and goals of the federal employment equity policy are presented along with a description of an employment systems review. And lastly, transformative policy is discussed with regard to the potential to enact social change.

Chapter III describes the research methodology. The qualitative research strategy is described along with a description of the participant selection process and a brief

profile of the participant groups. The discussion in this chapter includes the data

collection procedures as follows: the pilot study, focus group interviews, the online

format, telephone interviews, and researcher field notes. Data concepts or conceptual

categories (relationship; knowledge; value of education; policy, politics and rhetoric;

social justice; and, commitment) are defined and described as the tools used to analyze

the data collected. The data analysis process is also discussed including the strategies that

are used to validate the research findings. An important element of the chapter is the

discussion of some ethical issues in the inquiry, including how the researcher situated

herself in the inquiry, and the steps taken to ensure confidentiality for research

participants.

In Chapter IV, the findings of the study are presented including a brief descriptive

profile of each research participant. Additionally, a discussion of an essential aspect of

the online data collection format, the participant Code of Conduct is provided; this *Code*

was used to 'set the tone' for respectful and collegial focus group interview discussions.

A discussion of the findings explores the major areas of focus in the study: the context of

education and the implications this may have for recruitment and retention – the future

employment pool of Aboriginal scholars; why Aboriginal scholars remain, or conversely

why the leave the Ontario professoriate; and, social justice and equity – policy

implications for the academy.

Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings of the research in relation to the

existing literature. This discussion includes an examination of decolonization as a

national effort which must differentiate racism, move social change beyond the rhetoric,

acknowledge the distrust of the educational system, and explore the possibility of capacity building for the Aboriginal community. Additionally, findings relevant to recruitment and retention are presented along with a review of ideological perspectives which have, and continue to shape educational policy in Canada. A central feature in this chapter is the discussion of the proposed 'Policy Transformation Circle' which is described in terms of an ongoing evolutionary process involving four integrative stages: 1) the 'Beginning' where relationship building occurs based on a foundation of knowledge and decolonization to effectively move educational policy beyond rhetoric; 2) 'Consultation with Expert Knowledge' which stipulates the importance of genuine collaborative partnerships, and the implications this has for policy development; 3) 'Policy Development: Taking Action' revisits the research findings in terms of employment equity, specifically, recruitment and retention policy and practices within the academy; and, 4) 'Reflection: Policy Implementation' which offers a discussion of proposed principles with which to guide employment equity recruitment and retention policy and practices in the academy, and, ultimately, to positively address the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

The conclusion of Chapter V brings the discussion of the social justice premise of the inquiry full circle by re-examining the academy as an institutional 'agent of change.' This is done by defining the social responsibility of the academy in terms of its ability to actively foster and promote social change as an indelible function of its institutional responsibility. Finally, the implications of the study for future research are discussed in terms of practices that may safeguard Aboriginal knowledge and build capacity for future Aboriginal research.

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

A fundamental premise of this critical inquiry is that the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate is a complex, and multi-layered phenomenon. Therefore, the study investigated not only why Aboriginal scholars stay or leave the Ontario professoriate, but also the identification of factors which may affect the educational attainment levels of Aboriginal students, and which may in turn influence their potential choice of a career in academia. The literature suggests that the dominance of Eurocentric ideologies in the Canadian education system have negatively impacted the educational experience and levels of educational attainment among members of the Aboriginal community. As a consequence, this literature review will examine the hegemonic processes that are prevalent in the Canadian education system and the tensions or 'contested spaces' operating between Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemology in education. Also discussed is the relationship of education and social justice, and the policy implications of this relationship for the academy.

Of particular interest for this inquiry is the examination of social policy and Aboriginal education including equity versus equality, relational distributive justice, and the potential for backlash against equity policies. Also discussed is the impact of social policy on Aboriginal education including historical perspectives and social justice in education. And finally, a discussion of universities, the professoriate and equity policy is presented including a discussion of the federal employment equity legislation, recruitment and retention strategies, the Employment Systems Review as an institutional

equity audit, and transformative policy to enact social change to foster social justice for Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate.

Hegemony in Education

This inquiry examined the implications the dominance of Eurocentric ideologies in the Canadian educational system have had for those members of society, such as Aboriginal people, who continue to experience pedagogical silencing through systemic marginalization and oppression. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) define hegemony as processes of coercion that create barriers to inclusion by embedding Eurocentric practices and structures which have the power to exclude. They argue that historically, property rights defined as the ability to own and possess property, have been identified as a central aspect of power in American society. They equate this power with those of privilege feeling a sense of entitlement to better quality education. An example they provide is that of curriculum as a form of property – the intellectual property of the dominant group.

In the context of Aboriginal peoples, Corson (1997) suggests that Eurocentric hegemony may be the result of distorted beliefs Europeans brought with them during colonization – a belief system which assumed that all cultures are essentially compatible, and therefore easily acculturated into the European image. Corson asserts that this ethnocentric process had dire consequences for members of the colonized nations, that of "cultural assimilation" or "death" (p. 107). Corson's point is well-taken since this context of colonization continues to have significant implications for the Canadian educational system today, including the academy.

In considering the legacy and continuing effects of colonization and oppression, it is crucial to recognize and acknowledge that there are consequences not only for the groups facing oppression and marginalization, but also for the individual members of these groups. Hegemony may have dire effects on the individual's sense of personhood. Anderson (2000) describes a sense of identity or personhood based on Aboriginal worldviews as incorporating the physical, emotional and spiritual self. In her discussions of the effects of marginalization on the individual, she describes a "triangle of oppression" (p. 111) which has resulted in the construction of a negative identity for many Aboriginal peoples. The creation of this negative 'identity' is a consequence of the experience of oppression and racism at both the personal as well as the structural (education system) level. However, promoting community building in education – the sense of belonging and feeling of being valued, may ultimately work to address the silencing some individuals and groups experience at all levels of schooling.

In effect, to prepare students to participate and contribute as citizens, schools should consider community building as a critical element in the socialization process (Cogan & Derricott, 2000; Lynch, 1992). Furthermore, it can also be argued that community building would support the processes of decolonization which as Dei (2002) posits, requires the legitimization of other forms of knowledge, and other ways of knowing. Dei further asserts that while there are no claims to universality, the underpinning of Indigenous knowledge is tied with the awareness of the interconnectedness of the physical, spiritual and personal worlds. He terms this as "communalism" (p. 5) – thought that emphasizes a sense of belonging. As a core facet of educational community building, this sense of belonging may assist in addressing

hegemonic processes in education, and bridging the epistemic divide between Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemologies.

Bridging the Divide: Aboriginal and Eurocentric Epistemologies in Education

This discussion of social inequity in the Canadian education system is based on the proposition that Eurocentric hegemony is a process of coercion that continues to create barriers for Aboriginal scholars and scholarship in the academy. These barriers are the result of hegemonic processes that embed Eurocentric practices and structures that have the power to exclude (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In her 2000 work, *Circle as Methodology: Enacting an Aboriginal Paradigm*, Graveline addresses a common dilemma that confronts Aboriginal scholars with regards to the tensions existing between Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemologies in her statement, "Located within contemporary Western educational institutions how can I contribute to education as the "practice of freedom" (Freire as cited in Graveline, 2000) rather than perpetuating Repression Colonialism Eurocentrism" (p. 361). The next section presents a discussion of the tensions or 'contested spaces' that exist in examining Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemologies in education.

Farrell (2003) states that Aboriginal epistemology is "holistic, [representing] a philosophical view of life incorporated with the natural world" (p. 36). Further, Battiste (2002) asserts that Indigenous knowledge does not emulate a Eurocentric way of knowing, rather, it is embedded in teaching and experiences, and is a knowledge system in its own right. These epistemic tensions and perceptions of incompatibility are critically important considerations in this research which seeks to investigate how changes to social

policy can counteract hegemonic practices in the educational system including universities. The examination of the tensions between Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemologies requires a reference point from which to begin the investigation; and to do this, the works of Clare Brant and Ebert Hampton are discussed relative to Aboriginal epistemologies in the context of education.

Brant (1982, 1990) compiled what he referred to as a set of frequently occurring behaviours in Native people and then reviewed these principles with various Native groups across Canada. He concluded that with some "local variation" these principles were for the most part congruent with many Native community belief systems. Brant suggests that these "ethics, values, and rules of behaviour" (1990, p. 534) are important when considered in the context of the cultural dissonance Native people may experience in their interactions with mainstream society, and implicitly, their experiences with the education system.

Brant (1990) described four principles of conflict repression common among Native people as processes of adaptive function. These principles include: 1) the ethic of non-interference, which he suggests is the most widely accepted principle of behaviour among Native people, a behavioural norm which discourages coercion and promotes respect for individual independence; 2) the practice of non competitiveness to preserve the dignity of another which when extended into the workplace and school system, may be perceived as lack of initiative or ambition on the part of the individual; 3) emotional restraint which he suggests promotes self-restraint and suppresses expression of emotions including such feelings as anger, joy and enthusiasm, all of which he stresses may lead to an unhealthy internalization of hostility; and, 4) the practice of sharing and generosity –

a behavioural norm Brant suggests was adopted to ensure group survival, and arguably sharply contrasts with mainstream society's neoliberal drive for individual success (pp. 535- 536).

In addition to these principles of conflict repression, Brant (1990) described four traditional Native behavioural influences including: 1) the Native concept of time as an holistic and harmonious approach with nature, time being considered a personal and flexible concept; 2) the Native attitude that gratitude and approval should not be acknowledged, a norm that focuses on intrinsic satisfaction and responsibility for performance rather than acceptance of praise and reward, and which again has clear implications for interactions in an educational setting; 3) Native etiquette which Brant suggests are very structured codes of social behaviour which can also cause significant misunderstanding given that these "codes" cannot be directly communicated due to the ethic of non interference; and, 4) the practice of teaching by modeling which may have serious implications for Native students learning in mainstream classrooms as Aboriginal cultures reward learners in different ways than Western culture (pp. 536-537).

To effectively facilitate the development of a thematic investigation for this inquiry, Brant's Native principles of conflict repression and traditional behaviours were juxtaposed with the standards of education Hampton (1995) proposed. These 'standards of education' followed from the research Hampton conducted with Indian educators in which he sought to generate a "preliminary theory of Indian education" (p. 15). Hampton utilized a directional medicine wheel archetype to understand and organize the interview data collected among Indian educators in his study which asked participants to provide a description of what Indian education is, and what Indian education should be. Hampton's

contextual understanding of education embodies the following six directional elements of the medicine wheel: spirit (spirituality universe - identity); east (spring – origin); south (summer – growth); west (fall – renewal and rebuilding); north (winter – rebirth); and earth (home – stability).

Hampton (1995) suggests that there are 12 standards of Indigenous education in these directional elements or categories of the medicine wheel. The Spirit direction contains two standards: the first standard is spirituality – "relationship to all things" (p. 19), and the second standard, service – "education is to serve the people" (p. 21). In the Eastern direction there are also two standards: the third standard, diversity – "diversity, tribalism, and community-based education speaks to the active implementation of diverse cultures and local control as defining characteristics of Indian education" (p. 24) and, the fourth standard, culture – "ways of thought, learning, teaching and communicating" (p. 28). In the Southern direction of the medicine wheel is the fifth standard, tradition – "continuity with tradition which defines and preserves" (p. 29) and, the sixth standard, respect – "Indian education demands relationships of personal respect" (p. 31). These directional categories reflect educational standards involving 'identity', 'origin' and 'growth'.

The next directional categories Hampton (1995) presents, West, North and Earth, reflect the educational standards of 'renewal', 'rebirth' and 'stability' respectively. The Western direction contains the seventh standard, history – "Indian education has a history of colonization and conquest" (p. 32) and, the eighth standard, relentlessness – "Indian education is relentless in its battle for its children…. the war (is) between that which honours life and that which does not….fought within the individual and with the world"

(pp. 32-33). The North direction contains the ninth standard, vitality – "Indian education recognizes and nourishes the powerful pattern of life lying hidden, suffering begets strength" (p. 35) and, the tenth standard, conflict – recognition that Western education is hostile in terms of both its content as well as its structure to Aboriginal peoples, "education, as currently practiced, is cultural genocide"(p. 35). And finally, the Earth direction presents the eleventh standard, place – "Indian education acknowledges the importance of an Indian sense of place, land and territory....promoting involvement rather than isolation and segregation" (p. 40) and, the twelfth standard, transformation – "Indian education recognizes the need to transform relations between Indian and White as well as in the individual and society" (p. 41).

The combined works of Brant (1982, 1990) and Hampton (1995) provide a syncretistic vantage point from which the inquiry explored the complex relationship between identity, culture, and education with regard to Aboriginal Canadians. However, it is necessary as Farrell (2003) cautions, to recognize that the Aboriginal population in Canada is comprised of many diverse communities, with different values and beliefs, and it is imperative that the researcher does not attempt to essentialize or universalize these various belief systems. Therefore, in this study, Brant's (1982, 1990) work on Native psychology along with Hampton's (1995) "12 standards of Indian education" provided an epistemic standpoint from which to analyze current conditions in academia.

In this analysis of conditions in academia it is also important to note Baskin's (2002) assertion that despite the racialization of education, and despite the fact that Eurocentric ideologies subvert other ways of knowing, "Eurocentric knowledge is not universal…. like any other form of knowledge, it is culturally situated" (p. 2). These

points of tension in the production of knowledge, respecting and valuing different ways of knowing, are integral to discussions of social justice and equity in the educational system. Egbo (2009) asserts that critical theory offers an "alternative view of society" (p. 16), which in turn may create opportunities for the educational system to challenge hegemonic processes, and therefore support social justice and equity for all students in the system. Further she suggests that critical theorists stipulate that while schools may be sites of tensions resulting from the dominance by privileged value systems, schools also have the ability to institute societal change through processes of "transformative praxis" (p. 16).

Education, Social Justice and the Academy

In order to embrace a critical theory approach it is necessary to consider the relationship between education and social justice, and the implications of this relationship for the academy. For the purposes of this study, the examination of this relationship is particularly relevant to understanding the treatment of Aboriginal scholars and scholarship in the academy. This section presents a discussion of the relationship of education and social justice in developing social justice policy in education. The discussion of social policy in the Canadian educational context also examines the concepts of equity and equality, and the relevance of these concepts for employment equity in the academy.

History indicates that shifts in societal ideologies in Canada are reflected in social policies, including those policies affecting the system of education. Egbo (2009) offers that societal ideologies have shifted along a continuum which involves perspectives of "assimilation, benevolence, accommodation and cultural pluralism" (p. 186). She further

opines that social policy in Canada in the 1970s and 1990s sought to "consolidate Canada's image as a cultural mosaic" (p. 187), and that these attempts resulted in a response by the educational system to support and affirm a pluralistic Canadian society that is attentive to social justice. One way the Canadian society has attempted to foster social justice is through its 1971 *Multiculturalism Policy*.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006) describe Canada's 1971 *Multiculturalism Policy* as not only a challenge to Canadians to recognize the reality of pluralism in Canada, but also as a policy with which to address racism and discrimination. Majhanovich (1998) states that multiculturalism in Canada requires meaningful efforts to foster informed understanding and recognition of the contributions that many groups have made to Canadian society, and that as a result of the multiculturalism policy, society as a whole benefits. The multicultural approach to education policy focuses on a celebration of diversity including the various contributions by many cultural groups to our society.

However, it may be argued that the multiculturalism policy is somewhat superficial in that it does not promote meaningful respect and valuing for differences among groups – moving beyond a stance of tolerance. An example is provided by Lawrence and Dua (2005) in discussing the inability of the Canadian *Multiculturalism* policy to redress the extinction of Aboriginal languages. Lawrence and Dua assert that this policy reflects a colonial perspective in first providing for the 'official' languages of Canada, and only then providing whatever limited funding remains for Aboriginal language initiatives. They suggest that ongoing colonization is a foundational practice in Canadian society. Therefore, the literature supports the view that there is a crucial need

for the Canadian populace to not only acknowledge, but also to operationalize a shared conceptualization of what social justice means in Canadian society, and of particular interest to this study, how this conceptualization translates into social justice policy to address the marginalization of particular groups of students in Canadian schools.

Social Justice Policy – Equity versus Equality

Egbo (2009) postulates that social justice policy challenges the tensions created by systemic power differentials by defining equity as the process by which access to educational achievement is provided, rather than a vision of equality, which requires that everyone be treated the 'same' in education. The argument being that to be equitable, the education system must treat individuals or groups unequally in the interest of what is fair. Furthermore, Egbo asserts that social justice policies have attempted to address the differential needs of those marginalized in the past – and that attempts to remediate past exclusionary practices are in fact essential. In consideration of levels of educational achievement, social justice policy must seek to redress past practices which have resulted in lower levels of educational attainment for those members of society who have been pushed to the margins. I would argue that parallels may be drawn between Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) discussion of Carter Woodson's work in which he identified the inequitable structure of the American school as a de-motivating factor for African-American students – this seems strikingly similar to the conditions and systemic barriers Aboriginal students face within the Canadian educational system. This discussion of equity and equality is central to how social justice is conceptualized in the academy, and how this affects the treatment of Aboriginal scholars.

Egbo (2009) asserts that there are tensions between equity (where differences are acknowledged and accommodated) and equality (condition where everyone is treated the same in the interest of fairness) as well as tensions between critical theory, "knowledge situated in context of power and marginality" (p. 16) and a postmodernism theoretical stance which situates knowledge as constructed differently based on "multiple realities" (p. 17). While these tensions create spaces for meaningful change in terms of social justice policy by conceptualizing the purpose, goals and outcomes of education, there is also the need to connect these tensions with praxis. Praxis as the application of these theoretical approaches would facilitate what Egbo refers to as transformation, by enjoining social justice as social policy to address meaningful change. Of particular interest in this study, is meaningful change in terms of social justice relevant to distributive justice in the school system.

Social Justice – Relational Distributive Justice

Gewirtz (1998) conceptualizes social justice as involving both aspects of distributional justice – material and non-material goods, and relational justice – "nature of the relationships which structure society" (pp. 470-471). Ryan (2006) asserts that at the root of distributional and relational social justice, are the ways in which members of the society treat each other. Both Ryan and Gewirtz articulate a need to move beyond a theory of social justice as ascribed by Rawls as referring only to the distribution of rights, duties, and social and economic goods accrued from social cooperation, to include a relational aspect of justice which focuses on a form of 'social cooperation.'

Gerwitz's (1998) view of relational justice involves the 'nature' or 'ordering' of societal relationships. I would argue that this viewpoint is relevant to Bourdieu's (1985) conceptualization of categories or classification systems in society which ultimately inform an individual or a group, concerning their 'place' in the social structure. Processes which marginalize or 'other' individuals create inequality or differences in access to social or economic goods, and as suggested by Gewirtz, this has relevance in terms of the relational aspects of social justice. Findings in this review indicate that for many Aboriginal peoples in Canada there exists a class system within Canadian society which has had an unfortunate and remarkable longevity. The longevity of these 'class' structures has been supported by ongoing processes of colonization, and augmented by the hegemonic dominance of Eurocentric ideologies in the Canadian educational system. The consequences of the affirmation of "colonialism…in the name of global competitiveness and excellence...has been to diminish the value and potential relevance of Indigenous knowledge in education, and hence to forestall economic prosperity and social justice in Canada" (Battiste, Bell & Findlay, 2002, p. 83). Furthermore, Battiste, Bell and Findlay suggest that the politics of economics remains the "sanctuary of an open or coded colonialism" (p. 89), which has some significance in determining the meaning and practice of equity and equality within the academy.

Espinoza (2007) asserts that the concepts of 'equity' and 'equality' are often used as the rationale for distributive justice, the distribution of societal goods and services that impact the well-being of the individual or group at different levels within educational systems. However, similar to Egbo (2009), he indicates that the difference lies in the results or outcomes of equity and equality; whereas equity may "demand fair

competition" there is the expectation for "unequal results" (p. 346); equality on the other hand requires the equalization of results. Furthermore, he argues that equity or equitable outcomes may be dependent on many factors, including the need to invoke special measures to remediate past discriminatory or oppressive conditions experienced by members of marginalized groups in a society. His suggestion that research based on a critical theory perspective does not perceive inequality as the 'natural order' of society, but rather as a societal ill that requires specific treatment, is of particular significance to the theoretical premise of this study.

However, Espinoza (2007) postulates that ensuring access is not a panacea that leads automatically to equitable levels of educational attainment – interventions are necessary to support students' educational needs. The Government of Canada, HRSDC (2004), reported in its highlights of the 2001 Census that Aboriginal students' educational achievement fell below that of the total Canadian population. The statistics reported indicated that 15 percent of Aboriginal students reported achieving less than a grade nine education compared with only 10 percent for the total Canadian population. Furthermore, at the postsecondary level, only 4 percent of Aboriginal students were reported as holding a Bachelor's Degree compared with 15 percent for the total Canadian population. The statistics based on the 2006 national census indicate that levels of educational attainment for Aboriginal students continue to be relatively lower compared with the total Canadian population.

In reviewing the 2006 census statistics on educational attainment, Statistics Canada (2008a) reported that the attainment of a high school certificate or equivalent were reported as 6,553,425 for the total Canadian population, and that Aboriginal

students' share of this total was reported as 179, 590 individuals, or 2.7 percent of the total. Therefore, it may be argued that an 'equity goal' in terms of access to education, and the positive life benefits (economic, professional, health, etc) educational attainment can provide, may only be feasible through what Espinoza refers to as "positive discrimination in favour of disadvantaged groups" (p. 355). This is an important aspect which differentiates equity from equality, and has significance when considering the charges of 'reverse discrimination' made by the opponents of social policies such as the federal employment equity policy.

Backlash Against Equity Policies

The concept of reverse discrimination makes a number of erroneous assumptions concerning distributive justice in society. These assumptions include the view that all individuals (and/or members of groups): 1) begin at the same point of privilege in society with equal access to social goods and services, as well as the opportunity to reach their personal potential, and 2), that special measures adopted as remediation for past injustice in society in fact bestows 'unequal' benefits to an individual (and/or members of certain groups). It may be argued that the 'backlash' to equity policies resulting from charges of 'reverse discrimination' is one aspect that has had far reaching implications in terms of levels of educational attainment and participation in postsecondary education for members of the Aboriginal community.

To confront systemic resistance to equity initiatives, Espinoza (2007) proposes an equity-equality goal-oriented model. He implies in this model that the 'equality on average across social groups' dimension, specifically in terms of access to education, requires a guarantee that all social groups obtain equal access to all educational levels, as

indicated by proportional levels of representation. Furthermore, educational attainment in this equality dimension requires a guarantee that on average, students from different societal groupings (e.g., socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, gender, etc), will continue to participate in the educational system to a specified level. However when reviewing levels of educational attainment for Aboriginal students, it may be argued that this equality of opportunity dimension as an 'equity-goal' has not been met in the Canadian educational system.

Furthermore, Espinoza (2007) states that the application of equity to access to higher education may result in a perceived conflict by denying, what may be considered by some, "one of the basic functions of today's university" (p. 349); this function being that of a screening process to limit access to the academy to those members of society who have been identified as possessing the necessary 'talent' to assume future leadership roles in society. Related to this, Guri (1986) posits that equality and quality are often viewed as dialectic values for many institutions of higher learning; equality in terms of equitable access being negatively linked to standards of excellence within the academy. Although her investigation of equality in academia focused on access to opportunities for adult life-long learning, her conclusions suggest linking access and standards of excellence as a requirement that the system meet the "heterogeneous needs of an expanded clientele" (p. 60). This has merit particularly in the application of a critical theory perspective which suggests that unjust or inequitable access across social groups to social goods and services is the result of unequal class relations within a society.

Additionally, Espinoza (2007) asserts that challenges to equity programs that include special measures to remediate past discriminatory practices, may take the form of

opposition to governmental authority, and what has been referred to as a 'backlash' to equity programming. In the academy, this backlash can result in further isolation and marginalization for members of some groups within the system. Backlash may foster direct and indirect forms of discrimination and oppression such as: institutional ghettoization of programs and departments which focus on 'different ways of knowing' and, the lack of resources (distributional injustice) such as limited funding or support for academic programs to promote new knowledge in the form of Aboriginal scholarship. This resistance to change and to equity has particular significance in this investigation as to why Aboriginal scholars stay in the professoriate, and conversely, why they choose to leave.

Resistance to equity initiatives and the resulting challenges to the status quo have led to what Aboriginal scholars reported as a backlash in the academy (University of Western Ontario, 1996). The University of Western Ontario (1996) prepared a video presentation of a dialogue between Aboriginal members of the academy discussing the subtle and systemic processes of oppression and marginalization at work from both the mainstream community, as well as within the Aboriginal community. Attempts to derail equity programming included: silencing and isolation which further marginalize and 'other' the experience of members of the Aboriginal community through academic and social exclusion; sabotage and claims of reverse discrimination which attempt to negatively portray equity initiatives as unequal and unfair; and the internal self-destructive processes that some members of the Aboriginal Community adopt when internalizing the oppression they experience (University of Western Ontario, 1996).

As writers have suggested (Dei, 2002; Egbo, 2009), the acknowledgement of oppression and marginalization in education for some groups, in this case, Aboriginal peoples, would involve an informed recognition of the histories, languages, cultures and contributions of Aboriginal peoples to Canadian society. Brade, Duncan and Sokal (2003) conducted a study which investigated, among other aspects of life, whether or not the presence and affirmation of cultural identity would have a positive influence on levels of educational achievement. The findings of their research indicate a significant relationship between these variables. The findings also show that the respondents in their study (Aboriginal people), indicate that Native Canadian people "who liked what they were taught at school about Aboriginal people in elementary and high school displayed higher academic achievement than did their counterparts who did not" (p. 244). Furthermore their research indicated that those respondents who liked what they were taught about Native Canadians were three times more likely to continue to postsecondary education than those who did not. These research findings strengthen the argument for the need to create social justice policies that affirm diversity in Canadian society rather than policies that reinforce the status quo or the 'deficit model' of difference.

For the purpose of this investigation, a significant aspect of this review was to examine how experiences and perceptions of marginalization in the Canadian educational experience influence Aboriginal students in their levels of educational achievement, and ultimately, their consideration of a career in the professoriate. The reality for many Aboriginal students is that instead of feeling a part of the educational community, they identify as 'survivors' of the system (Smith, 2005). And, as 'survivors' of systemic marginalization in the Canadian educational system, these Aboriginal students then face

even greater hegemonic barriers when they enter postsecondary institutions. This reality contrasts sharply with the perception of universities as institutional champions of the 'truth' – intellectual bastions which promote and value the production of 'new' knowledge. This review indicates that the academy remains significantly constricted by hegemonic processes which are dominated by Eurocentric ideologies.

Despite efforts to achieve educational equity for Aboriginal scholars and Aboriginal scholarship, as Battiste, Bell and Findlay (2002) suggest, "Aboriginal peoples' achievements, knowledge, histories, and perspectives remain too often ignored, rejected, suppressed, marginalized, or underutilized in universities across Canada and beyond" (p. 82). And furthermore, they state that while universities "…express an Aboriginal agenda in mission statements, priorities, and projects [they in fact] reaffirm Eurocentric and colonial encounters in the name of excellence, integration, and modernity" (p. 82). These writers note that while there have been increases in Aboriginal enrollment in postsecondary institutions, that this increase has not been accompanied by meaningful change in terms of curriculum. They suggest that universities continue to offer imperialistic programming based on a cognitive stance in which Eurocentric knowledge is represented as the 'common story' – thereby creating the binary of otherness.

Consideration of the oppressive climate created by backlash or claims of reverse discrimination in the academy are indicative of the power of hegemonic processes which do not respect nor honour the worldviews and lived experiences of members of the Aboriginal community. Therefore, to be transformative, social policy in the educational system, conceptualized as social justice in education, must manifest itself as

programming and curriculum which not only support and engage multicultural and anti-racist pedagogy, but also provide some accountability in terms of societal understanding and compliance. While the celebration of the national 'multicultural identity' is important and beneficial to Canadian identity, it must not be a mechanism that supports colonial practices which have been pervasive throughout history, and which arguably continue in the current Canadian education system. Evidence of oppression is demonstrated by the lack of mother-tongue language instruction for Aboriginal students, absence of culturally relevant and sensitive curriculum in schools, as well as a noticeable deficit of critical pedagogy that actively recognizes and supports Aboriginal identity and epistemic worldviews in Canadian classrooms (Egbo, 2009). To engender social transformation that positively influences Aboriginal participation and educational attainment, policy direction must be informed by the history of past policy practices.

The Impact of Social Policy on Aboriginal Education

Sharilyn Calliou (1998) shares her thoughts of the transformative process as residing within the realm of possibility in her words: "Transformations occur al(l)ways, from granite eroding under the press of glaciers to rivers overflowing, from caterpillars weaving to butterflies emerging, from dominions forming to empires receding" (p. 50). Calliou's assertion brings to the forefront of the investigation questions concerning the implications transformation within the educational system may have in terms of social policy; specifically the promotion of social justice policy in Canadian schools.

Historical Perspectives

Manzer (1994) states that policy-making is an exercise in 'political thinking' and that political ideas are of extreme importance to the participants in the process as it assists

them in determining not only what the required actions are, but also in evaluating the results. Howlett (1994) suggests that Canadian policy towards Aboriginal peoples has constituted a "complex web" (p. 631) of initiatives involving not only constitutional rights, but also cultural, social and economic concerns from what some may characterize as an assimilationist perspective. The *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* (RCAP) (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1996), asserts that "education programs, carefully designed and implemented with parental involvement can prepare Aboriginal children to participate in two worlds, with a choice of futures, and that Aboriginal peoples should expect equity in the results of education received in Canada" (p. 8).

The government's response to the RCAP was the report, *Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan, a Progress Report* (1998), which enumerated a policy framework under thematic headings to address the urgent needs of the Aboriginal community, and the corresponding need for commitment from the government and peoples of Canada to acknowledge and implement the required changes. In this progress report, Stewart and Goodale (Canadian Department of Indian and Northern Development, 1998) articulated the government's commitment to work in partnership with Aboriginal peoples through a joint action plan under four critical areas of development: 1) renewing the partnership (creation of a joint partnership to promote healing and reconciliation); 2) strengthening Aboriginal governance (strengthening the Aboriginal community's ability to self-govern through government-to-government relationships); 3) developing a new fiscal relationship (fostering stability, accountability and self-reliance for Aboriginal governments); and, 4) supporting strong communities, peoples and economies

(supporting strong communities in areas of educational reform, training and development, health and public safety). However, Land (2001) in critiquing this response by the government suggests that the needs identified by the Commission were in fact not met, and that furthermore, the continuing lack of progress on Aboriginal rights continues to result in the "ongoing corrosive destruction of Aboriginal communities and cultures" (p. 59) in Canada.

Therefore it may be suggested that policy reform must involve a process which seeks not only to recognize and acknowledge Aboriginal epistemologies in terms of educational goals and experience, but also to develop genuine partnerships premised on authentic collaboration and consultation with the Aboriginal Community. Furthermore, this policy process must integrate an evolutionary aspect to facilitate ongoing collaboration and consultation between the 'partners.' In consideration of this, and specifically in the interest of this research, the view of educational policy reform proposed by Corson (1990) may be an appropriate model with which to transform employment equity recruitment and retention policy in the Ontario professoriate.

Social Justice Policy in Education

Corson (1990) suggests that educational policy framed in a context of social justice and equity, exhibits the necessary support comprised of empathy and care, to foster an inclusive environment in the professoriate. This viewpoint incorporates matters involving the understanding of values, attitudes, rights and needs of those affected, while considering the ethical, political and social implications of the solutions proposed. Furthermore, it is suggested that Corson's assertion that educational policy making should be comprised of a bundle of solutions, addressing both the specifics and

generalities within the system is synonymous with a social justice focus in policy reform – indicating that social change evolves best through incremental steps towards improvement. Based on research and anecdotal evidence, to be effective, employment equity policies and practices must embody many voices in order to create flexibility and fluidity in policy development, design and implementation; this flexibility and fluidity should be reflective of individual needs, and evolving within an ethical context of fairness, or as the Canada Royal Commission Report *Equality in Employment* (1984) describes it, in a context of, "what is fair and what is workable" (p. 254).

This evolutionary approach to policy making is founded on the principle that knowledge is constantly evolving in a state of error elimination (Corson, 1990). This type of evolution in policy development and implementation facilitates the building of the ideological bridge necessary to transform the relationship between Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemologies in order to promote inclusion in the academy.

Dei & Karumanchery (1999) suggest that in Canada while there may be national support for the principles of equity, fairness and justice in educational policy, these principles actually conflict with a perceived lack of 'official' support for policy reform to address and eradicate racism within the educational system. They also suggest that educational reforms in Ontario have been prejudiced by a 'market-driven' shift in ideology which frames education as a business endeavour. In their view, the "harmful consequences of this shift will be felt most severely in relation to issues of equity and access in education" (p. 121). Similar to Dei & Karumanchery, Smith (2005) suggests that knowledge, as a commodity of the 'knowledge society,' is about competitive value which reflects a neoliberal agenda for globalization.

Neoliberal ideology is based on the belief that the freedom of individual choice is imperative and market driven. Apple (2001) posits that a convergence of conservatism under the "hegemonic umbrella of the right" (p. 196) comprised of neoliberal ideology with neoconservative (seeking return to discipline and traditional knowledge) and authoritarian populist (religious conservatives seeking a return to values based on God's knowledge in all societal institutions) approaches, solidifies the power structure in society toward the protection and privileging of those with access to power. This view is consistent with Dei & Karumanchery (1999) who argue that "market-driven choice and competition serve the whims of the wealthy and most powerful in society, those who would benefit to having access to Ontario schools determined by income, family status, race, and social power" (p. 121). Ball (2007) asserts that education is of great importance to the middle class as a system of social reproduction. This 'reproduction' relies on what Ball refers to as the investment and reinvestment of cultural capital to ensure economic stability. In other words, economic well-being is based on a neoliberal project which redefines educational reform in terms of individual values and interests.

Overall these viewpoints lend support to moving educational policy reform beyond a philosophy that simply embraces multiculturalism to one which Dei & Karumanchery (1999) believe incorporates an antiracist agenda. Moving beyond 'multicultural' tolerance, an anti-racist agenda will address power differentials, and foster "long-term systemic or structural change rather than remedial patchwork efforts that seek to appreciate, celebrate or tolerate difference and diversity" (p. 126). They propose the following domains as supportive of inclusive school reform: 1) the need for the family to have representation in the educational system, to be part of their child's schooling

experience; 2) students' need to see themselves and their cultures reflected in the school and in the classroom; 3) students' need to have access to knowledge which promotes diversity and the exploration of the contributions of the many cultures, languages and histories that are part of the Canadian 'mosaic'; 4) the need for role models who reflect students' race, language, gender, as leaders within the school system; and, 5) the need for language integration so that students have the opportunity to enhance their ethnic identity and cultural knowledge in the classroom. Dei & Karumanchery further assert that success in dealing with the consequences and challenges resulting from "right-leaning educational" agendas can only be manifested through collective community building efforts – they underscore that "dealing with diversity is not simply a challenge – it is an imperative" (p. 130).

Ryan, Pollock and Antonelli (2007) also present a case for inclusive school reform as suggested by scholars and educational practitioners in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom to support the diversification of the educational workforce. This case is built on the premise of four connected arguments. The first argument calls for 'symbolic' representation in the teaching workforce comprised of an ethical stance based on the moral 'rightness' of a workforce reflective of the community in which it exists, and the positive practical impact this may have on how, and what students learn. This argument is reflected in the Ontario Ministry of Education (OME) (2009) report, *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy,* in which inclusive education is defined as an environment which respects and honour the diversity of human qualities present in Ontario society, and which allows students to see themselves reflected in their learning environment.

The second argument focuses on the unique and supportive relationships that may develop between minority teachers and minority students (Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2007). Support for this argument may be found in a study of a mentoring program to combat racism conducted by Cropper (2000) at the University of Central Lancashire. Cropper found that minority lecturers, in addition to providing a positive role model for their mentees, were also able to share similar experiences of institutional racism with their students which significantly enhanced the supportive nature of these relationships.

The third argument presented surrounds the "solid pedagogical reasons for establishing a diverse educator workforce" (Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2007, p. 5). The aforementioned OME (2009) report concurs with the need for culturally relevant and sensitive pedagogy in their assertion that education directly influences students' life chances – and therefore, life outcomes. And in this context, the fourth argument presented to support a diverse and representative educator workforce, suggests that minority educators are better able to prepare minority students to navigate and confront societal oppression.

The OME (2009) in its report *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* indicates that the diverse population of Ontario is an asset, and that an equitable and inclusive education system must remove barriers to student achievement to secure Ontario's prosperity. In this context, it is important to acknowledge the implications shifting demographics have for changing the 'face' of Ontario – the OME (2009) states "that between 2001-2006 the population of Aboriginal peoples grew five times faster than the non-Aboriginal population" (p. 8). Furthermore, the OME report identifies Aboriginal students as one of the groups facing systemic

barriers to student achievement and engagement in the Ontario educational system. This finding ultimately has implications in terms of access to postsecondary education and potential careers in the professoriate for Aboriginal scholars.

Universities, the Professoriate and Equity Policy

The existing literature points to a need for educational policy reform to address equity in the Ontario educational system. Of particular interest for this inquiry is the examination of what Canadian universities have done to recruit and retain Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate. This section will discuss the purpose and stated goals of employment equity policies in the academy. This discussion will include an examination of the strategies used to promote equitable recruitment and retention practices, including a description of the employment systems review process – an equity audit. This section will conclude by examining the implications that transformative social policy may have on the commitment by the academy to foster social justice and equity.

Employment Equity

The aims of the federal employment equity policy to affirm and promote diversity in the Canadian workforce are reviewed here. It may be argued that these policies as they stand, while valuable and comprehensive, lack the necessary cultural authenticity in practice with which to address the epistemic barriers experienced by Aboriginal scholars as they enter the academy, as well for determining whether or not they will then choose to remain in the Ontario professoriate.

The call for social justice in the Canadian educational system is not solely within the purview of members of minority groups, but rather that of a nation, which requires an awareness and recognition to act on the part of all citizenry. Both the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) Committees on the Status of Women and Employment and Educational Equity (1995), state that "equity and diversity are essential elements in excellence" (p. 4) for the academy. Interestingly many of the issues facing postsecondary education when the report was published (November 1995) remain relevant in the academy today. These issues include: the compensation of university faculty and staff; increasing workloads for academics; institutional restructuring which further undermines the under-representation of marginalized groups from decision-making positions within academic hierarchy; rolling back of research grants; the rising costs of tuition; and, the continual battle to keep equity at the forefront of all institutional planning. These COU Committees caution that diversity, both within the ranks in the academy, as well as in the student population, provide opportunities to foster debate and to promote intellectual capacity. They further suggest that a focus by the academy on equity is in fact an assurance by the institution of its excellence in service to the community.

Therefore, to diversify the professoriate, employment equity policy in universities must strategically address under-representation through careful and systematic analysis of barriers to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars. Preston (2008) suggests that there is a compelling need to ensure that Aboriginal peoples, as the fastest growing culture in Canada, are able to access postsecondary education and the many benefits educational experience provides. Furthermore, Preston states that Statistics Canada projects that by 2017 the Aboriginal population will constitute approximately 3.4 percent

of the Canadian workforce. Therefore, she indicates that increasing postsecondary

education opportunities for Aboriginal students is not only related to a robust national

economy, but also has the potential to ameliorate inequitable social conditions that have

been consistently endured by many Aboriginal peoples. Preston identifies these social

conditions as including such basic life supports as access to clean drinking water, and

combating health concerns such as the dramatically high infant mortality and suicide

rates among Aboriginal peoples.

Preston (2008) argues that postsecondary educational opportunities may provide

essential support for the preservation of Aboriginal peoples, and their cultures in Canada.

Similarly, Corson (1993) also links educational achievement with access to social goods

and services, or what he refers to as 'life chances'. Therefore it is incumbent on

educational policymakers to balance pressures for national economic growth and

stability, with a shared national imperative to ensure the well-being of all members of

Canadian society. Apple (2004) contemplates this balance of national economic or

market-driven reforms (neoliberal) with social well-being in his discussion of what he

refers to as the "regulatory proposals" (p. 13) of neoliberal, neoconservative, and middle

class managerial reforms.

Apple (2004) cautions that policy reform which returns to a traditionalist ideology

has "delegitimated more critical models of teaching and learning, a point that is crucial to

recognize in any attempt to think through the possibilities of cultural struggles and

critical pedagogies in schools" (p. 25). Furthermore, he suggests that two connected

educational reform strategies, market-driven and regulatory, tend to reproduce dominant

pedagogical and curriculum forms, and support the social privilege that goes along with

them. Therefore, advocacy for addressing the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate through educational policy reform is, in fact, an appeal for the Canadian education system to move beyond a celebratory multicultural stance. This would require a policy reform approach that promotes social justice for all students experiencing marginalization by acknowledging and dealing with the barriers created by systemic oppression within the educational system (Egbo, 2009).

With regards to Aboriginal epistemology, Dei (2002) posits that, "bringing Indigenous knowledges into the Euro-American academy, an institution of power and influence in this increasingly interconnected world is ever more critical in this information era" (p. 5). Similarly, Brodie (2007) decrying a fundamentalist approach in society based on threats to, and elements of, societal insecurity, suggests that to foster equity and social justice, " … the necessary task of reforming social justice may very well hinge upon our collective insistence on putting the social back into our way of seeing and contesting neoliberal times" (p. 105). The Federal Employment Equity Policy is an example of social policy which informs practice, the goal being to eradicate the residual effects of systemic racism resulting in under-representation in the Canadian workforce.

Employment equity in the workplace, including the academy, is legislatively driven with an emphasis on four groups the federal government has identified as underemployed and under-represented in the Canadian workforce (women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minority groups). Referred to as designated groups, these are groups that have been historically excluded from the workforce with many members concentrated in lower paying or specialist jobs where

they are excluded from positions with decision making responsibilities. As the report of the Canada Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (1984), *Equality in Employment* states, employment equity is an attempt to open the opportunities that Caucasian people and males have always had, to women, members of visible minority groups, Aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities:

> It is not that individuals in the designated groups are inherently unable to achieve equality on their own, it is that the obstacles in their way are so formidable and self-perpetuating that they cannot be overcome without intervention. It is both intolerable and insensitive if we simply wait and hope that the barriers will disappear with time. Equality in employment will not happen unless we make it happen (p. 254).

Employment Equity – Strategies for Recruitment and Retention

An important principle underlying employment equity programming is that the hiring and promotion of individuals is based on their skills and ability to do a job – merit is still the most important part of any decision concerning hiring or advancement. Persons who are not members of the designated groups will *not* be denied employment opportunities; however, they may be competing with an expanding group of candidates. As stated previously, the term reverse discrimination has been used to suggest that the efforts to practice employment equity for one group automatically results in discrimination against another, when in fact, eliminating barriers to employment opportunities ensures that ALL applicants have a fair opportunity to compete. The perspective of equity where differences are acknowledged and accommodated is clearly

articulated in the report of the Canada Royal Commission on Equality in Employment (1984) *Equality in Employment*:

> Employment Equity is a strategy designed to obliterate the present and residual effects of discrimination and to open equitably the competition for employment opportunities to those arbitrarily excluded. It requires a special blend of what is necessary, what is fair and what is workable (p. 254).

To 'open equitably' the competition for employment opportunities for Aboriginal scholars, this inquiry sought to investigate from an Aboriginal viewpoint, the barriers to recruitment and retention (tenure/promotion) in the academy. Speaking with specific reference to the Native American context, Fenelon (2003) argues that the basis for many of the exclusionary and racialized barriers have resulted from stereotypical representations – what he refers to as the "mascotry of American Indians" (p. 27). This racialization of Aboriginal peoples, which also exists in Canada, further entrenches the ideologies that support and provide justification for social stratification. This justification in turn results in policies that support the status quo and political rhetoric, thereby facilitating the continued oppression of members of those groups that are considered 'outside' of mainstream. Within the Canadian educational system the literature suggests that this may include members of those groups whose beliefs and ways of knowing are 'different.'

Fenelon (2003) sheds light on the experience of the Aboriginal academic identifying the treatment of Aboriginal scholarship as an area of contested 'ground' within the academic environment. He states that some forms of scholarship are valued more than others, and that reward is more likely for those forms of scholarship which

reify and possibly further justify "dominant meritocratic ideologies" (p. 92). This of course has a continuing impact on the Aboriginal academic in terms of the political nature of the tenure process. Fenelon concludes with the following view, "dominant group structural issues, as found in affirmative action and in racial profiling policies, continue to influence institutional treatment of tenure and research agendas" (p. 97).

The Employment Systems Review – An Institutional Equity Audit

Tenure, opportunities for promotion through the ranks, research funding, and other retention issues are all critical aspects of an academic career; and these retention issues comprise essential elements of employment equity policy in the academy. As an employment equity practitioner the researcher has conducted, evaluated and implemented an employment systems review at a university. This employment systems review process involved collaboration with a wide-ranging group of university faculty and staff (approximately 40 persons at all levels of the university including representatives from all union groups). Using a methodology recommended by the Human Resources Development Canada Workplace Equity Program (O'Donnell, 2005), that might be likened to an 'equity effectiveness' audit, this review process examined all aspects of the university's systems (policy/practices) related to:

- Recruitment and Selection (including recruitment via outreach and selection procedures including issues of credentialism, and testing – ensuring that this process examines bona fide requirements of the job);

- Training & Development (examining orientation, training, equity training and career development opportunities);

- Upward Mobility (secondments, special assignments, job rotation, transfers, special training, special committee or task force participation);

- Job Evaluation System (objective criteria versus subjective opinion, pay equity);

- Compensation System (pay equity, leave policies reflecting sensitivity for the needs of members of the designated groups - women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities);

- Working Conditions System: (availability of flexible work arrangements if needed, decisions based on bona fide job requirements versus subjective reasons); and

- Lay-off, Recall, Disciplinary Action and Termination System (based on clearly defined job-related, objective criteria).

Additionally, following the format suggested by Human Resources Development Canada Workplace Equity Program (O'Donnell, 2005), an employment equity systems review measures each institutional policy and practice (as listed above), against the following assessment criteria:

1. Legality: does the policy or practice conform to human rights and other legislation?

2. Adverse Impact: does a policy or practice have unequal impact on designated group members compared to others? What is the impact on all colleagues?

3. Job relatedness: is this practice based on bona fide occupational requirements?

4. Accommodation: if the policy or practice is determined to be job related, but tends to exclude designated group members, can an accommodation be made which would result in less or no adverse impact? It is important to remember that even if a job requirement is important to performing the job, accommodation must be made if possible.

5. Consistency: is this policy or practice applied in a consistent manner to all

    colleagues?

   The employment systems review committee examines each policy or practice to

determine if there is evidence of disadvantage for one (or more) of the four designated

groups as defined by the Federal Contractors Program. If disadvantage or an adverse

impact is identified by the committee, then a recommendation for reparative action to

remove the barrier is made. The employment systems review process, if conducted

through authentic collaboration, can result in meaningful recommendations with which to

address systemic barriers in the academy.

Transformative Policy for Social Change

   As the existing literature indicates, the academy is an institutional leader with

considerable power and influence in Canadian society, particularly in the field of the

politics of social stratifications for members of the Canadian 'mosaic.' An integral aspect

of this leadership role involves acceptance of the social responsibility which requires that

the academy not only affirm the equitable rights of all members of Canadian society, but

also confirm these rights through the practice of equitable treatment in employment.

And, as stated previously, to support equity, transformative policy strategies may require

unequal treatment and outcomes in the interest of fairness and social justice. It is also

equally important to determine how these policy processes may be undertaken to

engender social change. A review of the process of policy change is presented here based

on the examination Howlett (2002) conducted of four Canadian policy sector cases:

Federal Transport – Airline De-regulation; Federal Trade – Continental Free Trade;

Federal-Provincial Post-Secondary Education – funding; and Federal Banking – De-

regulation. Howlett found a link between subsystem structure (core policy actors defining policy: options, problem and solutions) and specific types of policy change.

   Based on his findings, Howlett (2002) suggests that "paradigmatic policy change" (p. 260), or a significant break from past policy goals, is only possible through the penetration of the subsystems of core policy actors. This suggests that to enact meaningful change in the complex interplay of variables associated with the policy making process (policy actors, institutions, knowledge and interest), penetration of the 'key' political players who define the situation and develop solutions through shared experiences and interest is required. Howlett refers to two "dimensions of subsystem structure" as predictors of the patterns of policy change. The first dimension Howlett (2002) identifies are 'inhibitors' of policy change resulting from the degree of insulation the subsystem has from uninterested parties (actors).   The second dimension he characterizes as facilitating policy change results from a balance of views between communities and networks. In the context of this research, these two dimensions suggest that policy reform requires the active and full partnership of members of those groups experiencing marginalization to 'sit at the table' and discuss these 'new ideas and interests' to effectively penetrate the subsystem of Canadian educational policy-making bodies through authentic collaboration.

   Policy transformation in the academy is fraught with difficulties including the battle to challenge existing political structures within the institution, and how, as Howlett (2002) suggests new ideas and interests involving equity and diversity may be brought into the contested terrain of policy change and be given genuine consideration and

reflection. In the Council of Ontario Universities (COU) (1997) document, *Monitoring and Strategies*, the COU suggests a framework to assist decision-makers in Ontario universities with monitoring the progress of institutional equity initiatives, and to possibly expand on advances in this area wherever possible. The COU rationale for supporting equity policy initiatives is evident in the following statement:

> Universities, whose stock in trade is ideas, whose greatest asset is the pool of talented students, staff and faculty, and whose goal is excellence, have recognized the contributions of equity and diversity and have made strides in achieving them with and without outside regulation (p. 1).

The COU (1997) presents what they refer to as "accountable self-regulation" (p. 1) to protect and promote equity in decision-making. The self-regulatory model was suggested after the 1995 repeal of the Ontario Employment Equity legislation by the newly elected Progressive Conservative party. The repeal of this legislation was due to controversial political opposition which alleged that the equity legislation created a 'quota system' and resulted in upheavals and charges of discrimination in Ontarian workplaces (Green, 1999). The model of self-regulatory accountability for equity proposed by the COU for universities includes accountability for: existing equity commitments; leadership to keep equity at the forefront of decision-making in the academy; analysis of equity data (both qualitative as well as quantitative) concerning the university's own workforce; being responsive to equity through institutional structural changes; and finally, equity goal-setting. While this COU report was prepared in response to political pressures which may have been suggestive of a lack of support for

equity and diversity initiatives in universities at the provincial governmental level, this accountability in equity decision-making continues to have significant relevance for Ontario universities. And, finally, the commitment and social responsibility of many Ontario universities to promote and protect equity and diversity as indelible aspects of their institutional structure and mission remain evident. Even with the repeal of provincial equity legislation, most Ontario universities continue to develop and foster equity programs and initiatives in their institutions.

Summary

This literature review examined the context of the educational experience of Aboriginal students relevant to hegemonic processes in the Canadian education system. Specifically the chapter examines, how, if possible, to effectively bridge the 'contested spaces' between Eurocentric and Aboriginal knowledge systems to create anti-racist education, and the implications this may have for the development of equitable policy in the academy.

The relationship between education and social justice was examined with regard to the impact this relationship has in terms of equity policy in the academy. This included a discussion of social justice, specifically, equity versus equality and the relational aspect of distributive justice. The discussion of the impact of social policy on Aboriginal education included an overview of historical perspectives and social justice policy in education. The concluding section of the chapter explored the implications of this environment on the ability of employment equity policy to enact social change in universities and the professoriate. This included a discussion of the Federal Employment

Equity policy, strategies for recruitment and retention, and the role of transformative policy in social change.

The literature suggests that despite some efforts to make Canadian universities more inclusive learning environments, oppressive structures, policies and practices still exist within the academy, and Aboriginal scholars remain essentially marginalized. More authentic equity policy needs to be developed to make the academy a more welcoming environment for particular groups of scholars, including Aboriginal scholars.

The next chapter will include a discussion of the methodology that was used in conducting this qualitative study including the participant selection process, data collection procedures, data analysis, strategies for validating research findings, and some of the ethical issues surrounding the study.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the extant literature foundational for this qualitative study. The research methodology is discussed in this chapter. The methodology used in this study falls within the qualitative research paradigm. A qualitative method is particularly relevant because the study was designed to investigate a social phenomenon from the interpretative and subjective stance of the participants. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) stress that the key features of qualitative research include a concern with process, and that data is analyzed inductively – developed through the interconnection of disparate pieces of evidence. A major assumption in the study is that the accounts and views of the research participants constitute valid data that can lead to social transformation. Specifically, using a grounded theory approach, a case study method was used to elicit emergent themes with which to provide a contextualized understanding, and allow for a qualitative analysis of the research findings.

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) indicate that a case study is a detailed examination of a subject or situation which can support a complex investigation beginning with a broad-based explanatory inquiry, which then progresses into a more directed and focused investigation. Stake (2005) posits that case studies are not essentially qualitative, but rather, research conducted to optimize the understanding of the research questions through processes of triangulation and interpretation carried out continuously during the study. Stake also asserts that the case study, as a scholarly methodology which reflects on the human experience, is designed around complex issues and themes. Corbin and Strauss

(1990) posit that two philosophical principles underpin grounded theory: 1) the conditions and issues studied are in a constant state of change, and 2) 'nondeterminism' which refers to the researcher's responsibility to "catch the interplay" (p. 5) between relevant conditions studied, and how the participants react and respond to these conditions. Also, Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that grounded theory involves the constant comparative analysis of data as a "strategic method for generating theory" (p. 21); the researcher's main goal is to develop new theories through purposeful, and "systematic generation from the data of social research" (p. 28).

However, while theory is generated, researchers must consider their role in engaging with participants as a process of observation, recording and interpreting the data collected. Tierney and Lincoln (1994) assert that the researcher must reflect on the interpretative nature of the qualitative inquiry process. And furthermore, they suggest that this requires a degree of reflexivity on the part of the researcher to acknowledge that "reality is mediated by any number of influences such as the researcher's own biases, the context in which the study is undertaken….and the theoretical framework employed" (p. 110). As Lather (1986) indicates, self-reflexivity or a self-critical stance on the part of the researcher is critical, particularly in the "empirical work that exists within critical inquiry" (p. 65).

Consequently, the case study method integrated the views of participants expressed in focus group interviews to guide the critical inquiry, ensuring that themes and major areas of focus were examined from the perspectives of the participants (Creswell, 2003). Sim (1998) asserts that focus group interviews explore collective experiences, rather than individual ones. Data gained "from a particular study" may enhance what he

refers to as theoretical generalization – data in the form of participant insights "possess a sufficient degree of generality or universality to allow their projection to other contexts or situations" (p. 350). Further, he posits that:

> [T]he researcher recognizes parallels, at a conceptual and theoretical level, between the case or situation studied, and another case or situation, which may well differ considerably in terms of the attributes or variables it, exhibits. In other words, the comparability required between the two contexts is a logical or conceptual one, not one based on statistical representativeness (p. 350).

A key aspect of this inquiry was to provide a transformative framework to bridge knowledge systems. Smith (1999) suggests that the term 'research' is inseparably linked to Eurocentric imperialism and ongoing processes of colonization. She further argues that research is a site of tension existing between the Western 'ways of knowing' and the resistance of the 'Other'. Duran and Duran (1995) posit that to confront imperialism in research, the most logical question to begin with is, "What is the point of reference for interpretation of the data?" (p. 25). This study did not seek to claim ownership of Indigenous ways of knowing, rather, it sought to engage in a process of sharing of knowledge systems and stepping beyond the lens and history of Westernized research (Smith, 1999). As Hampton (1995) suggests, that acknowledgement of the misunderstandings that can result from different worldviews based on personal experience is the first step in transformation and acceptance of the "right to be" (p. 41). Furthermore, Hampton asserts that these differences from a personal perspective (viewpoint, language and experiences) overlap with cultural differences (values, human

relationships, and communication style) in a binary of the conqueror and those who have been conquered.

This research was socially, politically, and historically driven, framing the purpose of the study in the engagement of social action or praxis through a dialectic aspect of theory development (Miller, 2003). In attempting to bridge the divide between Aboriginal and Eurocentric knowledge systems, the inquiry used the definition of community as those human relationships derived from a feeling of belonging in the context of a diverse range of societal groupings. What the research sought to do is to identify, from an Aboriginal epistemic viewpoint, inclusionary practices and policies which may strengthen relationships, examining where it may be possible to bridge Aboriginal and Eurocentric epistemologies in the practice of educational community building. Participant scholars as members of the Aboriginal community played an integral role in guiding the research by providing data regarding why they left or remain in the Ontario professoriate. Qualitative analysis of the findings supported the development of a set of principles based on the themes or categories of ideas that emerged from the research (Rose, 2001).

Procedure

Selection of Participants

The context of this research was confined to the Ontario region, and the study used a purposive sampling method. Known Aboriginal scholars (those who had self-identified publicly as an Aboriginal person), were contacted initially through written (E-mail) correspondence and/or telephone communication to establish rapport and to collect demographic information. A *snowball* technique was then used to make contact with

other potential participants, the goal being to enlist the participation of approximately

five – seven Aboriginal scholars in two separate groups – those currently working in the

Ontario professoriate, and those who had left employment with the Ontario professoriate.

Additionally, as researcher, a significant point of consideration was the need to be

sensitive to the apprehension potential participants might feel, both from an historical

context (as noted in the Tri-Council Policy, p. 6.2), as well as for current/future

professional reasons.

     Eighty-nine individuals were contacted directly by E-mail and/or telephone with

an invitation to consider participating in the study. An initial letter of invitation was sent

to individuals and organizations with the request that they consider the invitation

themselves and/or forward the invitation to interested parties, specifically Aboriginal

scholars who are currently employed in the Ontario professoriate and/or Aboriginal

scholars who were formerly employed in the Ontario professoriate. Of these 89 contacts,

52 were based at Ontario universities either professionally or academically, while 37

were members of organizations specifically dedicated to working with, and providing

advocacy for Aboriginal peoples in Ontario/Canada. Additionally, during the sampling

process, the wording used in the invitation evolved over time to better reflect the social

justice premise of the study, while still acknowledging the researcher's outsider status

(see Appendix B). The following is a general description of the participant groups (a

more detailed profile of individual participants is presented in Chapter IV).

Group A profile: Aboriginal scholars who 'remain' in the Ontario professoriate.

The participants in Group A included self-identified Aboriginal scholars who are current members of the Ontario professoriate in the following professional roles: Associate Professor, Research Officer, Department Head, Department Director, Sessional Instructor, and Graduate Student. Nine of the participants identified as faculty, one as faculty/administrative counsellor (with teaching responsibility), and one as a graduate student (with teaching responsibility). As indicated in Table 3, 36.4 percent of Group A participants identified themselves as female, while 63.6 percent identified themselves as male. The ages of the participants ranged as follows: 45.5 percent of the participants fell within the 25-45 age range, while the remaining 54.5 percent fell into the 46-65 age range. Collectively these participants represented diverse academic disciplines including: Education, Engineering, Environmental Studies, Arts/Media, and Indigenous Studies, and their reported experience as members of the professoriate ranged from one to 17 years, the median number of years of experience being eight years.

Table 3.   Study Participants: Group A

Sex	Age Range	Role:	No. of Years of Experience	Discipline
M	25-45	Graduate Student	2.5	Indigenous Thought/ Arts/New Media
M	25-45	Faculty/Admin. Counsellor	8	History/First Nations Studies
M	46-65	Faculty	10	Education Aboriginal Research
M	46-65	Faculty	8	Education
F	46-65	Faculty	6	Indigenous Studies
M	46-65	Faculty	15	Native Studies
M	46-65	Faculty	15	Indigenous Studies
F	46-65	Faculty	1	Environmental Studies
F	25-45	Faculty	7.5	Education
*F	25-45	Faculty	2	Education
*M	25-45	Faculty	17	Engineering

* did not participate in online weblog focus group interviews

Group B profile: Aboriginal scholars who have 'left' the Ontario professoriate.

Participants in Group B included self-identified Aboriginal scholars who were formerly employed as members of the Ontario professoriate in such roles as: Sessional Instructors, Administrative Counsellors (with teaching responsibility), and Graduate Students (with teaching responsibility). These individuals currently work in a variety of professions including the education sector, entertainment/education field, law, and advocacy organizations for women and children, as well as in municipal services. As Table 4 shows, participants in this group were all female; 40.0 percent were in the 25-45 age range, while the remaining 60.0 percent of participants fell into the 46-65 age range.

Group B participants reported their years of experience working in the professoriate as ranging from two to over 30 years; the median number of years of experience being three years. Most participants reported their academic discipline as education – specifically Aboriginal education, however, one participant reported Law as their academic background.

Table 4.   Study Participants: Group B
_____

Sex	Age Range	Former Role:	No. of Years Experience in Former Role	Discipline
F	25-45	Faculty/Graduate Student	3	Aboriginal Education
F	46-65	Admin. Counsellor	2	Aboriginal Education
F	46-65	Admin. Counsellor /Graduate Student	3	Law
F	25-45	Faculty/Admin. Counsellor	Not Available	Education
F	46-65	Admin. Counsellor	30+	Not Available

Sampling results initially confirmed eleven participants in Group A – self-identified Aboriginal scholars currently employed in the Ontario professoriate representing nine universities across Ontario, and seven participants in Group B – self-identified Aboriginal Scholars who had formerly been employed in the Ontario professoriate. However, two participants from Group B did not participate in the study – one withdrew as she did not fit the profile, and the other did not respond to follow-up contact.

Data Collection Procedures

  Pilot study.

  Prior to the collection of data a pilot study was conducted to test the weblog focus group interview format in terms of cultural sensitivity and user-friendliness. Five participants, three females and two males, were invited to participate in the pilot study based on their background working with Aboriginal students. All participants reside and work in the Windsor-Essex region in diverse areas of the education sector as well as in advocacy roles for Aboriginal peoples/students.

  During the pilot study, participants were asked to respond to three separate questions concerning: 1) a proposed *Code of Conduct* for weblog focus group interview participants; 2) the context of education for Aboriginal students in the Ontario education systems – specifically examining perspectives of inclusion and/or exclusion; and 3) the impact this educational context might have for the future pool of Aboriginal scholars.

  The pilot study provided a number of critical lessons concerning the online focus group methodology which informed the subsequent collection of data. Although there is little reported in the research literature concerning Aboriginal peoples' use of the Internet for dialogical purposes, some of the participants in the pilot study indicated that initially they felt intimidated by the online format, even though they were remarkably computer savvy – for example, one participant routinely delivers educational programs over the Internet, while another has written an instructional book for Newcomers to Canada about how to access and use the Internet.

The lessons learned from the pilot study included the need for researcher respect, empathy, and flexibility concerning the choice of communication style selected by participants. In some cases, this necessitated offering alternative format(s) for participation which respected the Oral Tradition – rejecting a 'one-size fits all' approach to interviewing. As well, the pilot study underscored the need for the researcher to frame each set of interview questions with an introductory statement indicating where the researcher was coming from; providing participants with a framework for the discussion. Furthermore the pilot study highlighted the role of the researcher as one characterized by the following: providing clarification when (and if) needed; modeling a caring and respectful tone in all communication; limiting personal participation in online discussion except when called upon for clarification or requested by a participant; and finally, providing a member-check summary of emergent themes.

As stated earlier, the findings of the pilot study reinforced the importance of utilizing a member-check process as a method to determine the accuracy of the findings in terms of the participants' meaning. This member-checking process confirmed that while the coding of research data flowed as Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggest as emergent themes based on participant response to interview questions/discussions, that this data must also connect thematically with the central premise of the study – which was to develop principles to guide equitable recruitment and retention practices and policies in the academy. As Luttrell (2000) suggests, this is a process of researcher reflexivity, the need to 'choose' what is gained through the emerging qualitative process, while also acknowledging what may be lost in an effort to remain 'true' to the central premise of the inquiry. The pilot study confirmed that member-checking was an effective

debriefing process. And lastly, the positive response by pilot study participants to the Code of Conduct demonstrated the significance of this *Code* as an important tool for fostering meaningful and respectful dialogue amongst the participants, as well as for providing participants with clear expectations concerning their role as critical research participants.

Focus group interviews.

The bulk of the data were collected through focus group interviews. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggest that focus group interviews support a situational case study method. The purpose of the focus group interviews was to elicit responses from Aboriginal scholars concerning their experiences within the Ontario professoriate, including suggestions they may have regarding practices to remediate the current under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate, and to foster community building – drawing upon Aboriginal epistemologies.

The fact that focus groups explore collective rather than individual experiences was of great relevance to this inquiry. As Rose (2001) suggests, focus groups "allow for the sharing of individual experiences as represented in the group setting; members arrive at collective rationalizations for their beliefs or their actions through the process of observing and commenting on their similarities and differences" (p. 17). Further, she describes a well-constructed focus group as: "having sufficient homogeneity in terms of cultural capital (social background, education, knowing-the-system), so that members can feel comfortable expressing opinions in front of the group, but not so much homogeneity that a herd mentality develops" (p. 18). The fact that the focus group interviews involved

participants who were self-identified Aboriginal scholars currently employed in the

Ontario professoriate, and those who have left similar employment, provided the

necessary balance in terms of cultural capital in the sense used by Bourdieu (1985).

Online format.

Focus group interviews can present many challenges for the researcher – making

contact, developing rapport and trust, and extensive travel. To contend with these issues,

this inquiry utilized an emergent methodology, an Internet 'blog' or 'weblog' for the

purpose of communicating and recording data during online focus group interviews.

Support for research conducted in an Internet collaborative space such as a weblog can be

found in Gregg's (2006) assertion that:

> Self-publishing platforms like weblogs are beginning to influence what an
>
> academic career can involve – and be seen to involve an interested public. Blogs
>
> have made scholarly work accessible and accountable to a readership outside the
>
> academy, an achievement that seems important in the history of cultural students'
>
> concerns…the very kinds of conversations [blogs] encourage can be regarded as
>
> offering renewed vigor to cultural studies; anti-elitist and reflexive
>
> epistemological project (pp. 147-148).

It was anticipated that the online format would allow for the creation of a

dynamic space for dialogue amongst research participants, and further ethically ground

the research as Markham (2005) suggests, by "putting the human subject squarely in the

center of the research [this] shifts the ethical considerations, and allows for socially

responsible research" (p. 815). In addition to ethical considerations, Chen and Hinton (1999) also suggest that using the online format for interviewing may act as *equalizer* by providing the interviewer with control over the manner in which questions, in a written format, are framed and asked.

Taking the above into consideration, an online research blog was created to provide a collaborative space for interactive dialogue where data was recorded, reviewed, and commented on by all the participants, the rationale being that the blog-method of data collection would allow a degree of flexibility for the participants as well as the researcher. Seymour (2001) in speaking about this flexibility and ease of access to the interview site asserts that because participants are able to actively visit and post on the site as often as they wish, this enables them to extend their discussions over a lengthier period of time, thereby creating multiple opportunities to express their views and to contribute to the research. This is a significant benefit, particularly when compared with the limited opportunity to contribute to research provided by a 'one-time' face-to-face focus group interview.

Gregg (2006) also suggests that what best characterizes utilization of blogging as a form of "conversational scholarship [may be defined as operating in] …the 'mid-range' between disciplinary insularism and public intellectual practice" (p. 153). She postulates that weblogs are 'political sites' with the capacity to develop a platform for dialogue. One of the benefits this creates for cultural studies is that the process of blogging and the knowledge shared becomes less guarded and more open in terms of discussion and response to discussions. She further contends that blogging provides the participants with access to an immediate public forum which may result in significantly personal and

active interactions. She concludes by stating that "blogs allow us [academics] to write in conjunction with non-academic peers and colleagues, who not only value and improve our ideas, but also practice their own rigorous forms of assessment, critique and review" (p. 158).

Support for this description of the research blog site was found on the blogging site One Degree (2005) in a blog entitled, *What Blogs are Not*, which provided a number of comments concerning the 'blogosphere' as an interactive space that allows commentary, reflection and analysis of multiple viewpoints. Therefore, this study employed weblog focus group interviews to conduct qualitative research comprised of guiding questions as well as themes that emerged from the online discussions. To assist participants in navigating the online interview process, all participants were provided with a 'research package' prior to data collection.

This research package contained the information necessary for participants to access the password protected weblog site, and as Seymour (2001) asserts, because the study used an institutional (in-house) web site housed on the University of Windsor server, it avoided issues associated with online confidentiality and security. The participant research package (see Appendix C) included: 1) Letter of Information for Consent to Participate in Research, outlining among other things, what they would be asked to do as a participant in the study; 2) Participant General Information Form which was used to collect demographic information; and 3) the Weblog Access and Instruction sheet which provided each participant with their own User ID and password, as well as instructions for reviewing and posting comments online.

Four separate online focus group interviews were conducted during a two month period. The participants had 24 hour access to the weblog site during this period and were encouraged to post comments online as often as possible. Each interview period was designed to last for seven days. However, it is important to note that because of the flexibility that was integrated into the interviewing process, some interviews lasted a few days longer than originally scheduled.

During the first two focus group interviews Group A (Aboriginal scholars who remain in the Ontario professoriate), and Group B (Aboriginal scholars who have left the Ontario professoriate), participated on separate weblog sites – in this way the participants were able to comment and discuss insights and share their stories with members of their self-identified 'group'. During the third focus group interview, both groups were merged into one group which constituted the final focus group – Group C. Therefore, Group C was comprised of all 16 participants, 11 participants from Group A, and five participants from Group B.

Telephone interviews.

In addition to the online focus group interviews, a number of individual telephone interviews were conducted with select participants. The original research plan called for selection of participants for telephone interviews based on their online entries. However, this plan had to be adjusted immediately following the first focus group interview due to a number of factors. These factors included the request by two participants to always speak with the researcher first by telephone, and then to post the resulting conversation online – one participant made this request to honour the Oral Tradition of her community, while the other participant used the interview-first technique

to become comfortable with the online process. Also, throughout the interviews there were a number of participants who requested that the researcher contact them as they wanted to personally discuss some of the issues emerging from the online dialogue. And lastly, these adjustments and flexibility were integrated into the study to ensure that every participant was provided with the opportunity, should they wish, to speak with the researcher during an individual interview.

The telephone interview process involved calling participants and engaging them in a discussion about the interview questions posted online, as well as their co-participants' responses. During these interviews participants were asked to share their stories and any insights that they felt were missing from the discussion. Each participant's interview was then transcribed and sent to them electronically for verification (meaning and interpretation). Once participants verified the content of their interview, they could either: 1) post all or portions of their interview online on the weblog site; or 2) at their direction, have the researcher post all or portions of their interview online; or 3) have the interview data remain as part of the research data collected, but not shared as part of the online focus group interview.

The researcher conducted a total of 18 telephone interviews with 12 participants during the course of the study. Although all participants were contacted to request the opportunity to speak with them personally, four participants did not participate in the telephone interview either by choice or because they were unavailable to speak with the researcher. In addition to the online focus group and telephone interviews, researcher's field notes constitute another data collection strategy that was used in the study.

Researcher field notes.

During the data collection phase of the study, field notes were kept by the researcher to journal observations and reflections. This was a particularly important aspect of both data collection and analysis, to ensure that the voice of the Aboriginal community was heard. As many writers have suggested (Corson, 1990; Dei 2002; Egbo 2009), policy change should include the voice of those who are directly living and experiencing exclusion (marginalization), so that they are the architects of change. The researcher field notes protected the integrity of the study by ensuring that the researcher employed a reflective lens, especially given the researcher position as an 'outsider' to the Aboriginal community. The field notes allowed for questioning of Eurocentric bias on the part of the researcher, and to acknowledge the ethical considerations and challenges that resulted. These ethical challenges focused on issues concerning the identity of the researcher (insider/outsider status); ownership of research (disclosing identity to ensure participant ownership of their own words); sharing of self (researcher being researched by participants – What is my personal commitment? How do I share my story? Why am I conducting this research? And most importantly, so what? What are the anticipated benefits to the Aboriginal Community?).

Essentially, these challenges required the researcher to 'unpack' the hegemony of Westernized research strategies in which I found myself immersed, and to carefully consider the implications that this hegemonic bias had for the integrity of the study as a respectful collaboration with the Aboriginal community, and finally, to acknowledge and protect the dignity of Aboriginal ways of knowing.

Data Analysis

As Janesick (2000) notes, "the qualitative researcher studies a social setting to understand the meaning of participants' lives in the participants' own terms" (p. 382). This qualitative research was concerned with understanding the meaning and perspectives of the Aboriginal participants in this study, and as Janesick suggests, looked for the "points of tension" (p. 288), to capture the complexity of their lived experiences. Applying a critical theoretical approach enabled the data collected to provide a "map or guide" (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 49) to the exploration of the experiences of Aboriginal people in the Ontario professoriate. The outcome of this research is therefore based on the perceptions and insights shared by the research participants, all of whom self-identified as Aboriginal scholars, (current or former members of the Ontario professoriate). Data analysis consisted of two stages: concurrent analysis done throughout the study to enable the development of a grounded theory; and formal analysis based on an in-depth analysis of all data collected.

The concurrent or 'field' analysis was done based on the research questions and critical questions that developed from the interviews as well as the researcher field notes. The analysis of data revealed the following major areas of focus: contextualization of the educational experience for Aboriginal students including the influence of this context in recruiting future members of the Ontario professoriate; an examination of recruitment and retention to determine why Aboriginal scholars remain, and why they leave the Ontario professoriate – how welcoming and supportive are universities; and policy implications to foster equity and social justice for Aboriginal scholars in the academy.

As noted, the data analysis involved concurrent or 'field' analysis, as well as 'formal' or final analysis once all data had been collected. This was done to provide a rich interplay of themes and concepts with which to develop theory grounded in data. The formal data analysis involved a deep and critical analysis of all the data, the goal being as Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggest to form the basis for developing themes or conceptual categories of data coding. Furthermore they suggest that in qualitative research this involves interrogating the data examining "process and meaning rather than cause and effect" (p. 160).

Interview Questions

The initial focus group interview invited participants from both Groups A and B to first respond to a proposed Code of Conduct for research participants, and then proceeded to request participant responses to the theme dealing with the educational experiences of Aboriginal students in Ontario (see Appendix D). The second focus group interview continued to address research question #1 by inviting participants in Groups A and B to respond indicating possible implications this 'contextualized experience' might have on the future pool of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate (see Appendix E). As explained to participants during the interviews, the reason for collecting this information was to examine, from their viewpoint, if they believed that the factors associated with a sense of inclusion and/or exclusion in the educational community, might have some influence on Aboriginal students' choice of an academic career, thereby impacting the future pool of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate. Questions during the second interview were also based on themes emerging from the data collected in the first session. Specifically, questions were asked about

participants' perceptions concerning the willingness/resistance the Aboriginal community might feel toward working with the non-Aboriginal community to address the current inequities in the Ontario educational system.

The third focus group interview addressed research questions #2, #3 and #4 by asking all study participants, as combined members of Group C, to respond to the theme that dealt with whether or not universities are welcoming institutions, specifically asking participants to identify barriers to recruitment and retention; exploring from the perspective of Aboriginal scholars, why they stay in the Ontario professoriate, or conversely, why they left the Ontario professoriate (see Appendix F). Participants were provided with relevant background information concerning existing employment equity program policy, specifically, an overview of the employment systems review process was presented to elucidate how current equity programming in the academy is designed. This was done to provide a context for participants to inform an existing policy framework – so that the participants could 'measure' these policies through the lens of Aboriginal worldviews.

The fourth and final focus group interview addressed research question #5, asking study participants to respond by examining policy issues they had identified in previous interviews (context, and implications for recruitment and retention) from an Aboriginal perspective (see Appendix G). Initially, analysis of the data for the focus group interview indicated two categories of data referring to: 1) policy issues, and 2) policy process. Data analysis examined the broad category of 'policy issues' in terms of: development of a Pan-Indigenous Organization; the effects of regionalism on relationship building and creating spaces for developing knowledge; and, the importance of not only a national

curriculum, but also a focus on Indigenous Studies in curricular development. To promote discussion and reflection during this final focus group interview, tables were created and presented during the interview based on data collected up to this point in the inquiry; these tables listed specific recruitment and retention issues, and the recommendations that participants had identified as methods by which the academy could either support inclusion relevant to a particular recruitment or retention issue, and/or, how existing barriers further entrench the marginalization of Aboriginal scholars and scholarship, in the academy. Furthermore, employing a grounded theory process of data analysis based on the emergent themes, participants were asked to not only examine the identified recruitment and retention issues, but also to reflect on how these issues/barriers might be addressed through a transformative policy process. Specifically, to encourage dialogue reflective of Aboriginal ways of knowing, participants were asked to respond to a proposed policy transformation circle. In presenting this proposal to participants, it was acknowledged that the development of the proposed policy circle was *grounded* in the research data collected, based on the following claims flowing from the data:

- There is a critical need for knowledge about Aboriginal peoples – their cultures, languages, histories and contributions to Canada in curricula at all levels of education including offering upper level courses at the postsecondary level, as well as the integration of this knowledge in professional teacher education programs;

- There is a significant need to create inclusive spaces in the educational system where ALL students feel supported and included;

- There is a need to establish authentic consultation with the Aboriginal community, not advisory panels/committees, but establishing the authority for the Aboriginal community to be directly involved in the development and implementation of change affecting members its community;

- It is necessary to create opportunities for collaboration with members of the nonAboriginal community;

- Addressing credentialism as a barrier to recruitment is critical; and

- There is a need to respect and to honour the contributions of Aboriginal scholars by:

  a) creating hiring policies with a stated goal of creating a critical mass of Aboriginal scholarship in the institution (combating tokenism and isolation), and

  b) promoting the retention of Aboriginal scholars through: granting tenure, and addressing epistemic barriers to scholarship and research.

Participants were asked to consider the viability of this proposed policy circle in the academy, and to identify what other groups might be brought into this consultative model.

Analysis of Themes

As suggested by Creswell (2003) the use of multiple layers of data collection ultimately guided the inquiry. Data was first collected during the focus group and telephone interviews, then summarized and categorized into a member-check summary document which was reviewed for meaning and interpretation, and integrated with researcher field notes. This 'multi-layer' analysis involved identifying categories of themes/patterns – the coding process linking data with concepts with which to interpret

the data. This interpretative process, the result of a grounded theory approach, generated what Strauss and Corbin (1994) suggest is theory developed through data systematically collected and conceptualized while undergoing constant comparative analysis.

Additionally, as Glaser & Strauss (1967) posit, "in discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence, then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept" (p. 23). This method facilitated the development of theory in the form of principles for policy guidelines based on the themes, or categories of concepts, emerging from the research (Rose, 2001). Specifically, the analysis of data resulted in the categorization of themes that emerged from the ongoing and final analysis. Figure 1 provides a 'map' of the areas of focus investigated throughout the thematic inquiry.

Figure 1. **Map of Critical Inquiry: Major Areas of Focus**
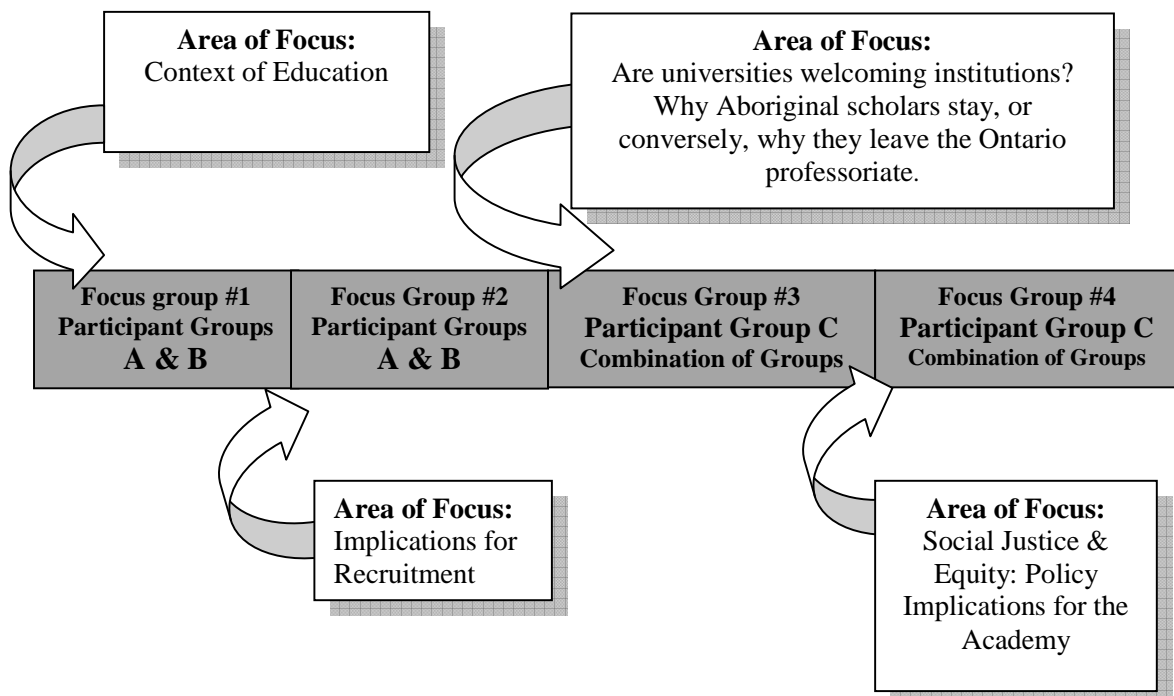
Once all data had been collected and thoroughly examined, data concepts (categories) were used to conceptualize the analysis of the emergent themes for each interview session, as well as through a case study analysis which utilized the data concepts to compare and contrast research findings by study group. Data was read, re-read, and then sorted to create a data coding system. This in turn provided, as Bogdan and Biklen (1998) suggest, the effective organization of all data collected. This coding system facilitated a data analysis process which involved weaving data collected through the online focus group interviews, with data from individual participant telephone interviews, as well as researcher field notes, for each of the focus group interviews.

Data were coded in conceptual categories as follows: relationship; knowledge; value of education; policy, politics and rhetoric; social justice; and researcher commitment. These data concepts or conceptual categories were defined on a broad definitional continuum or 'dimensionalizing' (Strauss & Corbin, 1985) from one polarity as supportive of the status quo (systemic oppression), to the other pole, as defining supportive and inclusionary policies/practices within the education system.

The data concept 'relationship' was defined along a continuum referring to the need identified by participants for authentic collaboration and consultation between Aboriginal peoples and mainstream society to address at one pole of the continuum, systemic barriers to recruitment and retention, and to examine why the educational system is failing students; while on the other end of the continuum, the conceptual category, relationship, was used to define supportive strategies, those initiatives which acknowledge, support, and value different knowledge systems, and celebrate diversity.

The data conceptual category 'knowledge' referred to the dual needs of Aboriginal peoples to know their own culture, as well as the crucial need identified for mainstream society to gain knowledge about the Original Peoples of Canada. This knowledge base may assist in a 'decolonizing' process for Canadian society by addressing the significant lack of knowledge and respect for the cultures, histories, languages and contributions of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Table 5 illustrates the strong connection between the data concepts or categories of 'relationship' and 'knowledge' – relationship building being predicated, in most cases, upon the acquisition of knowledge.

Table 5.   Data Concepts – Relationship and Knowledge

Systemic Oppression	Data Concepts	Supporting Inclusion
Historical context	Relationship Knowledge	Pan-Indigenous Organization National Curriculum
Colonization		
		Celebrating diversity
Why is the system failing?		
		Supporting scholarship
Barriers to scholarship		
		Acknowledging, supporting and valuing different knowledge systems
Lack of knowledge and respect for cultures, histories, languages and contributions of Aboriginal peoples; address regionalism		

The concept 'value of education' was defined from an assimilationist stance on one definitional pole, to a humanistic approach on the other. An assimilationist perspective resulting from the universalization of Aboriginal ways of knowing, including perceptions about the purpose for educational achievement identified by members of the Aboriginal communities; contrasted with a humanistic approach to education which

acknowledges the challenge of multiple epistemologies, and recognizes educational

goals/achievement as the purview of individual vocational and professional choices

(Table 6). A need to acknowledge diversity within the Aboriginal population in terms of

the goals and purpose of education was evident.

Table 6.   Data Concept – Value of Education

Systemic Oppression	Data Concept	Supporting Inclusion
Assimilation	Value of Education	Humanistic approach to education
Universalization		Facing the challenges of multiple epistemologies
Epistemic barriers to scholarship		
Pervasive Eurocentric hegemony		Recognition of individual vocational/professional choices

The data concept 'policy, politics and rhetoric' was defined along the definitional

continuum on one pole as referring to policy initiatives and strategic alliances which

support genuine partnerships with Aboriginal peoples; genuine partnerships/alliances

demonstrated by the leadership of Aboriginal peoples in defining, developing and

implementing educational policy to actively challenge the status quo, and thereby

creating meaningful change. Policy, politics and rhetoric on the opposite definitional pole

were identified as the 'lip service' or the resistance to change which is typical,

characterized as policy changes brought about without authentic partnership or

consultation with Aboriginal peoples, and operating through a 'culture of amnesia' which

pervades and supports hegemony in the academy – often resulting in barriers to

scholarship (Table 7).

Table 7.   Data Concept – Policy, Politics & Rhetoric

Systemic Oppression	Data Concept	Supporting Inclusion
Resistance to change	Policy, Politics & Rhetoric	Supportive alliances
'Culture of amnesia'		Leadership by Aboriginal people: power & authority to develop & implement educational policy
Lack of authentic partnership		
Eurocentric hegemony		Focus on development rather than advising: identify issues & policy goals
Tokenism; credentialism		Funding support

The data concept 'social justice' was created to recognize and acknowledge Western epistemic arrogance in terms of the relevance and translation of equity and social justice to Aboriginal worldviews. As well, this definitional continuum included a conceptualized definition of social justice as those policies, initiatives, strategies and alliances which support an educational system which begins with self-knowledge, framed in a positive 'sense of self' for all students (Table 8).

Table 8.   Data Concept – Social Justice

Systemic Oppression	Data Concept	Supporting Inclusion
Westernized epistemic arrogance	Social Justice	Transformative policy – policy circle
		Ethics & equity
Relevance/translation of equity and social justice to Aboriginal worldviews		Educational system infuse a positive 'sense of self' so that students feel a sense of belonging, valued for who they are (inclusion) within the Ontario education system

The conceptual category 'commitment' (Table 9), referred to the ethical stance of the primary researcher; this stance defined as an ethical commitment on the part of the researcher to move beyond a Westernized hierarchical relationship based on 'researcher' and 'Other' (those researched), by adopting a personal rather than arms-length approach to research, in a genuine effort to honour the voice of co-participants.

Table 9. Data Concept – Commitment

Systemic Oppression	Concept	Supporting Inclusion
Westernized approach to research characterized as an 'arm's length' approach of objective observer	Commitment (Researcher ethical stance)	Declaring personal experience/stance
		Honouring the voice of participants
Hierarchical relationship based on 'researcher' status versus 'Other – those researched' rather than collaborative/participatory methodology		Collaborating to create change/challenging the status quo

These data concepts or conceptual categories were created after a careful review of all the data collected to provide a conceptual basis for the analysis of data.

Strategies for Validating Research Findings

Triangulation

A process of triangulation, the integration of the literature review with data collected from the focus group interviews, telephone/personal interviews, along with researcher field notes, attempted, as Richardson (2000) suggests, to crystallize the data in this study. This process sought to shift the lens of inquiry to allow for a deeper and

complex understanding of the topic, encompassing the views and *voices* of all

participants.

Member-Checking

At the conclusion of each focus group interview, a member-checking process was

conducted to ensure the accuracy of the findings in terms of the participants' meaning, as

well as the researcher's interpretation of participants' meaning. Using an inductive

process, generalizing from specific to general, data collected through the member-

checking process was categorized or 'chunked' and presented to all participants in a

summarized format. This member-checking summary was posted online as well as sent

electronically, inviting participants to review, correct, and discuss. Telephone interviews

with select participants augmented the effectiveness of the member-checking process by

ensuring that participant voices were heard, as well as to meet the ethical premise of the

study to respect and acknowledge the voice of all participants.

Ethical Issues

The *Mi'kmaq Ethics Watch* (Mi'kmaq College Institute, 1999) developed

principles and guidelines to protect Mi'Kmaq peoples and their knowledge whenever a

request is made to study their community. This study attempted to infuse many of these

principles and guidelines especially surrounding the need for respect and sensitivity for

Aboriginal knowledge and culture. Smith (2005) suggests that critical theory applied in

research may "lead to emancipation and social justice for oppressed groups if research is

understood and addresses the unequal relations of power" (p.88).

There are ethical obligations and protocols which are imperative to maintain the

integrity of research. Given that the design of this study sought to recognize and treat

participants as equals, instead of simply informants or subjects (Mi'kmaq College Institute, 1999), these ethical challenges were particularly significant. As Smith (2005) states, in research involving Indigenous communities there are "intersecting challenges of methodology, ethics, institutions, and communities" (p. 86). Furthermore, she posits that research is a site of power that creates knowledge of the 'other.' A recent shift in what Smith refers to as the "critical discovery of the role of research in their lives" from "passive victim" has changed the perspective of members of many marginalized groups, including Indigenous peoples involved in research leading them to see themselves "as activists engaged in a counter hegemonic struggle over research" (p. 87). The ethical standpoint affirming the goals of this research, were to empower and provide a voice to promote social change. Graveline (2002) explains this in her poetic text:

> This is the Way I understand these Experiences to Be. Others might Understand it
> to be different. These stories are Mine. My Voice. I've told them True. True to
> Me. True to what I Know I Experienced it Reflected on it Told it To You Today
> (p. 83-34).

Situating the Researcher in the Inquiry

Rose (2001) suggests that qualitative research can enhance understanding of complex situational perspectives in formulating remedial policy development. Where research involves participants with culturally different backgrounds from the researcher, as was the case in this study, the researcher must be highly reflexive – to observe the self as part of the research inquiry. Furthermore, the greatest challenge for the researcher is applying the joint ownership principle to the findings of collaborative research, to engage

in the research process as a translator or facilitator between the community, and public policy makers (Rose, 2001). Therefore, it was incumbent, as researcher, to ensure a respectful location from which to collaboratively participate with the participants in the creation of knowledge. This required the active involvement of the participants in shaping the research agenda and strategy (Rose, 2001).

Personal statement.

As researcher, I positioned myself in this study as a white woman academic researcher, and an outsider to the Aboriginal community. As Smith (1999) suggests, because of this position I claim a specific "genealogical, cultural and political set of experiences" (p. 12). In terms of this study, this presented me with challenges to overcome personal bias springing from my lack of knowledge of the lived experiences of members of the Aboriginal Community. As the researcher, this was addressed by ensuring a respectful countenance and sensitivity to the words and stories shared by the participants. I am sincerely thankful for the generosity of my research partners throughout the inquiry in terms of their kind understanding, patience, and their empathy for me as we navigated this research journey together.

As an outsider to the Aboriginal Community, I approached this study through a lens that was tainted by a Westernized gaze, a symptomatic positioning as a *neutral* researcher; however, this positionality was actively interrogated on many occasions by the participants. Participants stressed that this *neutral* stance was in fact offensive, that it demonstrated a lack of respect for them, and furthermore, created a power hierarchy of researcher as investigating those researched. Smith (1999) identifies 'objective' research that claims researcher 'distance' or neutrality as an 'imperialist' approach. Furthermore,

she asserts that this creates a battleground to contest the 'ownership' of research as an institutional practice that determines, "what is legitimate research, and who counts as legitimate researchers" (p. 56). She also contends that research based on Indigenous values can face assaults from an exclusionary Westernized viewpoint by claiming that research based on Indigenous values is 'not rigorous,' 'not robust,' 'not real,' 'not theorized', 'not valid,' nor 'reliable' juxtaposed against Indigenous criteria which judge research as 'not useful', 'not indigenous', 'not friendly', and 'not just' (p. 140).

Boostrom (1994) further purports that part of the reflective qualitative research process involves "learning what to look at…. [that,] it is important not to allow theoretical beliefs to wash away the texture and context from our observational gaze" (p. 63). Being a reflective observer requires that we become "subjective makers of meaning….with eyes to see and ears to hear" (Boostrom, 1994, p. 63). Freire (1985) supports this viewpoint as he observes that when writing about themes that there is often a deeper meaning hidden that can provide even greater understanding. Reflecting on my abilities as a researcher in this qualitative and participatory inquiry evoked a process of self-discovery, and I have come to believe that as Richardson (2000) suggests, writing provides "a way of finding out about yourself and your topic" (p. 923). The ultimate goal of the inquiry is to translate the recommendations flowing from the research data into guidelines for equity programming which will promote social justice within the academy for Aboriginal scholars and scholarship.

Confidentiality

An essential ethical consideration of the study involved the protection of participant confidentiality, as well as anonymity amongst co-participants, through the use of a pseudonym system. This was done to ensure that participants were able to interact without fear of reprisal for their viewpoints. During initial contact with study participants, the researcher explained to the participants that it was necessary to choose a pseudonym as their online identity; this was also reiterated in participant information packages. This process worked with relative success.

However, there were a few instances where individuals used their first names and/or changed their pseudonym midstream throughout the study. In each case these participants were immediately contacted to request their permission to change the online posting to indicate their original self-selected pseudonym. One participant eventually chose, of his own accord, to reveal his real identity. This request was honoured. A related and very positive outcome of the study was the sense of community many participants felt in communicating and sharing their stories with each other – this again raised the issue of self-disclosure of identity, as many requested that at the conclusion of the study that they be allowed to disclose their identity to each other.

Summary

The focus of this chapter was on the qualitative research methodology that was used in the study including a description of the participant selection (sampling) process, and general description of the participants in each groups – A and B. Data collection procedures were described including the lessons provided by the pilot study, the purpose and format of the online weblog focus group interview process, participant telephone

interviews, and researcher field notes. Data analysis was described as fluid, involving a continual process of reflection and response. The interview questions incorporated themes as they emerged during the focus group interview process. The final stage of data analysis involved the creation of data concepts or conceptual categories to enable analysis of the data. As noted, a dimensionalizing (Strauss & Corbin, 1985) process was used in creating data concepts along a continuum of meaning; the polarity of meaning ranging from systemic oppression on one end of the continuum, to supporting inclusion on the other. In addition to discussing the data analysis process, the strategies for validating research – triangulation and the member-checking were discussed. The chapter concluded with a discussion of ethical issues, including strategies for safeguarding the confidentiality of participants.

The next chapter presents the research findings beginning with a description of individual participant profiles. The *Code of Conduct* is then described as a method used to frame the rights and responsibilities of the research participants in utilizing the weblog interview site. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the major areas of focus that comprised the thematic inquiry.

CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS

The previous chapter described the methodology that was used in the study. This chapter presents the findings. The data collected yielded interesting and significant results. In order to situate the findings in context, the chapter begins with a brief overview of participants' individual profiles. Following this section a discussion of the Code of Conduct is presented. The findings of the thematic inquiry are then presented based on the major areas of focus, which include: the context of education, implications for recruitment (the future pool of Aboriginal scholars), universities as welcoming institutions – recruitment and retention issues, and finally, social justice and equity – policy implications for the academy.

Participant Profiles

There were 16 participants in the study, 14 of whom actively participated. These participants are self-identified members of the Aboriginal community. Eleven of them are current members of the Ontario professoriate, while five are former members. The following section provides a brief overview of each of participant's background (in alphabetical order) in terms of demographics (sex, age), and their experience in the professoriate. To protect participant confidentiality, self-selected pseudonyms are used throughout the study, with one exception (see Chapter III).

adjidjak

adjidjak is a male faculty member between the ages of 25-45. adjidjak brings eight years experience to his professorial role. In our initial correspondence concerning the premise of the research study, adjidjak shared the following view, "Simply, there are a number of obstacles to Aboriginal peoples teaching at universities in Ontario. It varies

from department to department, faculty to faculty – but it generally rests, in my experience, on fundamental issues of systemic racism. Degrees, objectivity, and even research is suspect by the academy and those within it."

Anishinaabe-Kew

Anishinaabe-Kew a female, in the 46-65 age range, identified herself as an adopted child who had suffered the loss of her culture through the adoption process, "I had the feeling inside of me that something was wrong." Anishinaabe-Kew was formerly employed, for a two-year period, as an Administrative Counsellor with some teaching responsibility at an Ontario university. In this role she made frequent guest lectures in various disciplines across the university campus about Aboriginal teachings, history, and the residential school system. She holds a BA in Sociology, and is considering pursuing a graduate degree.

Her current profession involves working with an advocacy organization in the role of "counsellor and family and child advocate for Aboriginal families," in urban, suburban and rural areas.

Annie Oakley (Mamma D)

Annie Oakley (or Mamma D), identified herself as a female in the 46-65 age range, and as a former member of the Ontario professoriate. Annie Oakley's role in the professoriate included that of Administrative Counsellor and Graduate Student, both with some teaching responsibility. She holds an LLB and LSUC. In initial conversations, Annie Oakley indicated that she left these roles to pursue legal studies hoping that eventually she would be able to continue teaching, but as she states, the "discrimination

thing got in the way," further she described her experience in academia as a "warm climate – like hell."

Annie Oakley's work as a constitutional lawyer has focused on what she considers to be a fundamental right for adopted persons – and that is to know their parentage. Her work centers on legal proceedings to bring this important judicial matter through the Canadian court system. Annie Oakley identifies herself as the, "daughter of a third generation residential school survivor [who was] adopted by white people." As an Aboriginal child, Annie Oakley was denied her Aboriginal ancestry, and it is this tragedy that has influenced her passion for justice.

Borealgirl

Borealgirl is a female faculty member in the 46-65 age range. She holds a PhD in her disciplinary field. She reported eight years of experience as a member of the professoriate, beginning as a Lecturer, and now as an Assistant Professor.

Bryan Loucks (Lyght)

A member of the Bkejwanong Territories, Bryan Loucks (Lyght) identified himself as a male faculty member in the 46-65 age range. He has held the position of part-time lecturer for approximately 15 years, and he is currently completing a doctoral program. His academic work focuses on the areas of Native Studies and Indigenous Studies.

During the data collection process, Bryan Loucks (Lyght) asked the researcher to clarify her personal commitment, and also to move beyond what he referred to, and as Linda Smith has characterized, as the act of "perpetuating the same hegemonic processes through research." Bryan Loucks (Lyght) based his willingness to participate in the study

on an ethical stance, requiring that the researcher reflect and articulate her personal commitment to the research goals, thereby creating "safety" for study participants. He also chose to use his real name consonant with Aboriginal epistemology.

Cengin1

Cengin1, identified himself as male in the 25-45 age range, with 17 years experience in the professoriate. He holds both a BSc. and a PhD. Unfortunately, although Cengin1 initially confirmed his participation, and continued to express interest during follow-up conversations, he did not participate actively in the study.

drn (group5a)

drn (or group5a), a male, in the 46-65 years age range, is a faculty member, Chair and Associate Professor, with 15 years experience in the professoriate. drn holds both a BSc. and MBA.

Foxtail

Foxtail, a female faculty member in the 25-45 age range, indicated that she has been teaching as a sessional instructor for two years. Her full-time role outside of academia is working with a collaborative network of school partnerships where she does guest lecturing. Unfortunately, although Foxtail initially confirmed her participation, she did not participate actively in the study.

Gahutneo

Gahutneo, is a male in the 46-65 age range. He has 10 years experience in his position within the Ontario professoriate. However, his professional background also includes 20+ years working in higher/community education. In discussing the 'disconnect' between the Aboriginal Community and policy makers, Gahutneo posits that

the "greatest problem is that policy makers think they know everything – their epistemic arrogance is constant, and unconscious."

Jeannette

Jeannette identified herself as a female in the 25-45 age range. She holds a senior executive position in an organization which serves Aboriginal women primarily in urban areas, although this network does offer services to Aboriginal women across the entire province. As a PhD candidate, Jeannette taught for three years in the area of Aboriginal Education.

In addition, Jeannette reported that her background with the Ontario educational system includes participation and membership on multiple education advisory councils and boards. Furthermore, she states that her work, "…is extensively that of a liaison with government in the area of health, education, housing and employment, on behalf of Aboriginal women in Ontario."

mahkwa

mahkwa, a male in the 25-45 age range is a doctoral candidate. He has been a member of the Ontario professoriate for approximately 2.5 years, and characterized his experience in the academy as feeling "disconnected with his department" and furthermore, feels that "real support for Aboriginal scholars is lacking….Where are the scholarships for Aboriginal students?"

mahkwa stated that one vision for his future involvement with the Ontario educational system involves the development, "…on a contractual basis, [of] arts-infused Ontario Curriculum based lesson plans for teachers. Contracted to teach in elementary, secondary and university when and where agreed upon."

Metisprof

Metisprof identified herself as a female faculty member in the 46-65 age range. Metisprof enriched this study with her challenges concerning the relevance of the social justice and equity premise of this research in terms Aboriginal worldviews. Specifically, she stated that, "the worldview of my nation does not articulate the concept of equity"…and that the concept of equity employed in this study as "everyone gets what they need is rooted in Eurocanadian ideals of a just society….relatedness is much more easily understood." In many respects this viewpoint guided the exploration and translation of research findings from an Aboriginal epistemic viewpoint.

NishKwe

NishKwe, a self-identified Anishinabek indicated that she is a female faculty member in the 25-45 age range with 7.5 years experience in the professoriate. According to NishKwe, "…the reality is that education needs to be different and honourable to see more Aboriginal success…the old way devastated generations of our people…"

Raven

Raven identified herself as a female participant in the 46-65 age range. She indicated that as a former member of the professoriate she has over 30 years experience working in administrative roles with some teaching responsibility. Raven holds both a BA (Honours) and MA in her field.

Raven stated that her work as an Artistic Director and Founder of an Educational/Entertainment Production Company involves, "performing upwards of 80 shows per year in elementary, high schools, colleges and universities; I am often a

Keynote Speaker and/or Workshop Facilitator at college and university conferences,"
furthermore, she stated that:

> In my workshops, speeches, drumming circles, etc. I encourage our people to
> higher education. I spent over 30 years working as a senior manager at a large
> university so I am quite familiar with the above list; I am responsible for creating
> and designing several ordinary and honours degrees at my previous university.

SAM

SAM identified herself as a female participant in the 25-45 age range. Her former
roles in the Ontario professoriate included that of sessional instructor and administrative
counsellor. She is currently pursuing her doctoral studies. SAM also indicated that her
current professional role involves working/partnering with the Ontario educational
system, and that in addition to her own graduate research, she is also working on a study
with the Ministry of Education.

Wolf14

Wolf14, a male faculty member in the 46-65 age range, indicated that he has eight
years experience in the professoriate. In speaking about the context of education for
Aboriginal scholars in the academy, Wolf14 stated the following:

> Native scholars can be ghettoized in Indigenous Studies Programs …. that while
> Native Studies are important, there is also a compelling need to have Native
> people in other (non-traditional) roles – to create visibility for Aboriginal scholars
> throughout the academy, and professional role models for Aboriginal students.

Collectively, these participants brought a rich disciplinary mix to the research,
and offered their insights based on diverse levels of participation in the professoriate.

The initial step in the data collection process was to begin the focus group interviews by asking participants to review and respond to the study's Code of Conduct.

Code of Conduct

An important aspect of 'framing' or setting the tone for the focus group interviews was to begin with a review and acceptance by participants, of a proposed Code of Conduct. In both the pilot study and the actual data collection, participants were given the opportunity to review this *Code* prior to participating in the interviews. This step was included for the purpose of facilitating and promoting an online climate that was conducive to open and safe dialogue, as well as to protect study participants in terms of knowing the expectations for acceptable behaviour.

An essential goal of this *Code* was to establish a blogging community, as Kuhn, (2007) states, "Blogging has the potential to create cyberspace communities; therefore, prioritizing the human presence is an essential element of a blogging code of ethics" (p. 27). And furthermore, Kuhn indicates that the blogging community must address participant responsibilities, as well as participant rights. Participant responsibilities were characterized as the need for inclusive and respectful dialogue amongst participants, ensuring that participants did not label or knowingly cause harm to another participant. Concerning participant rights, Kuhn posits that, "bloggers frame blogs as vehicles for social change…and tools that can be leveraged for political and social gain" (p. 29). To address these rights required that participants acknowledge the central premise or goal of the study as contributing to the well-being of the Aboriginal community. Therefore,

participants agreed to participate in an interactive and respectful dialogue in which every individual participant's contributions were respected and valued.

During the member-checking process NishKwe, a participant in Group A, was particularly appreciative of the *Code* being, "laid out from the beginning…[to ensure] a respectful protocol that encourages and respects our dialogue." NishKwe further stressed the importance of culturally relevant aspects of personal conduct, including recognition for the "seven living teachings as foundation for all interactions, including respect, love, bravery, wisdom, honesty, humility and truth." Raven, a participant in Group B, also recommended the inclusion of two Native Ethics of behaviour - the 'Ethic of Non-Interference', and the 'Ethic of Anger not being Shown' in the *Code*. The inclusion of these ethical tenets provided another culturally relevant basis for the *Code*, for example, the Ethic of Non-Interference confirms the blogger's duty to "humanize the discourse….and to promote authentic communication" (Kuhn, 2007, p. 29), and as Raven noted, "That no one has the right to interfere with another person's opinions and we should all speak from our own truths."

Additionally, a need to be aware of the generational aspect which may influence a participant's viewpoint was identified by Annie Oakley when she stated that, "…to have been in the university in the 80's and 90's is quite different from today." This comment supports the promotion of authentic communication, the need for research participants to be accountable for what they post, to recognize as stated that, "…critical and scholarly debate of opinions and viewpoints will be solicited and encouraged" (Kuhn, 2007, p. 29).

And finally, as noted in the *Code*, Aboriginal scholars, as collaborative partners in this research study were asked to, "Acknowledge that the goal of this research is to

contribute to the well-being of the Aboriginal Community." This goal was affirmed in the following comments by Raven:

> [T]he federal government may say that assimilation is no longer on the table, [but] it will continue to exist in more subtle forms, particularly in Canada's education systems. No one, it appears is really taking the time to study our cultures, speak to those of us with deep knowledge….What are we going to do now? What actions can we take? We need to educate ourselves and draw on those with the knowledge."

Annie Oakley echoed a similar sentiment:

> [There] are a great many Aboriginal persons in graduate school now…. [they] may not recognize how much the university needs them now – Who are you teaching? Who are you reaching? How can you know where you are going if you don't know [acknowledge] where you are coming from?

After the *Code* had been reviewed and approved, the data collection phase of the study began by investigating the following major areas of focus: context of education, implications for recruitment (the future pool of Aboriginal scholars), recruitment and retention issues, and social justice and equity – policy implications.

Thematic Inquiry: Major Areas of Focus

Context of Education

As noted, the first two interviews focused specifically on research question #1 which asked Aboriginal Scholars to identify factors which they believed influenced their experience of inclusion and/or exclusion as Aboriginal students in the Ontario/Canadian educational system (elementary through postsecondary education). This research question

was expanded to find out whether or not the participants believe that the factors they identified have an effect on the future employment pool of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

This exploration of the 'Context of Education' included an examination of several conceptual categories: a sense of inclusion, which was defined as a student's/students' perception or feeling of belonging and value as a member(s) of the school and classroom learning community; a sense of exclusion, which was defined as a student's/students' perception or feeling of alienation, marginalization, and/or oppression in the school and classroom learning community; the value and purpose of education from Aboriginal worldviews; and participants' perceptions concerning the possibility of overcoming hegemony in the educational system.

The findings examined participants' insights in terms of the importance of relationship building from distinct polar standpoints, first in the context of the continual oppression experienced in the educational system, and then as a means of offering support for the inclusion of members of the Aboriginal community in Ontario's educational system. Many of the participants agreed concerning the significance of acknowledging the history of oppression, as Gahutneo clearly articulated, "Does the 'whitestream' recognize, appreciate and fully understand that their education system is a relic of colonial times and therefore is purposely designed to be mono-epistemic, to absorb the other?" Additionally, the underlying colonial ideology which permeates Canadian society continues to result in what Annie Oakley identifies as, "…[a] philosophical concept that one [mainstream] is intellectually superior to another." Raven supports Annie Oakley's views:

My experience has always been that of less being to the great white colonizers!

[The] Ontario education system is sadly lacking in understanding of Indigenous

worldview, for the simple reason, that if basic respect does not exist among

scholars, then how can any group come to a cordial meeting of the minds.

Analysis of the data supported a strong conceptual link between relationship building and

the creation of knowledge concerning the cultures, histories, and contributions of the

Original Peoples of Canada. In questioning the capacity of the Ontario education system

to address and remediate exclusionary practices, mahkwa had the following questions:

Can a space be inclusive to Aboriginal scholars if it sometimes barely

acknowledges the actual lived presence and value of Aboriginal peoples and their

cultural point(s) of view beyond the safety-net of dissecting it through books and

articles, while excluding the actual living, breathing aspects of it?....can it exist

without being projected through a romantic, monolithic lens built on historical

misconceptions of Aboriginals?

To counteract this historical legacy of oppression, and the current era of continued

colonization, many participants suggested that creating knowledge and appreciation for

Aboriginal peoples, both within their own communities, as well as within 'mainstream'

society, may in fact assist in bridging the perceived cultural divide.

Another issue examined concerned the participants' perceptions of the 'value of

education,' and whether this concept might have implications for Aboriginal students

choosing to pursue postsecondary education. Included in this discussion was an

exploration of possibilities for overcoming the perceived 'divide between Aboriginal

epistemologies and the Eurocentric ideologies in the current educational system'. In response to the above Borealgirl stated:

> We're all expected to reach certain levels of formal education. If we don't, then our options may be limited. One option is the practical, land-based experience common to Aboriginal people still connected to the land…Both [my parents] would argue that the more we achieved in formal education, the less practical we got…I've tried to bring together my theoretical knowledge with practical experience by learning from both academics and Aboriginal people connected to the land. I value both.

NishKwe added:

> I can only speak from what I know in my community…Respect, Love, Humility, Honesty, Bravery, Wisdom and Truth are the key tenets (7 Goodlife Teachings) in an Anishinaabe education…it is also important to be culturally and linguistically fluent, as well as being able to excel in mainstream society…this goes beyond being bi-cultural.

SAM responded by cautioning that we must not universalize the experience of Aboriginal students:

> Since each Native family will respond to what they value in a different way, I believe the question is not what is valued in Aboriginal education, but rather: What does each individual Aboriginal person value or hope to gain as a result of educational experience?

However, Gahutneo stated that, "The real question is can multiple epistemologies exist within one nation state and by extension one education system?" Wolf14 responded

that, "We cannot go back to a lifestyle of our ancestors. Our culture, whether we like it or not, involves all of the people now living in Ontario, Canada, and with the information age, the world." And NishKwe suggested that, "It is important to critically analyze the impact that a dominant canon and discourse has had on the production of what counts as knowledge." This dominance by political systems to support ongoing oppressive practices in the Canadian school system was noted as a concern for participants, as Borealgirl asserts:

> I think 'mainstream education' is trying to grapple with how to acknowledge different knowledge systems, but finding it difficult to give up on the institutions the system has developed…we pay lip service to the 'traditional ecological knowledge,' Aboriginal culture and spirituality, but still cling to western science and separation of church and state.

Participants expressed their anger regarding 'political rhetoric' which they believe attempts to disguise systemic oppression. Gahutneo concurred, as his statement indicates:

> I believe that using phrases like 'caring' and 'inclusive learning environment (an environment which promotes a sense of value and belonging for its students)' amounts to the 'politics of distraction' perpetuated by the 'whitestream' and designed to make us all feel warm and fuzzy about the future of education in Ontario.

Furthermore, SAM stressed:

> Best practices, good pedagogy, and student centred learning bridges all peoples and is the means of not only bridging the divide, but teaching all students. If we want social thinkers and learners, we need to teach our youth in socially

responsive manners…if we want our children to succeed we must teach the teachers how to foster success in their students.

As indicated in Chapter III, in the first online interview, Group A (those currently members of the Ontario professoriate), and Group B (those who have left the Ontario professoriate) each participated separately. The research findings suggest however that the members of both groups see a benefit from relationship building tempered by a sincere acknowledgement of the historical context of exclusion and assimilation, and the resulting ongoing ideology of colonization practiced within the Canadian educational system. Participants in both groups expressed their frustration concerning the lack of knowledge about the contributions and histories of Aboriginal peoples, both within their own communities, but most instructively, within 'mainstream' society. SAM captures this disparity and injustice in her response, "…educators and Canada are more likely to embrace a multicultural approach (designed around immigrant inclusion), and not teach history which is inclusive of Aboriginal perspectives or treaties."   This frustration with ongoing systemic oppression was pervasive throughout the participants' responses.

Interestingly, challenges concerning the definitions of 'social justice' and 'equity' based on Aboriginal epistemologies were made primarily by the participants in Group A. This resulted in challenges to the researcher to clarify her personal 'commitment' to the study. Early on in the study Metisprof asked the following questions:

How do we move this beyond the rhetoric? How is this study not going to continue the rhetoric? How will this work [study] make a difference? What is your [principal researcher's] commitment to Aboriginal peoples? Participation is costly both emotionally and spiritually for research participants.

This was a crucially important aspect of the qualitative inquiry as this 'commitment' pertained to the researcher's ethical stance in creating an authentic collaborative and participatory relationship with co-participants, to effectively honour their voices and contributions to the research. Bryan Loucks (Lyght), a current member of the Ontario professoriate (Group A), characterized my initial response to these challenges as being rather bureaucratic in tone. Therefore, as the primary researcher, after critical reflection and much personal soul-searching, I continued to address this issue of researcher 'commitment' as an area of focus. These discussions of researcher commitment provided a meaningful contextual backdrop for further inquiry.

Implications for Recruitment - the Future Pool of Aboriginal Scholars

As indicated in Chapter I, this examination of the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate also focused on whether or not the reported lower levels of participation in postsecondary education by Aboriginal students potentially has an impact on the future employment levels of Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate. The response by participants focused on examining why the educational system is failing Aboriginal students, rather than focusing on these students as failures within the system. As Gahutneo remarked:

> Have you ever noticed that the entire focus of Aboriginal academic achievements [is] always on us? I mean it is never what is wrong with the system, with teacher education, or why so many kids – red, white, black and yellow – [are] dropping out.

Linking the issue to an Aboriginal context, NishKwe stated:

…the current MET [Ministry of Education] policy on Aboriginal Education is making steps to address the barriers our people face on a daily basis in schools. Yet, we need to understand that it took 150 years of formalized schooling to wipe the 'Indian' out of our kids (genocide) and it will take long term measures to make 'real change' and instill cultural competence.

Given previous discussions concerning conditions of systemic oppression and discrimination in the Ontario educational system, participants were asked, from their individual perspectives, if there were any reparative options which they felt might eradicate barriers to educational attainment. The rationale for this question was based on a Foucouldian argument, and as suggested by Smith (1999), that "discipline can be used as a form of domination" (p. 68), and that this is at work in schools and other societal agencies – this domination manifesting itself in mechanisms which exclude and marginalize. Specifically, the question sought to examine what Ryan (1998) in discussing Foucault's perspective of power as an interior process, suggests is the impact of the individual's intervention on social relationships. Smith posits that the outcome of systemic oppression in education may result for some Aboriginal students, in their losing their Indigenous identity through assimilation, and/or becoming the "idealized saviour of the people identified by mainstream as community leaders" (p. 70).

An example of the impact of an individual's sense of social positionality may be found in Holmes (2006) assertion that although surveys indicate that Aboriginal people who complete postsecondary education generally have higher incomes and more success in the employment market, that for many years education has been associated with assimilation. Jeannette's comments during the interviews seemed remarkably in touch

with this perspective. She stated that her work with Aboriginal high school students clearly delineated the cultural genocide many face as students in the Ontario educational system:

> I worked with high school students who felt they needed postsecondary education to achieve their life goals (home, career, dreams)….these students didn't want to 'buy into' the western lifestyle and behaviour – created personal conflict within them....Elders complained [when students returned] that they have forgotten their traditions, [students] lose friends, told they were acting white….so Aboriginal students want the skills and the outcomes of a post secondary education (e.g., career, home etc), but not at the expense of giving up 'who they are'….a lot of students drop out – found postsecondary wasn't so much about skills, but rather more about adopting nonAboriginal values.

Furthermore, Jeannette recounted how this systematic 'cultural cleansing' impacted her own experience in the academy, "In my first year as a university student I found it easier to pretend not to be Aboriginal.…keep my head down to get through.…after a few months it [was] almost impossible to avoid the western culture." Annie Oakley informed the group of a similar experience recounting that:

> When I entered university I had a choice, get through and keep my mouth shut or speak out….I tried to walk a middle ground.…picking when to get involved.…have to look at education and decide as a[n Aboriginal] student, what am I here for, what am I going to get out of it….need to learn critically.

SAM's comments elucidate the complexity of this situation, and importantly, the need to move beyond universalizing these issues for the Aboriginal Community:

That is not to say that any nation, community or group of people are against or for

postsecondary education. It is again by individual and family upbringing that

students see the significance and lack thereof, of postsecondary education

.…[there are] researchers who state that all Aboriginal students (everywhere)

share a similar learning style and it is because of the lack of use of this style in the

schools that the Aboriginal student doesn't succeed.…a highly simplistic analysis

to make a direct correlation in this way.

Additional questions were asked about participants' perceptions concerning the

willingness/resistance the Aboriginal community might feel toward working with the

non-Aboriginal community to address the current inequities in the Ontario educational

system through the development and implementation of socially just educational policy.

Specifically, these questions were: "Would the Aboriginal community advise

'mainstream education' concerning how the system could acknowledge different

knowledge systems? In your opinion, how can Aboriginal worldviews be rightfully

supported and valued in education? How might the possible resistance to this change by

the educational system be challenged - moving beyond the rhetoric?"

The findings of this study indicate a strong link between relationship building and

the acquisition of knowledge about the Original peoples of Canada. Wolf14 articulates

this in his statement, "We [curriculum board] created Native Studies courses, but the

people who need to take them are the non Native people to gain a better understanding of

Native people. Education is one effective method of eliminating racism." Bryan Loucks

(Lyght) also stressed that, "WE including our families are all in need [of] decolonization,

cultural revitalization, healing and strengthening of our resiliency. Resistance is one tool

and tactic. The overarching strategy is cultural continuity and resiliency of ourselves and "all my relations." Raven responded with a similar viewpoint:

> We can put all the systems we want in place, but unless and until, we as Indigenous leaders, parents, elders can instill a sense of pride in accomplishment in our youth, it will all fall on deaf ears. Retention levels for Native youth (males in particular) are appallingly low, they are not given the right tools, the right sense of belonging, the right sense of understanding that it is good to know where they come from, so they can move on into the future as powerful, vibrant adults. This is where we have to start.

This need for decolonization and gaining knowledge to create relationships based on respect was echoed by SAM:

> [W]hen we bring authentic examples of Aboriginal and other racial knowledges to the class via lessons….it is through students learning historical truths and examples of knowledges that we can create the next generation of Canadians who are less ignorant and less biased of Aboriginal peoples as contemporary beings.

Decolonization, moving beyond the politics of rhetoric which supports the status quo, was an important theme developed throughout the study. This was characterized by Annie Oakley as a need for knowledge and Aboriginal leadership in policy development, as she indicated, "[we] need historical content to show the context of policy situated in present day….Aboriginal peoples definitely need to have leadership roles in policy process." drn supported this viewpoint:

> [T]he system should meet our own social and political objectives as well…students who come out of the system ought to have a solid sense of their

own history, culture and place in the world as well as a set of skills that provide a foundation for following their own dreams.

And as for the need for authentic partnership and collaboration between Aboriginal communities and 'mainstream' society, Jeannette indicated that, "the Aboriginal community wants genuine partnerships with government….involvement at the development stage….sharing power and authority….not an advisory council....these groups pose no threat (maintain status quo)….not advising, but rather co-development reflects genuine partnership." This was also articulated by Bryan Loucks (Lyght)'s assertion that:

> [W]e need to be thinking beyond survival for our people….we need to work at establishing alliances, social relations as well as our own institutional arrangements….to create spaces where we can safely develop the subjectivities, tools, stories and knowledge that will sustain our future as distinct peoples living on this land.

However, Gahutneo stated that there is a lack of recognition and acknowledgement for the, "…learning curve in dealing with Aboriginal education in this province" and that most importantly, there is an urgent need for Aboriginal employees and members of boards/council/committees etc to be given power and authority in policy-making, because as he laments, "…engaging Aboriginal peoples in a meaningful and respectful way in this province has not permeated all levels of the government." Jeannette reflected on her own experience in the academy and argued that to move 'beyond lip service' requires swift, just, and official action by the institution, and that in her experience "…an institution that deals with an issue officially and being actively

supportive has positive results…[as a result, there are] many Aboriginal graduates from this institution."

Wolf14 in response to interview questions that asked participants if they believed that change which promotes social justice in education and eliminates barriers can ultimately affect the future pool of potential Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, suggested that, "…any changes that support social justice and eliminate barriers would be welcome to any Ontario classroom. This would be one of many ways to get more Ontario Aboriginal Scholars." drn also indicated:

> There is a special responsibility for increased measures for Aboriginal education, including postsecondary, based upon two factors; constitutional and social justice.…unless we are active participants in the system working to change it from within supported by community leaders, it will change very slowly and probably not in ways that we would like.

Furthermore, drn provided a cautionary perspective with regard to collaborative partnerships with 'mainstream' society and educational policy makers when he stated:

> I'm not so much concerned about mainstream's understanding of Aboriginal history and culture, but their attitude towards self determining efforts: will they [mainstream society] support them [members of the Aboriginal community] and make room within their own institutions for them and welcome us? Can we create Aboriginal educational spaces and have them seen as high quality spaces? Often, in my 20 year experience, Aboriginal programming is seen as second class and of a lower quality than others. Yet I argue that our students must be able to function within their own communities and within mainstream communities through acts

of biculturalism that are not recognized, mainstream students do not have to do this on a regular basis, nor do mainstream students generally have to live with a legacy of state sanctioned discrimination and oppression….for me, I always ask the question: how does the system, program, etc support Aboriginal objectives and sense of well being?

Metisprof appears to mirror drn's concern in her statement:

I have difficulty buying into equity as a motivator, but relatedness is much more easily understood – all living beings, as expressions of the great mystery, are sacred, have immeasurable value, and are deserving of culturally determined ways of respecting them.

SAM articulated her suggestion about how social justice and equity might be authentically operationalized within the system of education in her comments:

[P]romoting social justice and authentic voice and inclusion will promote an environment where all students, Aboriginal and non[Aboriginal], will have heightened success .…[but must acknowledge] need entire team to achieve this at four levels: 1) professional development of current professionals; 2) teacher training programs and general post secondary requirements for all students including an understanding of historical and contemporary students; 3) provincial and district wide policies which mandate priorities for both funding and improvements in the areas of Aboriginal attainment and anti-racist pedagogy; and 4) curriculum infusion which presents all students with a clear historical and contemporary view of Aboriginal people and their influence/importance to Canadian history. It won't trickle down.

These findings indicate that participants acknowledged (albeit reluctantly for some) that there is a need for relationship development in terms of partnership and collaboration with mainstream Canadian society, to evoke the systemic changes necessary to foster an educational system that is responsive and respectful of the lived reality of its Aboriginal students. In this way Aboriginal students, as well as other students, may gain knowledge and appreciation for all members of Canadian society. Nonetheless, participants continued to express their concern as NishKwe does in the following statement:

> The purpose of education is to provide all children with the tools to reach their fullest potential. Realistically educational systems have failed (and have been set up this way) to exclude various groups based upon race, gender, orientation and social class. This is the history that education is trying to deal with, and overcome.

However, despite a perception among the participants that societal shifts to eradicate colonial and oppressive practices may be characterized as an almost insurmountable task, the genesis for this change may be achievable in our classrooms as SAM states:

> All worldviews can fit within the classroom providing the teacher, administration and district wants it in there. We are very good in Ontario at looking at the multicultural issues (predominantly International Immigrant), but not so vigilant at looking at the Aboriginal differences within the building. I have used the word authentic before, and that is the key for me between authentic inclusion and lip service or rhetoric.

The findings suggest a congruency between participants' stated beliefs and opinions on most of the questions pertaining to the context of the educational experience and the impact this may or may not have on the future pool of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate. There were however some areas of divergence in opinions expressed between members of the participant groups, with participants in Group A (currently employed in the Ontario professoriate) seemingly approaching the questions from a broad institutional perspective, while participants in Group B (those who have left employment with the Ontario professoriate), expressed their opinions in terms of personal experience. This was an unexpected finding, and may quite possibly have resulted from participants' perceptions of 'insider' and 'outsider' status in the academy. However, there appeared to be an agreement amongst all participants concerning the power of the academy to shape the 'life chances' (Corson, 1993) of all students. To this effect Bryan Loucks (Lyght) stated, "Education within postsecondary institutions is one site that must be embedded within the larger cultural movement towards self-determination, harmonization and dare I say, liberation of the Mind, Body, Heart and Spirit."

Concerning the conceptual code 'commitment' and pertaining specifically to the ethical stance of the research inquiry, there were additional challenges throughout the inquiry from participants. These challenges were recorded in the research field notes which recount the researcher's impressions, "I am now the subject of the research – I am being studied by the participants to see if I am in fact worthy of their time, effort and trust." Reflecting on the issue of 'researcher stance' I recognized that there was a fundamental need for self-disclosure of my personal lived experience relevant to this inquiry; reflecting on how, as the primary researcher, I could ask study participants to

share their life experiences with me, if I was not prepared to share mine with them. I believe this experience 'uncovered' a core feature of qualitative research methodology for me – incorporating the dual needs for personal humility with a humble approach to the inquiry, as key tenets of a researcher's integrity.

As a result of this reflective process, I contacted each participant individually to share some of my personal narrative as well as to describe what social justice and equity meant to me, and why I considered it an important aspect of my personal self. I asked participants to consider whether or not we could collaborate to find meaning, so that as Gahutneo put it, "we are not just moving the deck chairs" and thereby perpetuating the status quo. I also asked participants if we could begin to investigate together what these "deck chairs" represent. And if in doing so, we might inform the direction of change. In response to my personal message to each participant I received the following response from Raven which she gave me permission to share. Raven's insightful words identified the collaborative space in which I was situated in this study:

> Well, I'm glad to see you are giving up a little on your "I'm a white woman, I'd better hide behind the deck chair lest there be a Native uprising if I become too involved." This is your research, Karen, your heart, your soul. I firmly believe that my Ancestors directed you into this slippery territory for a reason. It seems to me that you are finding your passion for it, from reading our responses and relating them to yourself and finding that the arms length approach ain't working for you. Well done. Even scholarly discourse can be passionate. Social Justice cannot be articulated unless you have a true understanding of it as it pertains to you. Not all white women, for example, have a privilege place in society. There

are millions that struggle everyday with finding relevancy in the world, trying to figure out if they matter or not. It is not unique to visible minorities.

Are Universities Welcoming Institutions? Recruitment and Retention Issues

During the third focus group interview, the focus of the inquiry shifted to the following question (from participants' perspectives): "Why do Aboriginal scholars stay in the Ontario professoriate, or conversely, why do they leave the Ontario professoriate?" Participants were asked to reflect on these issues based on their own experiences as Aboriginal scholars, and to offer recommendations concerning how the academy might foster an inclusive environment which not only welcomes Aboriginal scholars as members of the professoriate (recruitment), but also provides a supportive and respectful environment in the academy (retention).

Specifically, participants were asked to share their views, from their perspective as current or former members of the Ontario professoriate regarding institutional policies/practices that are designed to foster a more inclusive and less isolating space in the academy for Aboriginal scholars. They were also asked to consider whether or not they believed that these policies/practices were successful. In response to the questions NishKwe provided a number of reasons why Aboriginal scholars stay or leave the Ontario professoriate:

> Why do 'we' stay? Respect for our culture, languages and worldview; Respect for our forms of scholarship and research; Respect for our contributions to the communities (non-university and university); Honouring the gifts that we bring (since we are still few in numbers); Honouring the struggles that we have overcome to get here (and there have been many - systemic and otherwise);

Honouring the unique voice that we bring to the academy (authentic and original);

Acknowledging our place with the appropriate salaries; Acknowledging our status

with the granting of tenure; Acknowledging our need to grow by offering

incentives and opportunities….Why do 'we' leave? When I have been taken for

granted, tokenized, taken advantage of and disrespected in terms of workload,

recognition and status….This is not acceptable, yet, it happens so often.

Underlying this inquiry was the examination of the potential efficacy and

feasibility for community building to build capacity for Aboriginal scholars in the

academy – community building brought about through the inclusion of principles and

guidelines reflecting Aboriginal ways of knowing with which to transform recruitment

and retention policies and practices in the academy. Again, the acquisition of

'knowledge' about the Aboriginal peoples of Canada was closely linked with the

potential efficacy of 'relationship' building in the academy, as Gahutneo's question

indicates, "How is it that the cream of the intelligencia can have zero knowledge of

Aboriginal peoples in this province? Is it a planned educational strategy in the interest of

promoting the hegemony agenda?" In reflecting on his personal experience as a current

member of the Ontario professoriate Gahutneo disclosed why he has stayed:

I think about leaving Ontario periodically and fret about leaving my territory,

what will I lose if I leave? Will I be disconnected from my ancestors? Am I

effectively leaving the communities that have invested in me, encouraged me,

prayed for me, and yes kicked my ass when I needed it just when I have the

credential that gives me voice in the academy?

Raven, who left the Ontario professoriate shared her reasons for leaving:

> I left due to lack of support, lack of interest in Indigenous culture, both pre and
> post-European contact…It is difficult to get people at the University-level to
> engage if they have never been taught or shown any interest in 'things
> Indigenous'

However, in responding to comments by NishKwe regarding what Aboriginal scholars
offer to the academy, Raven had this to say:

> NishKwe has a serious point about remaining within the academy to try and effect
> change. She states that what we offer is valuable – 'the unique voice Aboriginal
> Scholars bring to the academy' – now how does that translate to relevant
> policy/practice in the academy? Long-term persistence on the part of our youth. It
> is not going to help our goal if we all throw in the towel and simply decide to try
> to make change elsewhere. Ironically, academic institutions of this country
> regardless of their bias's, racial tightness and unwillingness to change and accept
> are still considered to be intellectual leaders, God help us all. Therefore, it
> behooves us to work hard to maintain a voice within that intellectual body. Those
> currently 'in the academy', need to band together, form a pan-Canadian University
> Indigenous Association, (I'd join in a heartbeat) to exchange information, form
> national strategies and policies and generally, hold hands! The time has come, my
> friends, to stand as a group and just do it.

Participants' comments concerning recruitment and retention centred on the
necessity for 'knowledge' to embrace what I would suggest is a 'social justice' platform,
to move the academy beyond Westernized epistemic arrogance in an authentic

legitimation of value for Aboriginal ways of knowing within the academy. As Jeannette

stressed, "… [it is] pointless to bring more abor[iginal] scholars into the 'hostile'

academic environment without making the necessary changes to improve the

environment." These sentiments reflected the views of all participants, those who are

currently employed within the professoriate, and those who have left. For example,

adjidjak who is a current member of the professoriate explained:

> Many professors in Ontario simply do not see Aboriginal people as relevant to
>
> their disciplines.…If you stand up in class and note that people made their place
>
> by killing, mutilating or stealing culture you are seen as some sort of radical
>
> attempting to demonize great thinkers.…This attitude also flushes Aboriginal
>
> students from continuing their studies.…there are also issues of tokenism in terms
>
> of supervision, evaluating thesis work, and committee work. All of which
>
> discourages individuals from coming or remaining in Ontario for long.

adjidjak is of the view that increasing Aboriginal student participation in the

academy is fraught with many barriers, including lack of: "…funding, faculty orientation,

and focus on Aboriginal research." He also indicated that "a lot of Native students

choose schools for other reasons [rather than money] – they go where they will get the

best treatment rather than money…[they] need safety". And furthermore, he states that

with regard to equity work on campus, "there is no safety in opening your mouth, power-

brokers [will] undermine committee's work."

These comments appear to suggest an existing system within the academy that

continues to 'silence' Aboriginal scholars and those engaged in the work to eradicate

systemic discrimination and oppression. This is the 'politics' of the academy at work.

Annie Oakley articulated this experience of 'silencing' in her poignant words, "…they used their power to silence me."

Two former members of the Ontario professoriate pointed to credentialism as a significant barrier limiting professional opportunities for Aboriginal scholars with regards to entry into the professoriate, and subsequently, to upward mobility (professional opportunities) within the academy. As Anishinaabe-Kew puts it, "…in the end they used credentialism to cut me out." However, in some cases, participants reported that the barrier they faced was not credentialism, but rather tokenism or 'ghettoization' of Native Studies within the academy, as effectively removing opportunities for professional growth and upward mobility among Native Academics. Some examples provided include: the lack of public recognition and acknowledgement of the research awards achieved by Aboriginal scholars; barriers to progression through the ranks – the lack of career opportunities such as teaching graduate courses; and a lack of cultural sensitivity with regard to ethical clearance for cross-cultural research which results in the delay of the release of research funding. In this regard adjidjak shared his experience, "…filling out a cross-cultural form to work in and among my own community (my relations) is nuts. I should really be filling one [cross-cultural research form] out to teach all the non-Aboriginals in universities."

The participants also discussed many issues concerning why universities are *not* welcoming institutions. These issues were related to barriers created by a significant lack of acknowledgement, support, and valuing of different knowledge systems within the academy. In sharing their perspectives about why Aboriginal scholars leave the professoriate, the absence of respectful acknowledgement for the value and unique

epistemologies of Aboriginal scholars (and scholarship) was cited as the most profound

barrier to inclusion. The crux of the situation was eloquently expressed by Gahutneo:

> [T]here is no Aboriginal intellectual critical mass in many universities in Ontario.
> We are isolated and marginalized because our epistemic realities conflict with the
> academies….it has to, I mean the word university literally means 'one song' and I
> sing a different song.

To build a 'critical mass' of Aboriginal scholarship and membership in the academy

Bryan Loucks (Lyght) suggested that, 'knowledge warriors' are needed to support these

spaces of respect and inclusion.

Social Justice and Equity - Policy Implications for the Academy

Connections between all emergent themes in the data were explored; this involved

analyzing the thematic connections based on participants' responses to recruitment and

retention issues identified, as well as a discussion about a proposed theoretical model of

policy transformation. Raven, began the discussion about relationship building

(community building), during the third focus group interview when she stated, "Those

currently 'in the academy' need to band together, form a pan-Canadian University

Indigenous Association," and she continued this discussion in the last focus group

interview stating:

> [P]olicies need to include a PAN-Indigenous look, and not simply a regional one
> simply because a University happens to be located in a particular area.… To bring
> [about] change requires forward-thinking people of all ages. Elders involved need
> to have a broad understanding of what it is to be Indigenous in this country.

The concept of a PAN-Indigenous Association was endorsed by some participants. However, Anishinaabe-Kew expressed a cautionary note:

> The Pan-Indigenous program is a good start, it would need to be fine-tuned – but it is problematic as there are so many Nations….It may be workable, but [we] need to ask, 'Who would be doing the course design? Who would be teaching?' The instructors would have to be very knowledgeable about a number of Aboriginal cultures.

This discussion of 'relationship' building was again linked with the corollary data concept, 'knowledge'; linking a process of relationship, or community capacity building if you will, with the necessity to ensure a process of 'knowledge' building. Bryan Loucks (Lyght) had this suggestion, "Indigenous knowledge scholarship has to be connected to Indigenous self-revitalization movement – not just a political movement but a cultural movement of people engaged in searching for 'who they are,' and practicing the knowledge of where they come from." Participants continued to explore this theme, discussing the issue of regionalism, and its potential to influence capacity building in education for the Aboriginal community. In this regard, Raven expressed her concern:

> What I lament over is the regionalism of Indigenous education – to me this smacks of exclusiveness! …. Does anyone have a clue about others? [This] doesn't help nonAboriginals – this is where stereotypes are born – very little is known about the 600 nations and 1200 tribes….We need to create a national curriculum, which offers Indigenous degrees from a Liberal Studies point of view (this is where a pan-curriculum comes in). Students should be able to major in the CREE culture and language, if they so choose. However, I hasten to add, that

qualified teachers in all aspects of the culture need to be hired. Yeah, I know, are

there any?"….My emails alone, tells me there are very few of us with the

[required] knowledge. This needs to be rectified with all speed, and Departments

of Education within those Universities who offer Education degrees, need to offer

comprehensive courses on all things Indigenous.

In his response to Raven's comments, Bryan Loucks (Lyght) acknowledged that

counteracting the climate of hostility, and the entrenchment of a Westernized hegemonic

stance in the academy, may require, in addition to self-knowledge, "…a need for more of

a Warrior Scholar – looking from a tactical standpoint to create these

spaces…Knowledge Warrior – is [a] better term- 'scholar' frames a western standpoint."

In creating these spaces, Anishinaabe-Kew suggested a policy strategy that would:

Start with curriculum, bring in Indigenous instructors and consultants, bring in

Elders….Win/win situation – students getting studies they want; professoriate

would benefit with Indigenous Scholars on board and learning Indigenous

Knowledge.…Need more events on campus involving students and professors -

Would universities do this? Will take time, may be difficult at the beginning –

once in place it will develop with continuity – people will adjust….Dominant

society needs to adjust to a few changes.

Participants discussed their perspectives concerning the necessity to develop a

process that would allow the Aboriginal community to create a knowledge bridge with

'mainstream' society – to bridge the abyss created by the significant lack of knowledge

about Aboriginal peoples. All agreed that creating knowledge spaces which honour the

cultures, languages, histories, and contributions of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada is

not only possible, it is overdue, and may be instrumental in healing the relationship between the Aboriginal community and 'mainstream' society. Raven eloquently articulated this healing process in her reflection of the transformative policy circle proposed:

> I really do want to start the National Association of Indigenous Scholars (South on the medicine wheel)….This is where the healing begins within tribal communities, jealousies laid aside and the real work of healing begins. Focus is on collective opinion and eventually a pan-Native spiritual view of what it is to be Native in Canada.

> Jeannette, in responding to the suggestion that all members of Canadian society must be involved in a process of decolonization, stated that, "[This is a] refreshing viewpoint – I often hear, Why should I be held responsible for what my great-grandparents did? If you are still reaping the benefits [privilege] – you can't accept the one-side of that ticket!" She further opined that entering into an authentic partnership with 'mainstream' society will require that the Aboriginal Community goes into this relationship:

> [W]ith our eyes wide-open we can come together in a commitment [for change]…. realistically, the problems our communities face – we need help – we didn't create this mess, and we don't have the capacity to change it alone….the dominant society will not just step aside - [change] will not happen easily.

> The issue of authentic partnerships was raised in previous discussions and was identified as an element of the conceptual code, 'policy, politics & rhetoric' and as Jeannette advised, to be authentic in a true collaboration would require:

Need collaboration rather than consultation….collaboration indicates that we are all going to agree to work together….if we start here – people come with genuine responsibility to build consensus and agreement – changes nature of the discussion entirely….relationship is primary….I have seen people so upset and labeled troublemakers because they do not want to accept what is presented as the 'product'. Need to be involved in genuine collaboration….At my former university the Aboriginal Community approached the university about developing a Master's Program….University made sure the Community was involved right from curriculum to course design….Created ownership and responsibility – it is authentic collaboration….Collaborating to build – [rather than] What do you think after we have produced it? Changes [the process] completely!

In recognition of policies and processes developed and implemented through what has been characterized as 'Westernized epistemic arrogance' a policy process was presented to participants which incorporated their insights and reflections, for their review and discussion. This policy process, in an attempt to honour Aboriginal epistemologies was presented as a transformative policy circle reflecting Calliou's (1995) peacekeeping pedagogy medicine wheel. In response to the use of a medicine wheel to inform a Westernized policy process, Gahutneo contends that, "medicine wheel teachings are powerful." NishKwe agreed:

A policy that models 'our wheel of life' being implemented in institutions to respectfully include Aboriginal scholars and worldview can become a reality. It is happening to some degree in the postsecondary environments that we work in, but, moreover where there is a high Aboriginal population (of which I do belong).

> We are in a time of great change and we have an enormous responsibility to pave the way for the others that come behind us.

Raven's words indicate the urgency for social change as reflective of the circle or 'medicine wheel' archetype:

> I have been a Medicine Wheel Teacher for thirty years and here is what I think. Without a circular-based, respectful discourse AMONG TRIBAL COMMUNITIES, never mind external sources, we are doomed to spinning the wheel in endless circles of fruitlessness. We can change the academy, we can do it, but it requires a collective goal. Change begins at home, our Medicine Bundle as NishKwe notes, is to stay the course as a cohesive group of like-minded, dedicated Indigenous people seeking to elevate the souls of the tribes through inclusive education. All My Relations.

> The integrative elements of the proposed transformative policy circle were

presented as: The East – a beginning, where the concepts of relationship and knowledge – or relationship building through education would provide a broad spectrum of knowledge concerning Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and the inclusion of Aboriginal worldviews in curricula – especially, in 'Character Education' in Ontario focusing on societal or citizenship values relevant to social justice; The South, a place of consultation with expert knowledge – the emotional realm, bringing together Aboriginal Educators and Elders to identify policy issues/barriers and goals; the West as the direction where action occurs in the form of policy development – specifically, stakeholders from Aboriginal Communities defining policy principles and creating policy guidelines, conducting trial application of these policy principles and guidelines to determine

efficacy, and confirming funding support and allocation for future development. Raven

shared her perceptions of the West as follows:

> The direction of dreams, humility, prayer, Element of Fire and the Emotional
>
> Realm of the Visionary in all of us. We gather around the fire of Indigenous
>
> knowledge and build, as the current chart says, firm principles and policies that
>
> will elevate the tribes, individual and the academy. That will infuse the Nations
>
> with pride through a series of collective guidelines that speaks to all of us.
>
> And the North, where policy implementation occurs through reflection, a process
>
> Calliuo (1995) suggests is an integration of emotions and actions – measuring success,
>
> and providing for ongoing and long-term review through continued consultation with the
>
> Aboriginal community. Raven referred to the north as, "the direction of the ELDERS,
>
> wisdom, honesty, honour, Element of Water and the Mental Realm of the Teacher in all
>
> of us. We have come full circle, and this is where we take our place in the larger picture."

While many participants seemed to find merit in the use of the transformative

policy circle as an appropriate method to articulate an Aboriginal epistemic approach to

policy development and implementation in the academy, there were concerns

Anishinaabe-Kew expressed as follows:

> If you are going with a medicine wheel teaching, it is important to note that in my
>
> culture, North is not the North you show at the top, it is the Eastern direction –
>
> East/West directions are where North/South are shown.…the Haudenoshonee
>
> have the West at the top of the circle.
>
> Interestingly, participants, both current and former members of the professoriate,

indicated support for, as well as caution with, relationship building initiatives such as the

PAN-Indigenous Organization. The PAN-Indigenous Organization was viewed by most participants as an opportunity for capacity building within Aboriginal communities and as a process of knowledge acquisition – intrapersonal knowledge for Aboriginal peoples, as well as process which would support the development of alliances both within and between institutions. Bryan Loucks (Lyght) indicates:

> It is important for institutions to build alliances with each other; Indigenous programs/institutions should build alliances to create spaces for Indigenous knowledge to emerge. In Ontario this would be a useful thing to accomplish. Creating dialogues…strategic alliances between these institutions.

> Gahutneo added that, "the only way to overcome is for both groups to sit together

for at least a year to uncover the epistemologies of both groups – to examine the conflicts….we are all inheritors of 200+ years of colonization….dysfunctional communities result." In other words, creating and nurturing ongoing dialogue amongst members of the educational community may provide opportunities to develop the necessary 'critical consciousness' to foster inclusion (Ryan, 2006). Additionally, Gahutneo offered his perspectives concerning the importance of Aboriginal Education as a decolonization strategy:

> This needs to be first on the agenda, if not done, then people teach through their colonial inheritance….this is the only way to get past epistemic conflict….examine and decolonize ourselves….everything is built around colonization….Understand what we have all inherited – [and ask] What are you prepared to do differently?

In comparing the views expressed by members of each participant group, there was diversity in the responses with regard to the value of education, the purpose or goal of education. Borealgirl, a current member of the professoriate shared the following with the group:

On reviewing some of the comments [from previous focus group discussions] was my omission of some of the practical reasons I joined the academy. One motivator was moving out of poverty, so a high salary, tenure and a good pension were all attractive. Also to be in the rarified milieu of a university where one is devoted to "higher" learning seemed a privilege after the drudgery, low pay and thanklessness of a pink ghetto job. Mind you, now that I'm here, higher learning has its own drudgery and thanklessness, as well as excessive demands.

For Anishinaabe-Kew, a former member of the professoriate, overcoming the effects of poverty was also a motivating factor in the acquisition of education:

I wanted education so that I could become a better helper for my people – extended the natural gift in me – enhance this with education. Poverty is another issue – there are no jobs on reserves – not enough employment. [The] Indian Act – they are still trying to wipe out the Indian in us…Our spirits haven't been broken – we are warriors! Education is a continuum – we are constantly learning – each day life presents new lessons. At professoriate level you are working in a westernized context.

In addition to relationship building and creating spaces which honour Aboriginal knowledge, a compelling need to create strategic alliances through processes of authentic collaboration with members of the Aboriginal community was suggested. With particular

reference to the institution of education, these alliances must include Aboriginal educators and Elders. Participants in both groups expressed their anger over the historical legacy, and the continuing oppression of Aboriginal students in Canadian educational institutions. Gahutneo a current member of the professoriate opined, "There are so many myths in this country: that we're a bicultural, bilingual country. Canada is the ravaging beast that rapes our women and steals our children!" And, in reference to what Canada as a collective may owe to the Original Peoples, Anishinaabe-Kew, as a former member of the professoriate asserted:

> We don't have 'free education' – we have paid an extremely high price with the blood of my ancestors.…the government is finally paying us back what they owe us! Funding has not grown as the population has increased.…[we] have to look at Ministry of Education and federal/provincial funding.

Borealgirl also articulated her perspective concerning the importance of policy initiatives to address the current under-representation of Aboriginal students in postsecondary education, and subsequently the professoriate:

> INAC [Indian and Northern Affairs Canada] has participated in some programs that encourage post-secondary education. There needs to be much more of this, including a focus on getting students through high school so they have the option to consider an academic career and then providing adequate funding for Aboriginal students to complete university--free university education for any student who is able to demonstrate the ability to complete!

In addition to the above, Borealgirl also shared her thoughts regarding how political rhetoric may be addressed and policy created to support Aboriginal scholarship – a strategic tri-level governmental policy approach:

I think we need to focus on the different areas where policy is made--at the federal level, the provincial level, in universities themselves and through Aboriginal communities and organizations. Federally, funding from Indian and Northern Affairs and research programs can influence the climate at universities....In the research arena, SSHRC [Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council] is looking at funding for Aboriginal research and CIHR [Canadian Institutes of Health Research] and NSERC [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council] have also attempted to address this area, but I don't think the approach is very strategic yet and as an Aboriginal scholar I don't feel I have much of a say in these processes….Another crucial policy arena is provincial education policy. In Ontario the Aboriginal Training and Employment Strategy led to some major changes in Aboriginal programming at both colleges and universities. More needs to be done. Thirdly, universities themselves have leeway to change their internal programming, faculty and administration to better address Aboriginal issues.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the inquiry based on the analysis of data collected. The chapter began with a description of the individual participant profiles. The *Code of Conduct* was discussed as a framework explaining participant rights and responsibilities in utilizing the weblog interview site. The discussions of the major areas

of focus in the thematic inquiry were presented including: the context of education, implications for recruitment, recruitment and retention issues and social justice and equity policies in the academy.

The findings indicated that participants expressed their anger, frustration, as well as their hope for social change – change that would be reflected in authentic relationship with 'mainstream' society based on mutual respect and knowledge. Change that would result in truly collaborative relationships, moving relationships between cultures and beyond rhetoric to create opportunities for members of the Aboriginal community, particularly Aboriginal educators and Elders, to join together to form an organization which Raven has suggested should not homogenize the cultures of Aboriginal peoples, but rather define, "…[a] collective opinion and eventually a pan-Native spiritual view of what it is to be Native in Canada." And, in her final thoughts regarding this research inquiry, and what the discussion amongst her co-participants has meant to her, Jeannette concluded,"…[this research inquiry has] reconfirmed what my experience has been….helped me to know that it is not just me….that I am not too far left-wing…that I am not being unreasonable." And in addressing the essential element of this inquiry – the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, Borealgirl shared her reflections concerning the benefits resulting from building a "critical mass" of Aboriginal scholarship at her institution:

> We are building a critical mass of Aboriginal faculty and administration in our university and what a difference it makes. I often feel isolated in my faculty, but can always turn to Aboriginal colleagues in other departments and in senior administration. It's heartening to see what kinds of changes can start when the

numbers increase. Ideas abound--even if workload is too much for each of us!--
and change starts to perc throughout the organization. For example, we have a
new faculty orientation every year. This year, for the first time, a session on
Aboriginal issues will be included. It has been obvious to everyone for a long
time that most faculty members are ignorant of Aboriginal issues, so this is one
way to start to address the problem. Another example, we have an annual research
forum and next year, again for the first time, we will include a focus on
Aboriginal research on our campus.

However, Borealgirl concludes by cautioning that all is not "rosy" with this situation, and
there continues to be much work to be done on this front:

> [S]o, even though we are increasing in numbers and influence, Aboriginal issues
> and peoples are still marginalized, misunderstood and misrepresented, both within
> the university and in the wider society. I guess that's an additional item in our job
> description--promoting understanding and social justice--but we're not getting
> paid to do that and it's a full-time job!

The next chapter will present a discussion of these findings relevant to the
literature and the themes explored. In Chapter V the potential policy implications of these
findings for the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario
professoriate will be discussed.

CHAPTER V. DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research in relation to the extant literature. The discussion in this chapter is presented in two main sections, the first, decolonization as a national issue, is examined relevant to several of the issues identified by the participants, and in the literature. These issues include the need to differentiate racism and the treatment of Aboriginal peoples, to move beyond the rhetoric and challenge the status quo to create meaningful change which includes an acknowledgement of the historically grounded distrust many members of the Aboriginal community have for the Canadian educational system. Additionally, decolonization should hopefully facilitate efforts which support capacity building for the Aboriginal community. Also discussed in this section is the central issue of the inquiry – why Aboriginal scholars stay, and conversely, why they leave the Ontario professoriate, through an examination of key elements of university employment equity recruitment and retention practices. These practices are reviewed in light of the participants' responses in which they not only identify barriers to recruitment and retention, but also offer suggested strategies to support the success of Aboriginal scholars and scholarship within the academy. The section concludes by revisiting some relevant policy issues, focusing on the ideological perspectives that have shaped, and continue to shape Canadian educational policy.

The second section of this chapter presents a discussion of a proposed policy process based on theory grounded in the data. A grounded theory approach was used to inform the Westernized stance toward employment equity policy in the academy,

specifically relevant to recruitment and retention practices. This resulted in a proposed policy circle or 'medicine wheel' as an organizational tool or framework for enacting a transformative policy process. The circle is a significant archetype of the worldview and spirituality of many Aboriginal Peoples (Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies, 2007). The policy circle model emphasizes the fact that effective policy is not a static process, but rather, a contextualized process in which policy is developed through evolutionary integrative stages, each reflecting an important aspect of development and implementation.

This evolutionary policy process involves four integrative stages including: the 'Beginning' stage; the 'Consultation with Expert Knowledge' stage; the 'Taking Action' (policy development) stage; and finally, the 'Reflection' (policy implementation and review) stage. The discussion of the proposed evolutionary policy process will highlight the relevance of each of these stages to the research questions and research data. This discussion will also include a contextual analysis of the proposed framework relative to the following educational policies in Ontario: *The Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007); *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students – Developing Policies for Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification: Successful Practices for Ontario School Boards* (2007); and a supporting policy document from the Joint Management Committee of the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy, *Respectful Treatment of Indigenous Knowledge* (2001).

Principles emerging from the research findings which reflect the tenets of respect, honour, truth and wisdom are presented as proposed guidelines for equitable and socially just employment equity recruitment and retention policies and practices in the academy.

Finally, the chapter will conclude with a rationale for change and for promoting social justice and equity in the academy. This change will require universities, as societal leaders, to act as 'agents of change' in order to empower Aboriginal scholars as well as foster Aboriginal scholarship.

Decolonization: A National Issue

As the literature indicates, and as the research participants reported, the effects of colonial oppression continues today within the Canadian educational system, and efforts to confront and eradicate discriminatory policies and practices will require the decolonization of all members of the educational community (Anderson, 2000; Cogan & Derricott, 2000; Corson, 1997; Dei, 2002; Lynch, 1992).

Differentiating Racism

However, Dua (2008) cautions that without acknowledging the differentiation of racialization and oppression, anti-racist projects may create a false sense of commonality amongst those marginalized and 'othered' in Canadian society. Dua purports that colonization in Canada has an historical context as a 'white' nationalist settlement process. Within this process, people of colour are positioned in the status of settlers, and are therefore "embedded in Canadian colonialism" (p. 33). While Dua acknowledges the historical legacy of profound racism people of colour continue to experience, she asserts there is a need to ensure that anti-racist projects do not work to adversely destabilize efforts to address the oppression that Aboriginal peoples experience. For instance, in explaining the complexity of this situation, Dua argues for recognition, by all Canadians, that the land we share and own was stolen from First Nations peoples.

Dua (2008) suggests that the lack of awareness for the differential experience of Aboriginal peoples involves the collective denial of their citizenship, and the continued efforts to weaken Indigenous self-government rights in Canada. And lastly, while Dua acknowledges the vast body of anti-racist scholarship currently developed, she posits that if this body of knowledge is framed without a purposeful awareness of the influence of colonization, this knowledge may in fact perpetuate and contribute to the ongoing colonization of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Without contesting the differentiation between racialization and colonization, without examining the implications of colonization in societal institutions such as education, Dua charges that we are in fact not centering the decolonization of Aboriginal peoples in anti-racist efforts:

> The first step is to begin to unravel the way in which we are part of the process, the ongoing project of colonization. This, in turn, requires that we engage with First Nations activism differently. This involves listening and learning from First Nations leaders. Only then can we become meaningful allies (p. 35).

Aboriginal peoples in Canada face generations of governmental policies developed specifically from assimilationist perspectives to destroy and undermine Aboriginal communities and identities (Lawrence & Dua, 2005). Smith (2005) describes Indigenous peoples as survivors of marginalization, modernity and imperialism. Nandy (1983) in describing colonization suggests that colonizers and those colonized share a culture of colonization. Translation of this viewpoint to the Canadian context would suggest that as a colonized nation, all members share what Nandy describes as a *coded* knowledge of colonization. And further, Smith (1999) suggests that:

Imperialism frames the Indigenous experience.…It is part of our story, our

version of modernity….Decolonization is a process which engages with

imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels….the two terms are interconnected

and what is generally agreed upon is that colonialism is but one expression of

imperialism (pp. 19-21).

Smith (1999) also postulates that imperialism involves the goals of economic

expansion, as well as the exploitation and subjugation of Indigenous peoples. The

example she provides is that of the Indigenous worldview of 'space' in its colonization by

the West as a spatial area separated from the relevance of time, and requiring that space

be controlled and tamed. She asserts that this colonial process of exploitation has

significantly 'disconnected' Aboriginal people from their view of land as integral to their

personal and collective histories. In addition to this negative epistemic impact, Ladson-

Billings and Tate (1995) argue that there is a link between historical property rights (the

ability to own and possess property) and privilege and power in America.

This linkage between property rights and power has had an indelible impact on

the amalgamation of Aboriginal territory as a matter of 'civil' rights, rather than 'human'

rights. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) extend this to suggest that those in possession of

these property rights equate the resulting power of this ownership with a privileged sense

of entitlement to better education. In Smith's (1999) view, the "…denial by the West of

humanity to Indigenous peoples, the denial of citizenship and human rights, the denial of

the right to self-determination demonstrate the enormous lack of respect which has

marked the relations of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples"(p. 120).

This lack of respect and humanity has had, and continues to have, a significant impact on the experiences of many Aboriginal students in the Canadian educational system. The research reveals that the context of Aboriginal students' educational experience continues to be influenced by an appalling lack of knowledge about the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, both within Aboriginal communities, as well as within mainstream society. An integral aspect of social justice is rooted in processes which may heal the Aboriginal psyche, and I would suggest that knowledge acquisition about Aboriginal peoples, their histories, cultures and contributions, could provide two-fold gains: first and foremost as a benefit for the Aboriginal community through the internalization of positive cultural identity, and secondly, as a defense against racism. The participants of this study provided compelling evidence that the impact of systemic oppression and marginalization continues to have a substantive negative impact on learning experiences and learning environment for Aboriginal students in present day classrooms in Ontario, and Canada in general. NishKwe, one of the participants agreed, "It is the 'First Story, the First Narrative, the First Peoples Account' that is missing from many types of schools.…this knowledge is vital to combating stereotypes and other lies."

Smith (1999) believes that the negation of Indigenous views of history are, "critical in asserting colonial ideology" (p. 29), and furthermore, that the system of education is directly implicated. Smith further postulates that systems of education are able to perpetuate a colonial ideology within this system because the knowledge schools transmit redefine the world, and most importantly, the social positioning of Aboriginal peoples within this world. The residential school system in Canada is an example of such a process. Most of the participants in this study agreed with Smith's characterization of

the residential school program in Canada as a vicious, systematic attempt to destroy the "language and memories of home" (p. 69) for many Aboriginal children. And, the findings of this study confirm a popularly held view that much of the systemic discrimination Aboriginal peoples experience today is the result of a national legacy of attempts by the Canadian government, under the auspices of the Church, to culturally assassinate its Aboriginal Community. Moreover, the racialized outcomes of these actions continue today as processes of oppression which marginalize the lived experiences of Aboriginal students by negating their cultures, their histories, their languages, and their contributions to Canadian society (Battiste, 1998; Redwing Saunders & Hill, 2007; Smith, 1999, 2005).

Most of the research participants expressed anger and frustration with the assimilationist and exclusionary practices they had experienced in the Canadian educational system. For Smith (1999), the major societal agency responsible for securing the dominance of colonial practice is education, practiced as a form of missionary genocide or public/secular education. Schools as transmitters of social and cultural values have the tendency of privileging mainstream society while marginalizing some of its citizenry who are considered as the 'Other.' Participants in this study concur with this viewpoint and suggest that the genocide of Aboriginal cultures continues to be perpetuated in contemporary society by the assimilationist attempts of the educational system to "wipe the Indian out of us" (NishKwe).

Particularly poignant were the powerful words shared by two participants who spoke of their experiences in losing their cultural heritage through Canadian adoption processes which not only denied their knowledge of Aboriginal kin (including siblings),

but also denigrated their Aboriginal cultural heritage – the assimilation or annihilation process at work on children. Duran and Duran (1995) observe in relation to Native Americans, that the destruction of the family as a cultural transmitter for many Aboriginal peoples has had demoralizing implications, "once the idea of family is eradicated from the thinking and lifeworld of an individual, cultural reproduction cannot occur" (p. 28). Furthermore, they assert that the devastating effects of European colonizers' attempts to "subjugate, exterminate, assimilate and oppress Native American peoples has had devastating physical and psychological effects" (p. 28).

Lawrence and Dua (2005) suggest that to redress the destruction of colonization perpetuated against the Aboriginal psyche and identity, there is a need for scholarship to decolonize antiracism. The resulting self-hatred experienced by some Native American peoples is manifested through catastrophic suicide and addiction (alcoholism) rates, as well as community violence. The participants' views align with Smith's (1999) assertion that acknowledging the past is part of a critical pedagogical standpoint to decolonization that recognizes the implicit role White communities played in the acceptance and support of this cultural genocide. Perhaps, as Smith suggests, through decolonization we can find our way to 'share the world' and to resist what she refers to as objectifying the Other.

Silver (2006) posits that colonization is not only part and parcel of Canadian history, but it is also an essential element of a national ideology, and therefore requires social policy which will actively decolonize all members of Canadian society. In addition to educational policy, these policy processes need to address the social exclusion many members of the Aboriginal community continue to experience in such areas as: the labour

market, housing, socio-economic status, as well as the legacy of discrimination which for many Aboriginal peoples has resulted in internalized oppression.

As some writers have noted (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 1999; Dei & Karumanchery, 1999; Nandy, 1983; Smith 1999), and the participants of this study agree, the recognition for the dignity of Indigenous peoples is an ethical stance mainstream society must adopt since this is crucial to a national decolonization process. Smith (1999) asserts that from an Indigenous perspective, this requires respect for the harmony of all peoples, and all things, to be in balance in the universe. Smith defines respect as a principle which is "reciprocal, shared and constantly evolving….expressed through all social conduct" (p. 120). Decolonization as a societal endeavour not only requires respect for humanity, it also requires that those who are oppressed take on what Freire (2007) asserts is a "great historic and humanistic task – to liberate themselves and their oppressors" (p. 44). He posits that the efforts by the oppressed, on behalf of the oppressor, will restore humanity for both.

Freire's assertion that the oppressed must take a leadership role in change processes has some application to equity in the academy, and concur with Smith's (2005) perspective concerning the importance of "retaining the connections between the academy of researchers, the diverse Indigenous communities, and the larger political struggle of decolonization, because the disconnection of that relationship reinforces the colonial approach to education as divisive and destructive" (p. 88). As Borealgirl, one of the participants put it, "the seeds of change are sown in our history and present system….We are all agents of change and need to do our bit to make it happen." Therefore to become agents of change will require that the members of the educational

community confront oppression, and then move beyond the rhetoric to effect meaningful change which supports social justice and equity in postsecondary institutions.

While the Canadian Council on Learning (2006) asserts that "Aboriginal Canadians continue to face significant challenges in pursuing postsecondary studies" (p. v), Stonechild (2006) offers some hope for transcending the legacy of colonization as he perceives a continuing shift in educational policy, moving the role of Aboriginal postsecondary education in Canada from an assimilationist stance, to a system of empowerment. However, the findings of this research suggest that vigilance is still required, because as Annie Oakley, one of the participants reported, based on her experience as a former member of the Ontario professoriate, "universities are institutions that create amnesia." Counteracting this 'amnesia' is an important aspect of decolonization for all Canadian society – this requires acknowledgment of the legacy of colonial educational policies. Moreover, members of both the Aboriginal community and mainstream society must learn to navigate together the complex terrain of what Stonechild (2006) refers to as the 'policy community' because as he suggests, the future of Aboriginal students and their communities hang in the balance. Although the current reality is that oppression persists both within the consciousness of Aboriginal students and Canadian society, there is hope for social justice within the political milieu of the educational system. Social justice defined by the creation of systemic reform in which Aboriginal epistemologies may be supported by what Stonechild (2006) refers to as genuine recognition of higher education rights for Aboriginal students.

In understanding how schools contribute to inequity, it is important to acknowledge the link between educational equity and social class, and how distributive

justice may foster equity in educational opportunity, and thereby become a significant predictor of what Corson (1993) refers to as life chances. Life chances are the choices or range of options that become available to the student as a result of educational attainment and the subsequent membership in a knowledge community (Roland, 2008). Unfortunately, as reported by many of the participants, while Aboriginal students are fully aware of the beneficial life chances educational opportunities may provide, because of Eurocentric pressures within the educational system, in many cases Aboriginal students who want to succeed face only one choice – to assimilate Westernized epistemology.

The findings of this study support the viewpoint that contesting hegemony will require the acquisition of knowledge about the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, to ensure, as indicated in the *Aboriginal Education Strategy* (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2007a) the integration of, "…information about Aboriginal culture, histories and perspectives throughout the Ontario curriculum to increase knowledge and awareness among all students" (p. 1). As well, I agree with bell hooks' (1984) claim concerning the importance of consciousness-raising in promoting socially just change, and that it is important for a nation to understand the intricacies and interconnections within the systems of oppression that has, and continues to exist. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (1999) *CCRF Task Force on Aboriginal Issues: Final Report,* concurs with this premise in their recognition of the "profound racism that Aboriginal peoples face" (p. 3) in Canada, and argue, that to honour and respect Aboriginal peoples will require strategies to generate public awareness and understanding.

The research findings indicate a recurrent theme – historically grounded distrust expressed by some of the participants concerning the education system, and the social justice premise of the inquiry. The literature suggests that this distrust may be rooted in the ongoing legitimation of colonial practices in the Canadian educational system – a system which research participants identified as continuing to marginalize Aboriginal students. Battiste (1998) asserts that this oppressive climate in education has resulted in a disconnection from cultural knowledge, voice, and historical experiences for members of cultural minority groups in Canada. Furthermore she asserts that this may lead individuals to "believe that their poverty and powerlessness are the result of their cultural and racial status and origins" (p. 21). Dyck (2004) in recounting her personal observations concerning the importance of trust within the educational setting states that trust is an integral aspect of relationships, and that hierarchies exist in these relationships for some Aboriginal peoples as a result of the "strangle hold" negative perceptions and "debasing stereotypes" have had on their sense of self (p. 41).

Utilizing a critical theory approach, this study sought to empower members of the Aboriginal community – to provide a voice within the research inquiry which could only be achieved through the development of trust amongst all participants. Therefore, given the social justice premise of the inquiry, it was essential that the researcher *unpack* this distrust from an Aboriginal epistemic perspective. In terms of educational policy reform, Nandy (1983) posits that distrust of social policies seeking to promote equity may be the result of the psychological dissonance created within the minds of those suffering the ongoing effects of colonization and its assimilationist stance as a "civilizing mission" (p. xi). In other words, the dissonance resides in reconciling the colonial practices that

presume to 'civilize' the perceived 'Other,' and which are facilitated under the guise of promoting a fair and just society.

Redwing Saunders & Hill (2007) state that, "for centuries Canadian First Nations education has been a substandard, abusive means of dealing with the Indian Problem" (p. 1015), and that even with the closure and censure of the residential school system in Canada, there remains a legacy of oppression which has resulted in the internalization of colonialism for some members of the Aboriginal community. As one of the research participants, Jeannette indicates, for some members of the Aboriginal community there is difficulty in overcoming this distrust because many individuals "can't unchange all those beliefs learned growing up!" Battiste (1998) stresses that for recovery to take place, members of the Aboriginal community must continue in their efforts to heal themselves as well as their communities. And, that although changes to the educational system have been made, Battiste contends that schools and the governmental bodies responsible for education in Canada have in fact failed to encourage the academic potential in all students. Therefore, it may be argued as the research participants suggest, that there is an undeniable need for capacity building for the Aboriginal community within the Canadian educational system.

Similar to the findings of this research which stressed the importance of capacity building for the Aboriginal community as being facilitated through processes of relationship building with mainstream society, Battiste (1998) emphasizes the need for the involvement of Indigenous peoples in enacting change at every stage and phase of the process. The study participants agreed with the view held by Silver (2006), who suggests that cultural knowledge can bring Aboriginal communities together because "the

promotion of Aboriginal cultural activities may be a way to begin to build community and to recreate a positive sense of identity," (p. 51). With regards to capacity building among Aboriginal scholars in the academy, it may be argued that it is incumbent upon the academy to closely examine what Holmes (2006) refers to as the 'socio-cultural' aspects or factors involving curriculum and language that may influence the institutional environment – both from a student as well as an employee (faculty/staff) perspective. Holmes suggests that this examination may involve reviewing the university-wide curriculum to ensure that "Aboriginal-centric" (p. 10) courses are not concentrated in isolated programs, but rather that the institution seek opportunities to "reflect the Aboriginal perspective in the wider curriculum" (p. 10).

Furthermore, Holmes (2006) suggests that self-identification by members of the Aboriginal community (students and/or faculty/staff), is a process which could create a realistic *picture* of participation rates, and identify where participation gaps exist. These efforts would address the compelling need for the academy to facilitate community building, as Dyck (2004) suggests, "community is the bringing together of people around common issues or beliefs whereby the environment is conducive to sharing with consideration of diversity and respect" (p. 78). Community building in the academy can foster capacity building for Aboriginal scholars by ensuring that there are equitable opportunities for active contribution and participation in the professoriate. In particular, this study sought to examine community building in terms of its relevance to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

Recruitment and Retention in the Academy

To inform policy design and development, this inquiry investigated from the situational perspective of the participants, the reasons why Aboriginal scholars stay or leave the Ontario professoriate. The next section will discuss the research findings relative to current employment equity policy at Ontario universities. However, given that an essential facet of policy design and implementation revolves around funding, the discussion begins with a brief overview of the educational funding issues facing the Aboriginal community – these issues provide a contextual understanding of the institutional setting in which employment equity policies are operationalized.

Stonechild (2006) indicates that funding issues for postsecondary education for Aboriginal students are very complex with the federal government insisting that funding for postsecondary education is the responsibility of the provinces, while the provinces contend that "funding arrangements, particularly when located on reserves" (p. 2), fall under the purview of the federal government. This along with other funding conundrums, and the sovereignty of Aboriginal postsecondary institutions, are all issues which afflict Aboriginal postsecondary education and subsequently the availability of Aboriginal scholars. And so, it is within this politicized funding and 'sovereignty' context that the Federal Employment Equity Program operates in Canadian universities.

The federal employment equity policy falls within the scope of Human Resources Skills Development Canada Labour Program, and seeks to redress the under-representation of the four designated groups (women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minority groups, and persons with disabilities) across the nation's workforce. The participants in this research indentified several barriers that limit the effectiveness of

employment equity programs in the academy, specifically as they relate to the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate. Additionally, during fall 2007 and spring 2008, Human Resources Skills Develop Canada (HRSDC) Racism-Free Workplace Strategy hosted a series of public sessions across Canada entitled, *Breaking the Barriers* as part of a national *Action Plan Against Racism.* The goal of the HRSDC Racism-Free Workplace Strategy is to promote and foster fair and inclusive workplaces in Canada that are free of barriers to employment and advancement. This strategy focuses on workplaces, such as universities, that are under the jurisdiction of the Federal Employment Act. The focus of these public sessions was to open a national discussion concerning employment barriers experienced specifically by Aboriginal peoples and members of Visible Minorities groups in the Canadian workforce. Information provided in the national summary report based on the *Breaking the Barriers* sessions (HRSDC, 2009), highlight the need for Canadian employers to become better educated about Aboriginal peoples, and the inimical role that stereotypes play against Aboriginal peoples in seeking employment. In the following section, the key elements of employment equity programming relevant to faculty recruitment and retention identified in the study findings, literature, and as they relate to the recommendations found in the national summary report of the HRSDC *Breaking the Barriers* sessions, are discussed.

Participants in this research inquiry identified the following as barriers to employment (recruitment and retention): a lack of knowledge and respect for the contributions of Aboriginal scholars, the isolation of Aboriginal scholars in the academy, tokenism, epistemic barriers to scholarship, credentialism, and the lack of authentic consultation with Aboriginal educators. Recruitment by universities involves innovative

outreach strategies to invite a wide-range of diverse applicants to apply for positions in the professoriate, followed by equitable selection (hiring) processes. These are the initial steps which comprise equitable recruitment to address under-representation in the professoriate, and to ultimately diversity the institutional workforce. As stated in the *Breaking the Barriers* national summary report, this is of particular significance in the case of Aboriginal peoples as they represent, "an unlimited wealth of talent, and are an untapped resource" in the Canadian workforce (HRSDC, 2009, p. 15).

Both employment equity outreach and equitable selection procedures are crucial aspects of employment equity strategies utilized by the academy to address under-representation in the professoriate. To effectively diversify the professoriate, and to create a representative workforce, it is essential for universities to systematically and thoughtfully initiate employment outreach strategies whereby the institutions actively invite applications from a diverse range of potential applicants. This however is easier said than done. Most universities include statements in their employment equity policy similar to that of Carleton University (2007) which states that, "The University undertakes to use search procedures that require an active search for qualified members of underrepresented groups" (p. 2). Based on my former role as an employment equity manager at an Ontario university, I can attest to the difficulty in performing effective employment equity outreach, and can affirm, as was indicated by the participants in this study, the absolute necessity for relationship-building activities to create a sense of trust with members, and organizations representing minority or under-represented groups.

During my tenure as an employment equity manager, the university's employment equity outreach program consisted of inviting members of the Aboriginal

community to visit the campus to meet with me personally. These visits were opportunities for the individual to familiarize themselves with the campus, and to gain a personal campus contact. Individuals were also invited to participate in campus events as participants, and/or as guest speakers. Additionally, an integral feature of this relationship-building activity involved my visiting members of the Aboriginal community at their offices, and taking an active role in community events which supported the Aboriginal community. This outreach process extended well beyond the typical placing of a job advertisement in a specific magazine or newspaper, it required what many of the participants in this inquiry urged, a personal commitment – an ethical stance to provide meaningful and genuine partnerships and relationships. A similar findings was also reflected in the *Breaking the Barriers* national summary recommendation that employers (such as universities), market job opportunities at "Aboriginal specific job fairs, community centres, as well as on the reserve" (HRSDC, 2009, p. 16).

As stated previously, the equity statement on job advertisements is another important factor in this outreach (invitational) strategy, as this statement provides applicants with an initial impression to gauge how 'welcoming' the institution is to members of designated groups. Interestingly, these equity statements range from the standard statement which focuses on the four groups designated as under-represented by the federal government, "….university is committed to employment equity, and encourages applications from all qualified women and men, including visible minorities, Aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities," to a broader and more inclusive statement which extends the definition of designated or under-represented groups to

include persons of any minority sexual orientation or identity group. However, it is important to note that at this time, members of minority sexual orientation or identity groups have not yet been identified by the federal government as under-represented in the workforce.

Outreach strategies attempt to expand the pool of potential applicants, however, once an application has been made, the selection process utilized by the institution is the next critically important step in the recruitment process – especially in terms of ensuring equity. In the study, research participants reported that barriers to the recruitment of Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate focussed primarily on what they perceived to be a significant lack of knowledge and respect for Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal scholarship in the academy. Relevant to this, although participants of the HRSDC *Breaking the Barriers* sessions (stakeholders and employers), expressed enthusiasm for diversification of their workforce, it was recommended that administrators and senior managers educate themselves concerning "the realities of the barriers that hinder and challenge Visible Minorities and Aboriginal Peoples when considering their candidacy for a position" (HRSDC, 2009, p. 7).

The hiring or selection procedure utilized in the academy often involves an internal 'oversight' process such as an Employment Equity Committee, to ensure that candidates are not denied employment opportunities for any reasons unrelated to their ability. Equitable selection of candidates is driven by the equity data the university prepares and disseminates to the campus community – this is often a critical aspect in determining the success and/or failure of an employment equity program at a university. While employment equity is not affirmative action, and there are no quotas because

hiring is based on merit, an area of considerable discussion surrounds the establishment

of employment equity hiring goals for specific faculty/departments/units. Equity hiring

goals are based on the comparison of the percentage of representation of members of the

designated groups in the various occupational levels (and within faculty

departments/units) against the labour force availability rates indicated in the Government

of Canada's *Employment Equity Data Report* (based on the most recent national census

data), and determined through a calculation indicating the probable number of vacancies

within the next 3-5 year period.

Also, in the selection process, most universities follow the practice that in the

event an equity hiring goal has been established (under-representation identified), and

two candidates demonstrate equal qualifications, if one of the candidates has self-

identified as a member of an under-represented group, then the position will be offered to

the candidate of the under-represented group. However, a significant challenge to

inclusive recruitment and selection practices in the academy can be the entrenchment of a

hierarchical managerial approach in the institutional leadership that establishes key

administrators with the power to select and promote candidates, at the expense of social

justice (Ryan, 2006).

Additionally, within the selection process there is an another issue that is

significant for the Aboriginal scholar as an applicant to the professoriate – as the findings

of this research indicate, this is the fact that a Westernized hegemonic perspective may

negate scholarship and the scholarly qualifications of an Aboriginal applicant which does

not 'fit' with the traditional epistemology of the academy surrounding 'what counts as

scholarship.' Smith (1999) asserts that although universities identify themselves as

institutional repositories of Western knowledge, that these institutions are also part of legacy of imperialism. She contends that ideologies of colonization pervade the disciplinary understanding within the institution from the perspective of "the colonized world.…in effect, determining what 'counts' as "knowledge, language, literature, curriculum and the concept of academic freedom" (p. 65). This is similar to Duran and Duran's (1995) view which states that "without a proper understanding of history, those who practice in the disciplines of applied social sciences operate in a vacuum, thereby merely perpetuating this ongoing neocolonialism" (p. 1). The *Breaking the Barriers* (HRSDC, 2009), national summary report, contains a recommendation that employers review their current recruitment practices to identify what may be considered credentialism (the inclusion of non-bona fide or non-essential experience in the job advertisement), and to include, where possible, qualifications that may be considered 'non-traditional' in the selection process.

The findings of this study suggest that employment equity programs in Ontario universities must consider creating alliances with local Aboriginal educators and Elders, and/or with the institutional Aboriginal Education Councils, to invite their membership on hiring committees to ensure that candidates who self-identify as Aboriginal scholars are able to interview and present their qualifications to a hiring committee that has sufficient cultural knowledge and expertise. As NishKwe, a study participant argued, factors that would support the inclusion of Aboriginal scholars and scholarship in the academic community include, "compassion, understanding, commitment to diversity, celebration of 'Aboriginalness' and acknowledgement of uniqueness through supportive policies and structures."

Investigating why Aboriginal scholars stay or leave the professoriate involves not only examining barriers to recruitment, but also barriers to retention within the academy. The participants in this study represented nine different universities across Ontario, and approximately nine of the 16 total participants, were currently employed as tenured/tenure track members of the Ontario professoriate. Study participants identified the following processes as positively influencing the retention of Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate: processes which support career development, support scholarship, and create equitable working conditions. The findings of this research suggest that the valuation and respect for Aboriginal epistemologies and scholarship are undeniably linked with retention issues for Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate. As NishKwe stated, the academy must acknowledge the need for Aboriginal scholars to grow professionally through the provision of incentives and opportunities for career advancement. Most of the participants suggested, and I agree, that building a 'critical mass' of Aboriginal faculty and administration is an important step in establishing a collegial academic environment which fosters respect.

The *Breaking the Barriers* (HRSDC, 2009), national summary report provided a recommendation that suggests that the retention of Aboriginal peoples in the workplace may be enhanced through the development of a network of role models and/or mentors. Specifically, for Aboriginal peoples, these role models/mentors in the workplace would act as a resource and supportive network to better "identify and utilize Aboriginal success stories and personal experiences to help correct ….employer and employee perceptions ….support begins with links that bridge the workforce with Aboriginal traditions" (HRSDC, 2009, p. 17). I would suggest that these supportive measures may counteract

the isolation and tokenism described by study participants and the literature, as rampant within the academy.

Factors identified by study participants as supporting the retention of Aboriginal scholars include: faculty orientation processes, the availability of career development through opportunities for upward mobility and tenure, and creating support for Aboriginal scholarship within the academy by examining working conditions to ensure that Indigenous Studies and Aboriginal scholarship are not ghettorized within faculty/departments/units of the professoriate. Smith (2005) states that decolonization strategies are political struggles which bring historical inequity to the forefront in the context of transformative change, and that these strategies may engender extreme opposition to processes which can affect institutional change. Therefore, if this change is to be operationalized, questions arise around how the education system can effectively address the hegemony of Eurocentric scholarship and research reported by participants as prevalent in the academy. In many cases, this hegemony is characterized as the resistance to acknowledging and valuing different ways of knowing. As Gahutneo, one of the research participants suggested, epistemology is 'unconscious' and automatic:

> [T]he only way to inform policy is to help them [dominant epistemology] understand how their epistemology conflicts with ours….policy makers must be conscious in a very deep meaningful way of their epistemic arrogance….what lies at the base is the values and beliefs they continually replicate subconsciously.

Therefore, the findings of the research study and literature suggest that to enact change, members of the academy have a collective responsibility to *consciously* acknowledge and

value diverse epistemic perspectives – to become agents of change to foster social justice and equity.

In addition to collective efforts by members of the academy to ensure a welcoming collegial environment for Aboriginal scholars and scholarship, senior management in the academy also has a vital role to play in their capacity as institutional leaders. However, as Ryan (2003) asserts, this leadership may present challenges given that many administrators often lack sufficient knowledge concerning the vast and ever increasing diversity of the population in education communities. And furthermore, Ryan (2006) states that the extent to which leadership embraces a social justice focus on inclusion is often dependent on the social relationships amongst the members of the institution with regard to prescribed personal roles, and institutional vision.

Additionally, as institutional leaders in the academy, senior management has a role to play in actively facilitating the development of strategic alliances within the university community to ensure the full participation and consultation of self-identified Aboriginal scholars on issues pertinent to Aboriginal scholarship. For instance, most Ontario universities indicate that they have an office dedicated to supporting Aboriginal Students and/or an Aboriginal Education Council. However, while these offices provide beneficial services, in some cases, as the findings of this research indicates, these offices and the faculty/staff working in them may be marginalized and isolated from the broader campus. As Annie Oakley states, "We have to be really aware of the potential of First Nations people being ghettoized into First Nations programs as academics."

Participants noted that it is important to actively celebrate Canada's Aboriginal peoples at an institutional level, and that this should include faculty orientation and/or

campus celebrations focusing on Aboriginal peoples as opportunities to not only share knowledge, but more importantly, as an institution to recognize and honour the Aboriginal Community. Anishinaabe-Kew asserts:

> Why can't we just say what we have to say as First Nations people? Often the institution is asking us to think quite the opposite from our ways of knowing, not speaking from our heart. We have brilliance in the Aboriginal worldviews, we are just thinking differently.

Recognition and honouring of different ways of knowing would send a powerful message regarding the institution's commitment to relationship-building through its employment equity program. However, to effectively develop and implement strategic employment equity policy initiatives to support the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal scholars and scholarship in the academy, it is important to consider the ideological perspectives which influence Canadian educational policy.

Ideological Approaches Shaping Canadian Educational Policy

The Canadian Policy Research Networks (2004), indicates that Aboriginal peoples in Canada face a dire predicament predicated upon by what they refer to as a national legacy of 'assumptions and ingrained relationships' that create barriers to societal recognition and socially just response to changing realities. This next section will examine relevant educational policy issues beginning with an historical perspective of the ideology shaping Canadian educational policy. Manzer (1994) suggests that public education in Canada was founded on the ideals associated with the shaping of a national identity and social order (political liberalism), along with the political ideology related to securing the economic growth and health of the nation (economic liberalism). Similarly,

Kirby (2007) asserts that an "economic-utilitarian policy approach" continues to strongly influence Canadian educational policy, quite possibly to the detriment of "traditional academic-humanist perspectives" (p. 5). In other words, the focus and role of Canadian educational policy is to operate as a strategic force to foster the economic health of the nation as it competes within the context of a globalized economy. This strategy is indicative of a continued legacy of educational policies in Canada which Manzer (1994) postulates have been influenced by conservative communitarianism – policies defined by educational standards which focus on the preparation of students to become productive members of society – productive in terms of supporting the economic well-being of the nation. The dominance of this economic-focused ideology permeates policy initiatives at the expense of humanistic, citizenship-based policy, treating education as Kirby (2007) suggests, as a market-driven consumer commodity.

It may be argued that an example of this political 'market-oriented' approach to policy reform in Ontario, focusing on the national ability as a 'global competitor,' may be found in some of the educational policies which center on a Canadian national identity as an 'immigrant nation.' These educational policies have resulted in important, and yet exclusive policies concentrated solely to support the experience of immigrant students in Ontario classrooms – to create an environment where immigrant students experience a sense of belonging in Ontario classrooms (for example see the following Ontario Ministry of Education policies: *Many Roots, Many Voices* (2005); and *English language learners, ESL and ELD programs and services: Policies and procedures for Ontario elementary and secondary schools Kindergarten to grade 12 (2007c)*. While these are extremely beneficial policy initiatives that support students, they do however raise

important questions to consider when reflecting on the condition and experience of

Aboriginal students in Ontario. Where are the social justice and equity initiatives to

support the inclusion of Aboriginal students and teachers in the Ontario classroom? How

is the Ontario curriculum supportive of Aboriginal students' lived experiences? How are

the histories of Aboriginal peoples in Canada portrayed? And most importantly, with

whom are these portrayals shared; and are these historical portrayals accurate? I would

suggest that the focus on the multicultural mosaic that is part of Canadian national

ideology has overlooked the Aboriginal peoples of Canada (Battiste, Bell & Findlay,

2002; Dei & Karumanchery, 1999; Howlett, 1994; Lawrence & Dua, 2005).

Dua, Razack, and Warner (2005) suggest that scholarship examining race and

racism in the Canadian context must be cognizant of the long history of colonization of

Aboriginal peoples along with what they refer to as 'white settlement policies'.

Furthermore, they assert that Canada is mythologized as a racism-free nation supported

by multiculturalism policies which purportedly ensure the inclusion of Newcomers. They

counter that these myths erase the history and ongoing political structures which continue

to oppress and marginalize Aboriginal peoples and persons of colour in Canadian society.

Lawrence and Dua (2005) also assert that the ongoing struggles to address colonization

and decolonization must be at the core of understanding anti-racism policies. They

contend that Aboriginal issues are often placed within a liberal pluralist context or

framework where they become marginalized. Furthermore, scholarship which ignores

and inaccurately represents the presence of Aboriginal peoples in Canadian history

essentially compromises our understanding and view of Canada. Therefore, while

Canadian society may be focusing its efforts on supporting Newcomers to Canada, it has

all but forgotten the Original People of Canada and their fundamental right to education –
Constitutional rights obtained through treaties in return for the sharing of lands (Battiste,
2002; Cherubini & Hodson, 2008; Stonechild, 2006).

The findings of this inquiry along with the literature underscore the importance of
education to the well-being of Aboriginal peoples in Canada – the benefits participation
in education may accrue for members of this community in terms of personal and socio-
economic well-being. As Holmes (2006) states, "it is generally recognized that more and
more of the new jobs in Canada will require a postsecondary education and that such an
education generally pays off" (p. 5). Therefore, as an institutional leader, the academy
has a responsibility to support Aboriginal scholars and scholarship through the provision
of equity not only to increase Aboriginal student participation in postsecondary
education, but also through equitable employment equity recruitment and retention
practices, to create what research participants identified as a "critical mass" or presence
of Aboriginal scholars within academe. Strategic policy initiatives are needed to create an
environment responsive to the needs of Aboriginal scholars in the professoriate.
Therefore, a transformative policy process reflecting the integrative and evolutionary
stages of the circle archetype is hereby proposed as the grounded theory flowing from the
research data

Policy Transformation Process

Proposed Policy Transformation Circle

To initiate critical social change, I propose the adoption of a policy transformation
process that is consonant with the 'circle' organizational framework. The Coalition for
the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies (2007), suggests that the circle acknowledges

that while everything in creation is related, all things must also follow their own unique instructions. Therefore, the transformative policy process proposed involves integrative stages of growth and maturation, in an evolving developmental process.

In this policy process, the first stage, the 'Beginning' is a place where knowledge is the means by which Aboriginal peoples and mainstream society may forge relationships through decolonization and acknowledgement of colonial oppression; the second stage, 'Consultation with Expert Knowledge' indicates the space of authentic collaboration and consultation with expertise within the Aboriginal community, to develop deep understanding and identification of the critical issues in the field of educational policy relevant to Aboriginal peoples and Indigenous Knowledge; the third stage, 'Taking Action' refers to policy development as within the scope and authority of members of the Aboriginal Communities to define policy principles and guidelines, and to not only receive funding, but to also have decision-making capacity concerning the allocation of funding; and the fourth stage, 'Reflection' is where policy implementation, and the review and assessment of policy goals and achievements is conducted (see Figure 2). The fourth stage represents the essential aspect of renewal in the policy process, forging ahead in new directions and beginning the process of policy development once again. This 'reflection' stage as Calliou (1995) suggests, is the position of wisdom where knowledge converges. It is not the 'end' of the process as it may appear, but rather as the circle suggests, is yet another beginning.

***Figure 2.* Proposed Policy Transformation Circle**

‘**Reflection'**
Policy Implementation
- Measuring success
- Ongoing/long-term review through consultation process with Aboriginal Community

'Taking Action'
Policy Development
Aboriginal stakeholders develop & implement policy:
- Define policy principles
- Create policy guidelines
- Trial applications of policy
- Confirm funding support and decision-making authority concerning allocation of funds

'POLICY CIRCLE' TRANSFORMING RECRUITMENT & RETENTION IN THE ACADEMY

'Beginning'
Relationship building through education (knowledge):
- provide access to broad spectrum of knowledge in Ontario curricula concerning Aboriginal peoples' history, cultures and contributions to Canada
- include Aboriginal worldviews in 'Character Education' curricula

'Consultation with Expert Knowledge'
Challenging Dialogues:
Aboriginal Educators: Elders, Community Organizations
- Consultation required – focus on development rather than advising
- Identify issues/barriers
- identify policy goals

Support for a transformative and evolutionary policy process is found in the work

of policy theorists such as Ball (1993), Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992), and Corson (1990).

Figure 3 illustrates the integration of the theoretical tenets of these policy theories with

the proposed policy transformation circle.

Figure 3. **Transformative Policy Process Proposed – Integrated with Corson's (1990) 'Social Epistemology' Framework, and Bowe, Ball & Gold's (1992) 'Context of Policy-Making'**
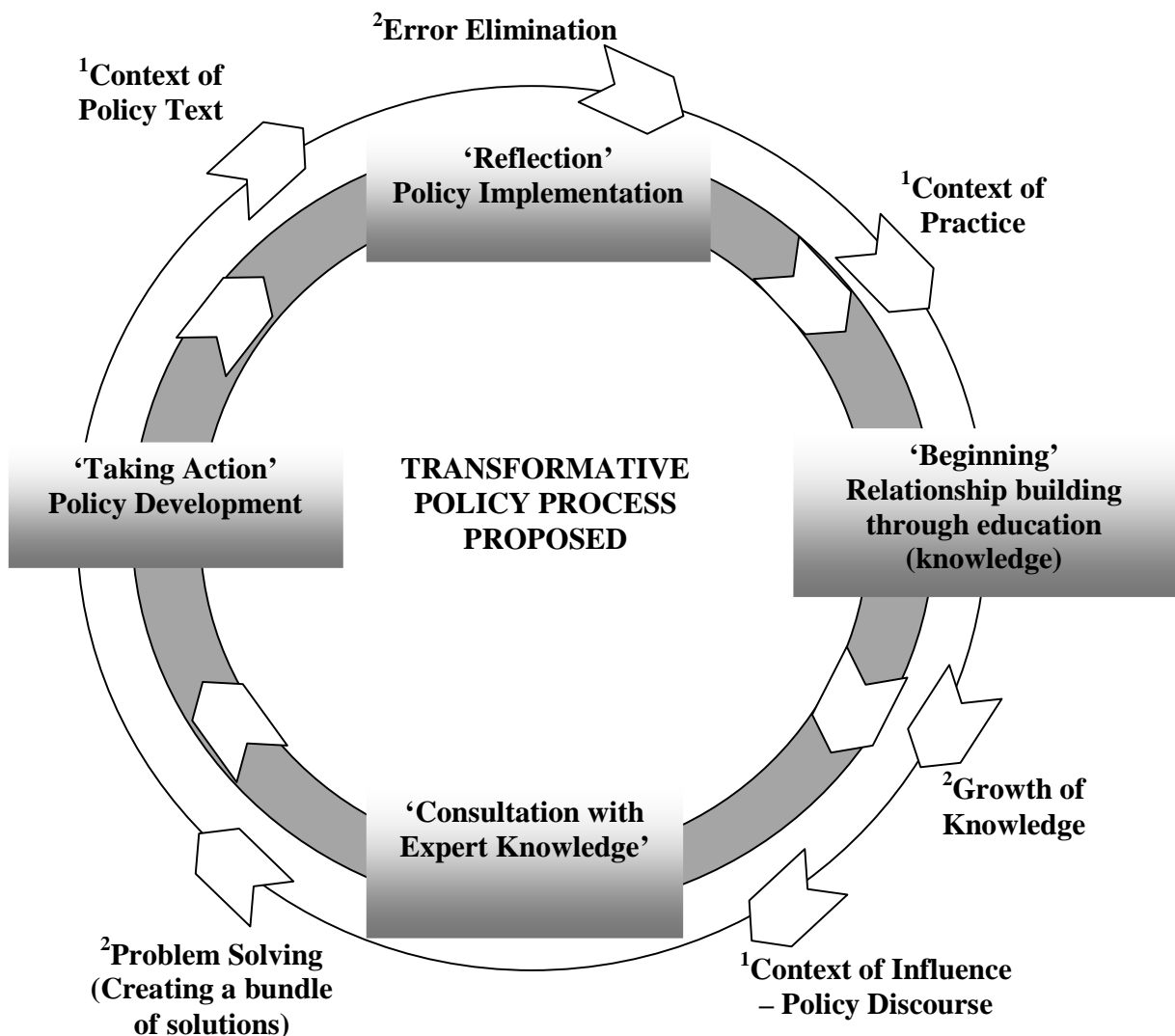
[1] Bowe, Ball & Gold (1992)

[2] Corson (1990)

The research findings as well as the literature indicate that what is missing in current employment equity policy developed and implemented in a Westernized institutional context such as the academy, is as Corson (1990) suggests, "…[the] recognition that all aspects of the universe (including knowledge about those aspects) can only be properly understood if we accept that they are in a constant state of evolutionary change…" (p. 264). Furthermore, as stated previously, Corson asserts that educational policy making should be comprised of problem solving strategies to create a 'bundle of solutions' which are then corroborated through processes of error elimination. In this way, policy evolves to enact change through incremental steps towards improvement.

Similarly, in describing policy-making Ball (1993) states that policies are complex encoded representations that are developed in a constant state of flux – the meaning of policy is ever-changing and ascribed based on the plurality of readers. He posits that the political milieu influences and shifts the interpretation and purpose of policy. Policies are subject to interpretation and representation as defined by the actors involved in a context fraught with inequality and power differentials – policy enters, rather than changes these power relations. He further indicates that policies do not instruct, rather they create circumstances and the availability of a range of options. Ball shares his view concerning the influence of discourse on policy-making in the following statement:

> We are the subjectivities, the voices, the knowledge, the power relations that a discourse constructs and allows. We do not 'know' what we say, we 'are' what we say and do. In these terms we are spoken by policies, we take up the positions constructed for us within policies (p. 12).

Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) posit that there are three integrative and inter-connected contexts of policy-making, including: 1) the context of influence, 2) the context of policy text production, and 3), the context of practice. The 'context of influence' is where they indicate that policy is initiated. They posit that there is a symbiotic relationship between the 'context of influence' and that of 'policy text production' based on the articulation of policy in terms of the public good. The context of 'policy text production' they suggest involves the textual representation of policy in the form of documents and legal text. The third policy-making context identified, the 'context of practice' is where these policy texts are interpreted and reformulated.

Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) caution that policy writers do not have control over the 'context of practice,' and that policy interpretation is based on the diverse interests, histories, and experiences of the readers. The integrative and evolutionary aspects of policy-making presented by Corson (1990), Ball (1993), and Bowe, Ball and Gold (1992) were critically important to understanding the transformative nature of the policy circle proposed, and the associated need for ongoing policy review and assessment. The next section provides a description of each of the four stages of the policy transformation circle proposed.

The Four Stages

The first stage – the beginning.

In some Aboriginal conceptualizations of the world, the eastern direction marks the 'Beginning' of the circle or the journey, and based on the findings of this study I propose that the beginning is where relationship building based on knowledge, begins the transformative policy process. The participants in this study provided a situational

response to the discussion as either current or former members of the Ontario professoriate, and as such, participants first shared their perceptions about the context of educational experience for Aboriginal students. Participants suggested that to effect positive social change for members of Aboriginal communities, rather than just "moving the deck chairs" (supporting the status quo), what is required is authentic partnership and relationship between Aboriginal communities and mainstream society. I believe that these findings are indicative of the significance of relationship building to policy reform, because as suggested by Freire (2007) in his discussion of the anatomy of oppressive relationships, "people do not exist apart from each other, they exist in constant interaction" (p. 50). And, as Egbo (2005), in discussing a critical realist paradigm relating to research asserts, "human interactions occur in open systems, which means that the social world is emergent as human beings continuously adapt to their environment" (p. 281).

Therefore, I suggest that the 'Beginning' of the transformational policy process addresses an essential need for community building defined as authentic and genuine collaborative relationships between members of the Aboriginal community and mainstream society, developed on a foundation of knowledge and respect. Ryan (2006) opines that it is necessary to educate the entire educational community to effectively develop this foundation of knowledge and respect. Furthermore, Ryan posits that inclusive leadership, in this case in the academy, would require the acquisition of not only new knowledge, but also the development of meaningful understanding and attitudes about inclusion and exclusion in education. These strategies would provide an opportunity for innovation within the academy to create inclusive spaces which Battiste

(2002) suggests may facilitate the blending of Indigenous and Euro-Canadian epistemology and pedagogy in a respectful manner.

Given that the findings of this inquiry indicate that the production and validity of knowledge based on respect for different ways of knowing is contested by the dominance of Eurocentricism within the Canadian educational system, there is a crucial need for policy initiatives to support and safeguard Indigenous knowledge. An example of such a policy is the Joint Management Committee, Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (2001) report, *Respectful Treatment of Indigenous Knowledge* which provides a list of policy strategies to protect and honour the knowledge of Indigenous people in ways that ensure that: 1) Indigenous peoples are recognized as the primary guardians and interpreters of their cultures and the knowledge generated; 2) Indigenous peoples are the collective legal owners of said knowledge; and, 3) the right to use and learn Indigenous knowledge is done according to Indigenous laws, procedures and customs. These principled strategies to respect Indigenous knowledge align with the findings that were noted earlier, as well as in the literature, which suggest that the creation and dissemination of a national curriculum inclusive of Aboriginal ways of knowing may effectively support student success (Battiste, Bell & Findlay, 2002).

The Ontario Ministry of Education, Aboriginal Education Office (2007d) policy document, *The Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework,* acknowledges that there is a critical need for strategic policy initiatives in Ontario to:

Improve the academic achievement of an estimated 50,322 Aboriginal students who attend provincially funded elementary and secondary schools….to clarify the roles and relationships of ministry, school boards, and schools in their efforts to

help First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students achieve their educational goals and

close the gap in academic achievement with their non-Aboriginal counterparts

(pp. 5-6).

As Dei & Karumanchery (1999) argue, and as indicated in the Ministry policy principles,

community support which includes parental involvement in the educational experience of

their children is essential. However, I would submit that this type of community support,

and what the Ministry refers to as "cooperation and shared responsibility" (Ontario

Ministry of Education, 2007d, p. 8) will only develop through dedicated and sincere

efforts to nurture relationships with members of the Aboriginal community at a 'grass-

roots' level.

Additionally, the Ministry document articulates the Government of Ontario's

responsibility to ensure respect for diversity and equity in academic environments. The

attainment of this goal may only be possible, as purported by Dei & Karumanchery

(1999), and as this research also shows, through strategic processes to increase the

knowledge of Aboriginal peoples held by members of the Ontario teaching profession.

As SAM, one of the research participants said about this, there is a need to promote social

justice where all students, not only Aboriginal students, have "heightened success" by

educating the educators, through the development of teacher education programs and

policies which foster an understanding of "historical and contemporary students".

The findings of this study clearly indicate that while the *Ontario First Nation,

Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework* policy statement (Ontario Ministry of

Education, 2007d) seeks to address the highly beneficial and lofty goals of increasing the

capacity of the Ontario education system to respond to the cultural and learning needs of

Aboriginal students through programming, services and curricular development, there remains much to be done in terms of defining what the Ministry proposes as "quality education" (p. 8) as it relates to the design and delivery of culturally and linguistically relevant curricula in Ontario classrooms for Aboriginal students. Toulouse (2007) advocates curricular design and pedagogy based on the "seven good life teachings of the Ojibwe people" (p. 1) with which to engage Aboriginal student success and foster positive self-identity (esteem). She contends that there is a strong link between the self-esteem of Aboriginal students and levels of educational attainment. She suggests the following as 'key questions' to use as a starting point for examining this linkage:

- "What is currently working to support Aboriginal students in our educational system – and why is "meaningful change" important?;

- How can the needs of Aboriginal students be met in the daily reality of the classroom?; and

- What does the educational system need to know about Aboriginal student success and experience in the classroom?" (p. 2)

These are critical questions that must be investigated through authentic collaboration and consultation with Aboriginal educators and Elders. The next stage of the integrative policy process addresses this need for the genuine involvement by members of the Aboriginal community, specifically educators and Elders, in the challenging dialogues around educational policy reform.

The second stage – consultation with expert knowledge.

As stated in the previous section, the circle connotes an ongoing evolutionary process, with each stage representing an incremental developmental or maturational level.

The second stage of the proposed policy transformation circle is represented as the phase of 'consultation with expert knowledge.' Agbo (2007) in discussing collaborative models of school and First Nations community relations asserts that, "the school must empower the community through genuine discussions that foster collaboration and respect for multiple perspectives" (p. 1). The findings of this study suggest that through genuine consultation, the relationship-building begun in the first stage of the policy process built upon a foundation of knowledge, may develop in terms of respect and honouring the Aboriginal Community. Participants expressed their views stating emphatically that genuine collaboration and consultation are essential for policy reform to support social justice and equity in the academy. The Joint Management Committee (JMC) (2001) presents an example of such a consultative process. The JMC emphasizes core elements of their policy statement as the defining principles which protect cultural integrity and heritage in research conducted with their agency – the JMC states that Aboriginal peoples have the right: a) to determine "the conditions under which Indigenous Knowledge may be gathered from their communities, including communities of interest" (p. 3); and, b) to be equal partners in the research including the approval of "objectives, methods, interpretation and publication of research" (p. 3).

Governmental attempts at consultation with the Aboriginal community may be found in the Ontario Ministry of Education and Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities policies investigating the educational achievement of Aboriginal students. An example of such an education policy is the Ontario Ministry of Education (2007b) policy document, *Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students – Developing Policies for Voluntary, Confidential Aboriginal Student Self-Identification:*

Successful Practices for Ontario School Boards, which enumerates three principles used in pilot projects in selected school boards, and which have now resulted in a proposed process for the development of an Ontario-wide voluntary Aboriginal student self-identification policy. These principles are: 1) Foundations – the recognition of Aboriginal peoples; 2) Consultation – active support of the Aboriginal Community; and, 3) Implementation – how the data collected will be used. The rationale stated for collecting this self-identification data is to provide evidence (data) with which to track Aboriginal student achievement, and where gaps are identified, develop relevant programs in an effort to improve their academic achievement.

While this policy initiative is laudable, it is not without problems. For example, Cherubini & Hodson (2008) have identified three areas of the policy which are problematic. First, they suggest that the use of standardized tests results in a culturally biased assessment of Aboriginal student achievement. Secondly, they identify the serious lack of culturally specific teacher training programs focusing on Indigenous knowledge. And thirdly, they suggest that the process of policy design and development is also lacking in the area of "meaningful engagement of Aboriginal communities" (p. 10). Furthermore, they charge that this process of self-identification and subsequent publication and dissemination of "the results of Aboriginal students' achievement on standardized assessments that are exclusively emblematic of colonial measures of academic success" (p. 17), implies what they refer to as the continued "colonial project in Ontario classrooms" (p. 20).

Cherubini & Hodson (2008) assert that these, "external assessments based largely on a standardized colonially-influenced curriculum would seem to merely perpetuate the

bias that typically favours students from the dominant culture" (p. 12). Furthermore, they continue, "…province-wide external assessments are invalid interventions in terms of charting Aboriginal student achievement and connote a Eurocentric cultural relativism that fails to account for the epistemological, cultural, and spiritual schemata of Aboriginal learners" (p. 13). What is missing, and what research participants revealed in this study, is that social justice and inclusion for Aboriginal students require authentic consultation with Aboriginal educators. In effect, to move beyond the rhetoric, this consultation must empower Aboriginal educators and Elders with the authority to identify issues, barriers in the current educational system (curricular and pedagogical) for Aboriginal students, and then to subsequently define the goals of educational policy.

An appropriate ideological stance for Canadian educational policy to effectively embrace the multidimensional approach required for a system of education in a pluralistic society may be ethical liberalism. Manzer (1994) defines ethical liberalism as focusing on the development of the individual (physical, intellectual and emotional), and providing equal opportunity for education of equal value within the context of a pluralistic society. And, distributive justice in terms of ethical liberalism is defined as relevant to the access students have to equal opportunity based on educational need – students get what they 'need.' However, this definition of 'equity' as everyone receiving what he or she needs was challenged by a few participants as contrary to some Aboriginal worldviews which define 'equity' from a relational standpoint. Ermine (1995) emphasizes this viewpoint in his description of the Aboriginal process of self-actualization:

> [T]he being in relation to the cosmos possessed intriguing and mysterious
>
> qualities that provided insights into existence…In their quest to find meaning in

the outer space, Aboriginal people turned to the inner space. This inner space is that universe of being within each person that is synonymous with the soul, the spirit, the self, or the being….Their fundamental insight was that all existence was connected and that the whole enmeshed the being in its inclusiveness. In the Aboriginal mind, therefore, immanence is present that gives meaning to existence and forms the starting point for Aboriginal epistemology. It is a mysterious force that connects the totality of existence – the forms, energies, or concepts that constitute the outer and inner worlds" (p. 103).

Ermine's statement, as it relates to the definition of equity and social justice in the Canadian education system, is reflected in the challenges presented by participants throughout this inquiry for the researcher to maintain an ethical stance which embraces Aboriginal ways of knowing, moving beyond a Westernized conceptualization of the individual. Bryan Loucks (Lyght), a research participant, provided the following in discussing what Aboriginal self-actualization means to him:

> Maslow's hierarchy of needs [the] goal [equals] self-actualized human being – diminishes the importance of social relations, missing major emphasis of relationality as a goal and expression of actualization…. When I talk about the nature of a human being within a cultural context, it raises what does it mean to be human? Moving to that kind of level (Indigenized) has a different emphasis than westernized: relational; centrality of spirit; and centrality of acceptance rather than opposition - we all have our own path and how we choose to express that recognizes equity – equity as defined within the worldview from which you come….for Indigenous scholars and those engaged in Indigenous scholarship –

someone taking seriously Indigenous scholarship is a way of life in terms of commitment to social relationships within Indigenous community and practice/theory of Indigenous Knowledge….one's relationship with this knowledge – that you aren't just responsible to the discipline as organized in western academia, but moving deeper into the relationship with Indigenous knowledge and social relations – to be engaged in social relations and Indigenous knowledge…How do we as scholars and as allies from a strategic or tactical standpoint create spaces where Indigenous knowledge can find expression – [we are] tools of the Knowledge rather than placing ourselves at the centre – we are involved in the discourse.

I would suggest that in light of this relational definition of 'equity,' and to support and sustain a respectful relationship between members of the Aboriginal community and the educational institutions in Ontario (and nation-wide), there is as Ermine (1995) asserts, a responsibility for the Aboriginal community to uphold a worldview built on the premise of "recognizing and affirming wholeness," and furthermore to "disseminate the benefits of this to all humanity" (p.110). Revisiting the Freirian (2007) concept of the 'oppressed' being responsible for the liberation of both themselves as well as the 'oppressor' it is necessary for members of both the Aboriginal communities and mainstream society, to collaborate as agents of change, to bring about socially just and equitable policy in education. An important caveat in the process of developing and implementing socially just policy is that collaboration must be undertaken differently, not as an ideological stance imposed by mainstream society, but rather as the genuine

collaboration with Aboriginal stakeholders (educators and Elders) to create and implement policy change.

Therefore, this second stage in the policy transformation circle encompasses an authentic consultation process – genuine consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders, specifically Aboriginal educators, Elders and community members. What is required is a precise mandate for policy transformation to create bona fide social change, as Gahutneo challenges, "more than just moving the deck chairs." The next stage of the proposed policy process involves taking action, implementing social policy designed by Aboriginal stakeholders.

The third stage – policy development: Taking action.

The findings of this research underscore the importance of collaborative consultation with regard to the design and implementation of equitable recruitment and retention policies in the academy. As the Honourable Donald Oliver (2008), a Senator from Nova Scotia and current member of the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights states, "If we want to create inclusive communities in universities, we need to know about our own history and not to believe the myth that Canada has a tradition of tolerance" (p. 2). Social responsibility requires that the academy, as an institution of higher learning, take an active role in promoting, creating, and protecting social justice in education. The findings emphasize the fact that to be socially just, policy reform needs to address "why the institution is failing its students" when investigating the issue of under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

The first step in acknowledging this 'failure of the system' is the recognition by mainstream Canadian society that there is an ongoing injustice perpetuated through

educational policy which seeks to under-fund, limit, and decontextualize the experience

of Aboriginal students and Aboriginal scholarship. Furthermore, there also has to be

recognition of the entrenchment of hegemonic processes which perpetuate this injustice,

and effectively nullify respect and honour for Aboriginal epistemologies in Ontarian and

Canadian classrooms. Therefore, the third stage of the policy transformation circle, as

part of an evolving process of policy development, is the action stage – moving the policy

process into the realm of enacting actual change.

However, in enacting change through policy, the challenge is to examine what

Ellison (1999) refers to as the "universalist plea for greater social justice and equality"

juxtaposed with the recognition that universalism may in fact be "socially exclusive" (p.

59). I submit that Strike (1999) offers a definition of moral pluralism which captures the

essence of the policy transformation process articulated by the research participants,

expressed as their belief in the importance of the leadership of Aboriginal stakeholders in

any policy decisions affecting the future of their communities. Strike suggests that

"moral pluralism is part of the human condition, and that we cannot achieve every good

fully in every situation; there is no *grand theory* in which all moral goods are

synthesized, weighted and ordered; moral goods cannot be reduced and often conflict" (p.

21). And further, as Marston (2002) recommends, social policy research must seek to

sufficiently understand the "cultural injustices that play a part in maintaining and

obscuring continuing inequalities" (p. 313). Therefore, the moral complexity surrounding

educational policy reform to benefit Canada's Aboriginal community must be

acknowledged, and subsequently, any attempt to develop transformative policies must

also address the competing epistemological conflicts and challenges that will arise given the cultural and linguistic diversity of Aboriginal communities in Canada.

Consonant with this third stage of policy transformation, is the related issue that emerged from the study indicating that Aboriginal faculty, staff and students must be active participants in programming and initiatives developed and implemented on university campuses to support and respect Aboriginal scholarship. As one participant noted, "many professors in Ontario simply do not see Aboriginal peoples as relevant to their disciplines." This oppressive situation may impede the professional growth and development of faculty who teach in Indigenous Studies programs in the form of limited resources and the lack of senior level courses being offered (or developed). If this situation continues, Indigenous and Native Studies programs may become job ghettos within the professoriate due to their undervaluation by the academic community. One participant noted that there are no senior level courses in his area which results in two significant negative effects: first students (Aboriginal as well as nonAboriginal), are not able to pursue advanced learning about the Original Peoples of Canada; and secondly, this limits his career development as he stated, "I have been told, on a couple of occasions to wait for about 10 years before being permitted to teach a graduate course." The subsequent effect may have ramifications for the Aboriginal faculty member in terms of upward mobility and tenure opportunities. These strategic initiatives created to promote inclusionary 'spaces' for Aboriginal scholarship in the academy highlight the importance of ongoing reflection and assessment to assess meaningful progress.

The fourth stage – reflection: Policy implementation.

Holmes (2006) indicates that even though many postsecondary institutions across Canada have created Native Studies programs, significant barriers remain with regard to efforts to "Indigenize the academy" (Stonechild, 2006, p. 67). These barriers are the result of the continued rejection, suppression and marginalization of Aboriginal achievements, knowledge, histories and worldviews. Unquestionably, measures to address these barriers must include recognition for Aboriginal values and epistemologies in teaching and research activities within the academy. For example, the Ontario College of Art and Design in its response to Ministry of Training College and Universities' (2007) requirements to increase participation of under-represented groups through access and quality initiatives, prepared recommendations to increase the involvement of members of the Aboriginal community in such initiatives in its institution as: recruiting Aboriginal coordinators to implement curriculum development and community engagement, and establishing an Aboriginal Education Council and Elder Program. These recommendations are also reflected in the findings of this study. Therefore, it is suggested, that proposed changes to support and promote socially just equity policy and practice in the academy must be governed by principles or tenets which respect and honour Aboriginal epistemologies.

Finally, relative to the policy transformation circle proposed here, the next section presents principles which were identified as guidelines to inform employment equity recruitment and retention policy and practice in the academy. The development of these principles was directly informed by the words of the study participants, supported by the literature, and reflect the tenets of respect, honour, truth and wisdom to support

community building within the university, the expected outcome being an increase in human capacity for Aboriginal scholars.

The first principle, respect, acknowledges the barriers created by historical and continued systems of oppression within educational systems in Ontario (and Canada), and the impact of this on levels of postsecondary education attainment by Aboriginal students. The assumption here is that the University will undertake special measures to ensure that:

1. As a core element of the institutional identity, Aboriginal knowledge including knowledge of their diverse cultures, languages, histories and contributions to Canada will be shared with all members of the campus community;

2. Senior management of the institution publicly recognizes the fact that Aboriginal peoples are the guardians and protectors of their knowledge;

3. Courses and interdisciplinary programs that focus on Aboriginal knowledge are developed at both the undergraduate and graduate levels; and,

4. Campus and/or external representatives from the Aboriginal Community (including Aboriginal educators and Elders), are directly involved in all aspects of the above-noted course/program development and delivery.

The second principle, honour, will guide university equity practices by recognizing hegemonic barriers as pervasive conditions which restrict access and afflict the growth, development, and dissemination of Aboriginal epistemology and scholarship.

Therefore, to protect Aboriginal scholarship and the integrity of Indigenous knowledge, the University will actively sponsor and support Aboriginal scholarship by:

1. Recognizing its institutional duty to actively collaborate and consult with Aboriginal scholars to create inclusive spaces in the academy in order to address epistemic barriers to scholarship and research;

2. Actively seeking opportunities for genuine consultation and collaboration with representatives from the Aboriginal community – these representatives should have decision making authority to develop and implement programming/policy;

3. Assisting in the creation through funding and course release, of a Pan-Indigenous organization – a provincial alliance comprised of Aboriginal members of the Ontario professoriate, as well as community members including Elders and Aboriginal educators; and

4. Creating strategic research alliances with the Aboriginal community/organizations to conduct research collaboratively to foster cross-cultural scholarship.

The third principle, truth, will guide university equity practices by ensuring that Aboriginal stakeholders (campus and community) define policy principles and guidelines to address barriers to recruitment and retention experienced by Aboriginal scholars. As such, this principle will guide the university in actualizing a 'welcoming' environment by:

1. Ensuring that employment equity policies and practices are reviewed for bias, adverse impact, legality, and consistency;

2. Including Aboriginal scholars (or representatives from the Aboriginal community – Elders, Aboriginal educators) on hiring committees; specifically on hiring committees which require expertise in evaluating Aboriginal scholarship;

3. Disseminating information about Aboriginal peoples, Aboriginal programs and research being conducted, in all faculty/staff orientation sessions;

4. Considering the development of a subgroup of the institutional research ethics board to evaluate and process research applications involving Aboriginal knowledge;

5. Ensuring the representation of Aboriginal scholars on promotion, tenure and renewal committees, both at faculty/departmental levels, as well as the institutional level; and

6. Working with the existing institutional framework to develop a process whereby Aboriginal scholarship including research and research funding are publicly recognized and celebrated.

The final principle, wisdom, is reflective of the need for the university to actively consult and review policy in a continual process of change. This will require a review process which examines the effectiveness of employment equity policies and practices, and which provides recommendations for remediation as required. This principle will guide the university to continue to actively collaborate and consult with members of the Aboriginal community:

1. Ensuring the development and implementation of strategic employment equity outreach with the Aboriginal Community; relationship-building based on trust and respect;

2. Ensuring that the institutional employment equity committee prepares and tracks equity hiring goals for Aboriginal peoples in a confidential and respectful manner;

3. Ensuring that there are representatives from the Aboriginal community (campus and/or external) invited to join institutional committees/groups whose focus is the eradication of racism and discrimination; and

4. Making sure that within the institution there is support for the creation (and sustainability) of a Pan-Indigenous organization to promote Aboriginal scholarship, and to assist in building a 'critical mass' of Aboriginal scholars and administrators in Ontario universities.

The views of the participants in this study suggest that employment equity policy must infuse an Aboriginal presence in the definition of principles that are designed to guide faculty recruitment and retention in the Ontario professoriate. Each stage along the policy transformation circle should embrace the last, and the over-arching theme of this policy process should be the dissemination of knowledge about Aboriginal peoples to all members of the academy as a core aspect of relationship building. However, while knowledge is a critical foundation upon which to build these relationships, it is essential that Aboriginal peoples, faculty, staff and students, are recognized as the *voice* of change. To alleviate the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate requires universities to not only acknowledge Aboriginal leadership, but to also support this leadership in order to combat the resistance and the potential 'backlash' against Aboriginal scholars and scholarship which is likely to occur. The findings of this study suggest that the use of a transformative policy process may in fact achieve this support for Aboriginal scholars and address potential backlash to equity programs. To achieve

these goals, a knowledge-base will be required as the foundation for authentic

consultation with members of the Aboriginal community in which stakeholders from this

community design, implement and finally assess equity policy in the academy.

Implications for Future Research

Three core issues were identified during this inquiry as having implications for

future research with members of the Aboriginal community: 1) ethical considerations for

research conducted collaboratively with members of the Aboriginal community; 2)

utilization of online methodologies in conducting research; and 3) efforts by the academy

to provide the support needed to increase capacity building for Aboriginal scholars and

scholarship within the academy.

I would suggest that a significant aspect of defining or prescribing ethical conduct

for research with Aboriginal participants involves the researcher's responsibility to

protect the well-being of all participants. As Rose (2001) suggests, working from a stance

of ethical responsibility is necessary to ensure that in the translation of research findings,

the researcher has in effect fostered collaboration between the institution and the

community. Especially in terms of researcher outsider status, this presents ethical

challenges which require cultural sensitivity and respect in the interpretation and

translation of data.

Smith (2005) eloquently describes the contested ground or tensions if you will,

that qualitative research must navigate as the spaces " …between methodologies, ethical

principles, institutional regulations, and human subjects as individuals" (p. 85). She

suggests that these 'spaces' are counterbalanced against forces which oppress and are

intolerant of the complexity and richness of a qualitative approach. She also states that a

"consistent thread in research claiming to deconstruct oppressive systems has adopted a 'human rights' perspective; and that this has been fraught with the binary of colonizer and colonized" (Smith, 1999, p. 26). In this regard, Smith purports that, for many Indigenous peoples, research has become a further method of colonization used to exploit Indigenous peoples and knowledge through a Westernized lens. As Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) state, scholarship from a critical theory framework must embed the *voice* of participants as well as the opportunity to claim and name one's reality – to present counterstories with which to challenge Eurocentric hegemony in the academy. As they suggest, telling these stories influences both teller and listener, and challenges meritocracy – that by communicating the experience of oppression, this may in fact be the first step toward social justice.

Contesting the exploitation of colonization may be achieved by providing opportunities for these counterstories to be told by Aboriginal scholars, Elders and educators.   And furthermore, this may involve academic research processes/procedures that incorporate the knowledge and expertise of Aboriginal scholars in reviewing research proposals, and as required, educating researchers who are seeking to conduct collaborative research with members of the Aboriginal community. This process/procedure should acknowledge cultural nuances, thereby honouring and respecting the participants and the knowledge shared during the research. Additionally, workshops and information sessions hosted by the institution and facilitated collaboratively with Aboriginal scholars would also allow for the active dissemination of information about Aboriginal knowledge and scholarship to all members of the academy, and in particular, to academics. It is my belief that I would have benefited immensely

from a process which offered assistance in developing cultural competency prior to commencing research. This competency based on developing researcher reflexivity and meaningful understanding of not only my own personal lens as a researcher, but also the influence of this *lens* on the collaborative research inquiry. My reflexivity as a researcher developed greatly throughout the inquiry, and in many cases this development occurred under the kind tutelage of the research participants.

An element of this research reflexivity dealt with my responsibility to foster a sense of community with, and amongst the research participants. I would suggest that the choice of methodology used in conducting research with members of the Aboriginal community be carefully scrutinized from a cultural sensitivity standpoint. This was especially important given that this study utilized an online format for the focus group interviews. As previously noted, a positive outcome of the online focus group interviews was the fact that many participants did experience what I would characterize as a 'sense of community' which I attributed to their wish to self-identify with each other at the conclusion of the research to maintain contact. Also, the telephone interviews were instrumental in many cases in fostering a personal relationship between researcher and participants.

Another point of consideration in the development of a 'sense of community' amongst participants has to do with the proposed duration of the research. I believe there is a need for sufficient time to ensure that participants have the ability to develop rapport with one another, as well as providing them with ample opportunity to share their insights and comments online.

And lastly, I believe that the research data and literature identify a compelling need to not only 'build a critical mass of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate,' but also, there is a related need to develop strategies and initiatives to build capacity for Aboriginal scholarship in the academy. Smith (2005) offers the following strategies as methods for building capacity in Indigenous research:

- "Training/employing Indigenous people as researchers;

- Generating research questions by communities;

- Developing Indigenous research methodologies;

- Establishing Indigenous research organizations; and

- Engagement and dialogue between Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers/organizations" (p. 92).

I believe these strategies comprise fundamental elements of a culturally sensitive and ethical practice for researchers involved with the Aboriginal community.

Additionally, as suggested by the research participants, another method to build capacity for Aboriginal scholars and scholarship in the academy may exist through the collective efforts of Ontario universities to facilitate the development of a Pan-Indigenous organization. Lawrence and Dua (2005) state that the survival of Aboriginal peoples is based on their nationhood. This view is reflected in the findings of the study in that most participants were supportive of the development of a Pan-Indigenous Organization through which networks of allies may be utilized. And furthermore, Ryan (1998) postulates that at the core, resistance to oppression may be facilitated through forms of community building to collectively confront and address oppressive practices. Therefore, as a collective strategy, the Pan-Indigenous strategy may assist in addressing the under-

representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate through the creation of supportive alliances within, and amongst postsecondary institutions. Raven, one of the participants notes a positive outcome of such strategic alliances may be the focus "…on [a] collective opinion and eventually a pan-Native spiritual view of what it is to be Native in Canada."

And so in conclusion, the implications for future research with members of the Aboriginal community centers on the need to develop relationships with research participants which are embedded with a respect for the nuances of culture, and thereby honour participants through opportunities for authentic collaboration in the production of knowledge. As Ryan (1998) suggests, critical approaches to educational leadership focus on efforts to promote social justice and equity for groups, and members of those groups who experience oppression and marginalization within the educational system. He states that rather than managerial effectiveness, the focus of critical leadership emphasizes the importance of a social critique to address inequitable life chances and differential treatment within the educational system.

Conclusion

Bell (1997) describes social justice educators as 'agents of change' who seek social justice reform in the following contexts: social responsibility, empowerment, and distributive justice. I believe that the university as an institution of higher learning must embrace its leadership role and act with social responsibility by empowering Aboriginal scholars to reach their fullest potential. This institutional leadership may be characterized as the ability to add to existing knowledge, to excite intellectual development, and to move beyond the possibilities that currently exist through knowledge production that is

supportive of innovation and different ways of knowing and learning. Ryan (2003) posits that an understanding and appreciation for the complexity of inclusive education moves beyond a simple recognition and knowledge of different values and practices. And furthermore, Ryan (1998) suggests that critical leadership should provide members of the educational community with an understanding of how these inequities are perpetuating on and through individuals, as well as providing strategies to resist oppression and marginalization.

As the participants in this study suggest, universities have to 'walk the talk.' While there are educational policy reforms which attempt to address the marginalized status of many Aboriginal students in Ontario, at both the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities levels, more is needed. Recent policy around the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Ontario provides valuable lessons in this regard. Specifically, the challenge made by members of the population who identify as persons with disabilities, that any legislative or policy reform must involve the active consultation and participation of persons with disabilities. Their motto, 'nothing about us without us' reminds us that policy reform, even with the best of intentions, can be an exclusionary and oppressive process.

And finally, the findings of this study agree with Preston's (2008) comments concerning the 1996 report of the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, which suggest that there is a need for Canada to develop and implement strategic initiatives in education which support the success of Aboriginal students. These strategic initiatives include the provision of transitional supports (particularly for Aboriginal students from northern and rural locations), and the promotion and facilitation of the active

participation of Aboriginal educators and Elders from the community in developing

curricula and pedagogy which respect and honour Aboriginal epistemologies. However, it

is important to recognize that these initiatives will require the investment of both time

and funding to develop Aboriginal postsecondary programs. If properly implemented,

such initiatives, while strategically developed to support Aboriginal peoples within the

Canadian educational system, will ultimately be of immense benefit to the nation.

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APPENDIX A
Focus Group Interview Participation Summary

Focus Group Interview #1 – GROUP A (10 participants in total)
70% overall participation

Question	Total # of Postings	# of Participants	Participant	# of Postings	Total Postings/Interviews by Participant
Code of Conduct	1	1	NishKwe	1	3
Question #1	5	5	mahkwa	1	1
			Gahutneo	1	1
			adjidjak	1	1
			NishKwe	1	2
			Wolf 14	1	
Question #2	3	3	Wolf 14	1	
			Borealgirl	1	
			NishKwe	1	

Focus Group Interview #1 – GROUP B (6 participants)
66.76% overall participation

Question	Total # of Postings	# of Participants	Participant	# of Postings	Total Postings/Interviews by Participant
Code of Conduct	3	2	Raven	2	3
			Annie Oakley	1	
Question #1	4	3	Jeannette	1	1
			Mama D/Annie Oakley	2	3
			Raven	1	
Question #2	1	1	SAM	1	1

Focus Group Interview #2 – **Group A** (11 participants in total)
55.0% overall participation

Question	Total # Postings	# of Participants	Participant	# of Postings	Total Postings/Interviews by Participant
Implications for the future pool of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario professoriate	6	5	Group5a/drn	1	1
			Bryan Loucks	1	1
			(Lyght)	1	1
			Nishkwe	1	1
			Wolf14	1	1
			Gahutneo	1	1
			*Metisprof telephone		

Focus Group Interview #2 – **Group B** (5 participants in total)
80% overall participation

Question	Total # Postings	# of Participants	Participant	# of Postings	Total Postings/Interviews by Participant
Implications for the future pool of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario professoriate	7	4	Raven	1	1
			SAM	4	4
			Annie Oakley	1	1
			Jeannette	1	1

Focus Group Interview #3 – **Group C** (16 participants in total)
50.0% overall participation

Question	Total # Postings	# of Participants	Participant	# of Postings	Total Postings/ Interviews by Participant
Why do Aboriginal Scholars stay, and conversely, why do they leave, the Ontario professoriate?	10	8	Raven	2	2
			NishKwe	1	1
			borealgirl	1	1
			adjidjak	2	2
			Gahutneo	1	1
			Annie Oakley * telephone July 8th	2	3
			Jeannette	1	1
			Anishinaabe-Kew *Telephone		1

Focus Group Interview #4– Group C (16 participants in total)
37.5% overall participation

Question	Total # Postings	# of Participants	Participant	# of Postings	Total Postings/ Interviews by Participant
Policy Implications for the Professoriate	5	6	Raven	2	3
			NishKwe	1	1
			borealgirl	1	1
			Bryan Loucks (Lyght)	1	1
			Annie Oakley		1 (member-check document)
			Anishinaabe-Kew *Telephone		2

APPENDIX B – Letter of Invitation
(Later Version)

Dear

Re: Dissertation Research

Title of the Study: 'Examining the Under-representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario Professoriate: Policy Implications for Faculty Recruitment and Retention'

I am writing to you as a PhD Candidate in the Joint PhD in Educational Studies Program at the University of Windsor, to invite your participation, and/or to request that you forward this invitation to members of the Aboriginal community, specifically, Aboriginal scholars who have been members of the Ontario professoriate who may be interested in the study. My background as a university employment equity manager, and as a social justice educator, has provided the personal interest and impetus to investigate the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario Professoriate; for the purpose of this inquiry, professoriate means those who currently hold, or who have held, a role with teaching responsibility in Ontario universities, including: faculty, as well as administrative counsellors and/or graduate students with teaching responsibility.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to examine the under-representation of Aboriginal peoples working as members of the professoriate at Ontario universities in an effort to develop recruitment and retention policies which support equity and social justice for the Aboriginal Community.

This research inquiry proposes to examine issues which influence the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, from the perspective of Aboriginal scholars currently employed as members of the professoriate at Ontario universities, and those who have left employment in this role (retirement, career change, move to another province or country, and/or as the result of the experience of discrimination, etc.), at Ontario universities. Based on the experiences shared, and recommendations provided by these Aboriginal scholars, it is proposed that a set of principles with which to guide recruitment and retention policies and practices in the academy will be developed to foster equity and inclusion, and potentially address the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

The methodology proposed for this research study will focus on the analysis of qualitative data gathered through online (weblog) focus group interviews which will commence on June 18th. As I am not a member of the Aboriginal Community, and given the social justice premise of this inquiry, I believe that participation by members of the Aboriginal Community is critical to ensure the authenticity and cultural relevancy of the research findings. Participant responses will be kept in confidence, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

Please feel free to contact me as I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, or supply additional information as requested.   I look forward to the possibility that you will agree to participate, and/or forward this invitation to participate in research to members of the Aboriginal Community who may be interested.

Sincerely,

Professor Karen Roland
Doctoral Candidate: Joint PhD in Educational Studies
Experiential Learning Specialist, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor
519-253-3000 ext. 4288, roland1@uwindsor.ca

APPENDIX B – Letter of Invitation
(Original Version – Email Sample)

Dear

Re: Dissertation Research

Title of the Study: 'Examining the Under-representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario Professoriate: Policy Implications for Faculty Recruitment and Retention'

My name is Karen Roland, and I am writing to you today as a PhD Candidate in the Joint PhD in Educational Studies Program at the University of Windsor, to request your assistance by providing me with contact information for Aboriginal Scholars who are, or who have been, members of the Ontario professoriate, and/or forwarding this invitation to members of the Aboriginal Community who may be interested in participating in the dissertation research study noted above. My background as a university employment equity manager, and as a social justice educator, has provided the personal interest and impetus to investigate the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario Professoriate; for the purpose of this inquiry, professoriate means those who currently hold, or who have held, a role with teaching responsibility in Ontario universities, including: faculty, as well as administrative counsellors and/or graduate students with teaching responsibility.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research study is to examine the under-representation of Aboriginal peoples working as members of the professoriate at Ontario universities in an effort to develop recruitment and retention policies which support equity and social justice for the Aboriginal community.

This research inquiry proposes to examine issues which influence the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, from the perspective of Aboriginal scholars currently employed as members of the professoriate at Ontario universities, and those who have left employment in this role at Ontario universities. Based on the experiences shared, and recommendations provided by these Aboriginal Scholars, it is proposed that a set of principles with which to guide recruitment and retention policies and practices in the academy will be developed to foster equity and inclusion, and potentially address the under-representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

The methodology proposed for this research study will focus on the analysis of qualitative data gathered through online (weblog) focus group interviews. As I am not a member of the Aboriginal Community, and given the social justice premise of this inquiry, I believe that participation by members of the Aboriginal Community is critical to ensure the authenticity and cultural relevancy of the research findings. Participant responses will be kept in confidence, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time.

Please feel free to contact me as I would be happy to answer any questions you may have, or supply additional information as requested.   I look forward to the possibility that you will agree to provide me with contact information for Aboriginal Scholars who are, or who have been, members of the Ontario professoriate, and/or forward this invitation to participate in research to members of the Aboriginal Community who may be interested.

Sincerely, Karen Roland

Professor Karen Roland
Doctoral Candidate: Joint PhD in Educational Studies
Experiential Learning Specialist
Faculty of Education, Room 3332, University of Windsor

APPENDIX C
Letter of Information for Consent to Participate in Research

June 2008

LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE OF THE STUDY: Examining the Under-representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario Professoriate: Policy Implications for Faculty Recruitment and Retention

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Karen Roland, a doctoral student in the Joint PhD in Educational Studies Program, from the Faculty of Education, at the University of Windsor. The results of this research study will be contributed to her doctoral dissertation. If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact Karen Roland (519) 253-3000 ext. 4288, roland1@uwindsor.ca, or, her Supervisor, Dr. Benedicta Egbo, (519) 253-3000 ext. 3839.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This research inquiry proposes to examine issues which influence the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate, from the perspective of Aboriginal scholars currently employed as professors at Ontario universities, and those who have left employment as professors at Ontario universities.   Based on the experiences shared and recommendations provided by these Aboriginal Scholars, it is proposed that a set of principles with which to guide recruitment and retention policies and practices in the academy will be developed to foster equity and inclusion, and potentially address the under-representation of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

PROCEDURES
If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

- Participate in the research study by contributing to focus group interview sessions utilizing an online weblog format; these focus group sessions will be conducted during the period of June – August 2008.
- Participants will be asked to choose a pseudonym for their online identity (based on a cultural, familial, or historical context) in an effort to protect each individual's identity.
- Participants will be asked to participate in four online focus group interview sessions as members of either:
    - Group A (those Aboriginal Scholars who are currently employed at an Ontario university as a professor), or,
    - Group B (those Aboriginal Scholars who have left the employment as a professor at an Ontario university).
- Telephone interviews with a select number of participants will be utilized to further explore and confirm findings.
- Additionally, all participants will be asked to provide feedback to the researcher through a member-checking process integrated throughout the data collection process to allow participants to guide the research inquiry.

- Participate in the two final focus group interviews as members of Group C (comprised of members of Groups A and B) to discuss and reflect on why Aboriginal Scholars stay/leave the academy, and the potential implications of proposed principles to guide equitable recruitment and retention policies/practices in terms of the under-representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario Professoriate.

Participation in the focus group interviews has the potential to create some emotional discomfort/stress; both in terms of issues discussed, as well as perhaps when revisiting experiences that may have caused you emotional hardship in the past. Additionally, given the dynamic nature of the discussion proposed during the interview process, with all posted entries visible to the members of your focus group (Group A or Group B, or Group C), there could be some emotionally charged discussions causing you some emotional discomfort.

The results of this study will have significance in that as the population of the Canadian Aboriginal community of people continues to grow, and as professional opportunities in Canadian universities develop, it is necessary, in the interest of social justice and the production of new knowledge, to embrace principles which enhance inclusive practices to positively influence the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal peoples in the professoriate.

Research participants will not receive payment for their participation in this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission. Care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of each research participant through a coding system (self-selected pseudonym), so that you are able to interact without fear of reprisal for your viewpoints. This coding system will be the responsibility of Karen Roland, the investigator. Additionally, although participation in all weblog focus group interview discussions by all of the participants would be considered optimum, participation is strictly voluntary, and no individual research participant will ever be coerced or forced to join into a discussion. In addition to the right to withdraw from the study at any time, participants also have the right to withdraw from a particular focus group interview discussion without embarrassment.

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, as stated above, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind and you may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

Upon successful defense of the doctoral dissertation, Karen Roland will ask all research participants if they would like to be provided with a final copy of the dissertation. A summary of research findings of the study will also be made available at the following websites:

Web addresses: www.uwindsor.ca/reb and http://www.uwindsor.ca/KarenRolandResearch

Date when results should be available: June 2009

It is anticipated that the study data will be used in subsequent studies as a backdrop for further inquiry with the Aboriginal Community concerning initiatives/programming to promote inclusion and equity in the educational system.

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario, N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR
These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

June 11, 2008

Signature of Investigator   Date

APPENDIX C
Participant General Information Form

Dissertation Research Study: Examining the Under-Representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the
Ontario Professoriate: Policy Implications for Faculty Recruitment and Retention
K. Roland, PhD Candidate, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON
519-253-3000 ext. 4288, roland1@uwindsor.ca

Participant General Information
Name:

Login User ID: (provided)   Password: (provided)

Self-Selected pseudonym for online identity: _____

Self-Identification as a member of the Aboriginal Community: YES _____   NO _____
I chose to use the terminology Aboriginal peoples for this study because of the fact that this means original
people, and that it is a legal term used in the Canadian Constitution (as well as the Federal Contractors
Employment Equity Program), and most importantly for the study purposes, it recognizes "Indians, Inuit
and the Métis", which resonates with the inclusionary premise of the inquiry. However, I am respectful of
the fact that some persons may self-identify otherwise, such as Native, First Nations, Original Peoples,
Status or NonStatus Indians.

Please identify with an (X), your sex: Male _____   Female _____
          _____

Please identify with an (X) your age group: 25-45 _____ 46-65 _____   Other _____

Current Employment Position Title:_____

Post Secondary Education:
_____

Are you currently a member of the Ontario Professoriate (faculty member, administrative
counsellor with some teaching responsibility, or graduate student with some teaching
responsibility)?
                                                   YES _____   NO _____
Please indicate with an (X), how you would identify your role as a member/former member of the
Ontario professoriate:
   • Faculty _____   or,
   • Administrative Counsellor (with some teaching responsibility): _____ or,
   • Graduate Student (with some teaching responsibility): _____

How many years have you held this role/were you employed in this role: _____

While a member of the professoriate, what discipline or area of focus did your work involve?
_____

Please indicate if you have received, read and understood the Letter of Information for Consent to
Participate in Research: YES _____   NO _____ Date:_____

Please indicate with an (X):

_____   Are you currently involved with the Ontario educational system (i.e., elementary school, secondary school, colleges, and/or universities), or

_____   Other (please describe):

Please indicate with an (X), if your current work serves Aboriginal people located in (Please select all that apply):

_____   Urban areas

_____   Suburban areas

_____   Rural areas

_____   Remote areas

Please indicate with an (X), where geographically the educational institution or organization you work with serves Aboriginal peoples (Please select all that apply):

_____   Northeastern Ontario

_____   Northwestern Ontario

_____   Central Ontario

_____   Greater Toronto area (GTA)

_____   Southeastern Ontario

_____   Southwestern Ontario

_____   Other location – please specify:

Please indicate with an (X), the type of information/service the educational institution or organization you work with provides to students/clients/consumers concerning education (Please select all that apply):

_____   Information about educational programs, services and/or facilities

_____   Information about ways to access educational programs, services and/or facilities

_____   Academic programs

_____   Contact/location information

_____   Application forms

_____   Apprenticeship schooling and licensing

_____   School Board policies and procedures

_____   Health and safety-related information within the school system

_____   Other (please describe):

Please indicate with an (X), how the educational institution or organization you work with communicates with students/clients/consumers (Please select all that apply):

_____   In person

_____   Print material

_____   Print material that is posted

_____   DVD/CD-ROM

_____   Direct mail

_____   Mass mail

_____   Telephone

_____   Email

_____   Internet

_____   Weblogs

_____   Websites

_____   Information sessions

_____   Presentation

_____   Lectures

_____   Seminars

_____   Television

_____   Radio

_____   Newspaper

_____   Other (please describe):

I would appreciate if you would kindly complete and return this form to me by E-mail (preferable) to roland1@uwindsor.ca or by fax to my attention at 519-971-3694.
THANK YOU!

APPENDIX C
Weblog Access and Instructions

Research Study: Examining the Under-Representation of Aboriginal Scholars in the Ontario
Professoriate: Policy Implications for Faculty Recruitment and Retention
K. Roland, PhD Candidate, University of Windsor, Windsor, ON
519-253-3000 ext. 4288, roland1@uwindsor.ca

Weblog Focus Group Interview Access Instructions

Dear Study Participant,

Thank you again for agreeing to voluntarily participate in the above-noted research study! You,
along with approximately 11 other individuals who have self-identified as Aboriginal Scholars
who are either currently, or formerly employed with an Ontario university, as a member of the
professoriate, will participate in four(4) separate weblog focus group interviews; the first weblog
is tentatively set to commence on Wednesday June 18/0 and end on Wednesday, June 25/08.

For the purposes of this research inquiry I am utilizing a secure, password protected weblog as
the format for online focus group interviews. These online research weblogs will be used to
provide a "collaborative space" for interactive dialogue in which data can be recorded, reviewed,
and commented on by all the participants; it is anticipated that the blog-method of data collection
for the focus group interviews will allow flexibility for participants as well as the researcher.

Shown below is the tentative schedule for the Weblog Focus Group Interviews:

Weblog Focus Group Interview #	Theme	Start Date	End Date	Telephone interviews with selected participants	Weblog Summary posted online for comment (member-checking process)
1	Code of Conduct Context of Education	June 18	June 25	June 26 & 27/08	June 28/08
2	Implications for future pool of Aboriginal Scholars	June 30/08	July 7/08	July 8 & 9/08	July 10/08
3	Why do Aboriginal Scholars Stay/Leave the Academy?	July 11/08	July 18/08	July 19 & 21/08	July 21/08
4	Policy Implications	July 24/08	July 31/08	August 1 & 11/08	August 12/08

*Please note that during the designated period for each Weblog Focus Group Interview,
participants will have 24 hour access to the site, and are encouraged to post as often as they wish.

Posted comments may be accessed by clicking on the blue 'comment' link; comments will appear in chronological order with the most recent appearing at the top of the page under the question heading.

Also, to honour the Oral Tradition shared by many Aboriginal Peoples, I would like to offer participants, at their request, the opportunity to speak with me in a telephone conversation regarding the thematic discussion for each weblog focus group interview; this conversation will allow the participant to share her/his thoughts orally, and I will forward a transcription of this conversation for review by the participant, and to consider what, if any part, the participant wishes to share during the online discussions. I offer this as an imperfect alternative, but I am hopeful that this alternative may offer some participants the ability to participate in the online dialogue in a manner which is respectful of their personal ways of knowing. Please give me a call to advise me if you would prefer this method of interaction.

As a study participant you will be provided with a personal USER ID and Password with which to access the weblog site (please refer to your personalized Participant General Information form); however, in an effort to empower participants, I will ask that each of you choose a pseudonym for online interactions - naming oneself based on a cultural, familial, or historical context – your pseudonym will be the online identity you use when submitting comments.

Your voluntary participation in these online weblog focus group interviews will be confidential, and although there will be anonymity amongst the participants during the online dialogue, of necessity for the integrity of the research study, I will be aware of each participant's identity. I would suggest that when posting online, you refrain from identifying yourself, your institution, and/or any other individual. Additionally, you may withdraw from participating in this research study at any time, for any reason.

The weblog postings will involve a thematic inquiry, initially based on themes identified through the literature review process, and then as they emerge through the online discussions.

Your participation in the first weblog focus group interview will commence with your review, comment, and recommendations concerning:

- June 18- 20/08 - our proposed Code of Conduct for Weblog Participants
- June 20- 25/08 - Two sets of questions will be used to begin the process of consultation with you, self-identified Aboriginal Scholars, examining factors which you as members of the Aboriginal Community, may believe affect Aboriginal students' sense of inclusion and/or exclusion in the Ontario educational system (elementary through postsecondary education). The reason for collecting this information is to examine if these factors have any influence on Aboriginal students' choice of a career as a university professor in Ontario – the future employment pool of Aboriginal scholars.

The first Weblog Focus Group Interview will end on Wednesday June 25, 2008.

Instructions for Study Participants: Accessing the Research Weblog site

1)   Participants are requested to proceed to the following link:
      http://cronus.uwindsor.ca/users/r/roland1/blog/
2)   At the Authentication Page, please enter the USER ID and Password provided in your
      Participant General Information form
3)   Once at the weblog site, you will find the first posting ready for your comments:
      • Requesting your feedback (comments/recommendations) regarding the proposed weblog
         focus group interview Code of Conduct for participants
4)   To add a comment, please click on the comment link and the following text box will
      appear (as shown below). Please follow instructions as shown below to submit your
      comment(s).

Comments (0)
 Add Comment

      Subject: Web Blog Proposed Code of Conduct for Participants

      Name: *INSERT YOUR PSEUDONYM HERE

      Email: do not complete this box

      Website: do not complete this box

      Comment: (No HTML - Links will be converted if prefixed http://)

      Please record your comments/recommendations here.

      Remember Me? ☑   [Send] [Clear Form]

      ──
      When you have completed entering your comment, please click on the 'Send' button and
      your comment will be added - as mentioned previously, comments will appear in
      chronological order with the most recent appearing at the top of the page under the
      question heading. You are encouraged to view each weblog focus group interview site
      when active (as per the dates noted above), and to comment as often as possible.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this research study! If you have any questions,
concerns, or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Karen Roland, Doctoral Candidate: Joint PhD in Educational Studies
Experiential Learning Specialist, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor

APPENDIX D
Focus Group Interview #1
Major Area of Focus: Context of Educational Experience

Proposed Code of Conduct for Weblog Focus Group Interview Participants

Shown below is a proposed *Code of* Conduct created for you as participants in this Weblog Focus Group Interview process - please take a moment to review the code - your comments, suggestions, or recommendations would be most appreciated! (click on the word *Comments* (blue font) below to add your thoughts). You need only include your pseudonym as your online *Name,* and please do not complete the sections asking for your email address and website. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you again for your participation!

Proposed Code of Conduct for Weblog Focus Group Interview Participants:
Shown below is a preliminary draft of a *Code of* Conduct created for you as a participant during the online focus group interviews which will be conducted in a weblog format during this research study. The purpose of this *Code of* Conduct is to facilitate and promote a climate conducive to open and safe dialogue, to protect study participants in terms of knowing what the expectations are for acceptable behaviour for participation. Critical elements of this Code address respectful dialogue in an online format, as well as the well-being of the Aboriginal Scholar.

The goal of this *Code* is to establish a blogging community, as Kuhn, (2007, p.27) states, "Blogging has the potential to create cyberspace communities, therefore, prioritizing the human presence is an essential element of a blogging code of ethics".

Weblog Focus Group Interview Participants will:
Foster a sense of inclusion among the participants by:

- posting comments regularly, and
- building relationships and blog-community by responding to comments regularly.

Promote respect for the human nature of communication, or what Kuhn (2007, p.29), refers to as the "humanized discourse of the blog", by minimizing harm to others:

- do not "self-censor" by removing weblog posts or comments after published;
- promote authentic communication - be accountable for what you post; and
- critical and scholarly debate of opinions and viewpoints will be solicited and encouraged; however, participants will not label or knowingly cause harm to another participant.

Encourage interactive behaviour among participants by:

- respecting blog etiquette; and
- encouraging response to your comments on the weblog.

(Kuhn, 2007, pp.33-34)

Weblog Focus Group Interview Participant Rights:
Kuhn (2007, p.29) posits that, "bloggers frame blogs as vehicles for social change…and tools that

can be leveraged for political and social gain". I would suggest that the primary stakeholder in this research study is the Aboriginal Community itself given that the goal of this research is to contribute to the well-being of the members of this community.

Aboriginal Scholars, as collaborative partners in this research study:
1. will participate in an interactive and respectful dialogue in which every individual participant's contributions are respected and valued;
2. can expect to participate in safety and with the assurance of confidentiality; participants will not be identified - only the principal researcher (K. Roland) will have access and knowledge of individual participant identity;
3. must demonstrate respect for human dignity in all aspects of their participation (Tri-Council Policy);
4. acknowledge that the goal of this research is to contribute to the well-being of the Aboriginal Community; and
5. study participants will comply with the University of Windsor Information Services *Acceptable Use Policy:*
 http://www.uwindsor.ca/units/its/website/main.nsf/inToc/8FFBB082927240E385256EA9006EEB77 during all online focus group interviews; and, as stated in above-noted policy, this includes: as a holder of a computer ID and password, the study participant is responsible for protecting campus computing facilities from unauthorized access by keeping the computer ID and password confidential

Karen Roland, as principal investigator, can and will remove access to the focus group interview weblog site for those participants who do not willingly abide by the terms of this *Code of Conduct.*

Kuhn, M. (2007). Interactivity and prioritizing the human: A code of blogging ethics. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 22*(1), 18-36.

Question #1 (June 19, 2008) Theme: Context of Educational Experience

The first step in this research study is to consult with you, as an Aboriginal Scholar, to identify factors you believe may influence the sense of inclusion and/or exclusion Aboriginal students experience in the Ontario educational system (elementary through postsecondary education). The reason for beginning the inquiry at this point is to develop a contextual understanding, from your point of view, to understand the meaning behind the experiences.

For the purpose of this inquiry, inclusion will refer to a student's/students' perception or feeling of belonging and value as a member(s) of the school and classroom learning community; exclusion on the other hand, will refer to a student's/students' perception or feeling of alienation, marginalization, and/or oppression in the school and classroom learning community.

Shown below are some preliminary questions with which to being our discussion - I invite you to please share your comments, insights and reflections....
Do you believe that a compassionate (caring), and inclusive learning environment (an environment which promotes a sense of value and belonging for its students), is possible in the Ontario education system? If so, what elements, from an Aboriginal worldview, do you believe are necessary to create this learning environment (i.e., unconditional respect between teachers and students; a holistic approach to education in relationship to individual well-being)?

How would you, as an Aboriginal Scholar, characterize your experience in the Ontario educational system, in terms of a sense of inclusion (feeling that you belong and are valued as a member of the educational community), and/or exclusion (feeling that you do not belong and are not valued in the educational community)?

Question # 2 (June 22, 2008)

Continuing the discussion, please consider the following questions...

What are your perceptions and feelings about what is valued as 'education' from an Aboriginal perspective/worldview?

Do you believe this is congruent with the values associated with the purpose of 'mainstream' education?

Do you believe it is possible to overcome the divide between Aboriginal epistemology and Eurocentric hegemony in the current educational system in Ontario?

APPENDIX E
Focus Group Interview #2
Major Area of Focus: Implications for Recruitment

Implications for the Future pool of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate:

The reason for collecting this information is to examine, from your viewpoint as self-identified Aboriginal Scholars, if you believe that the factors associated with a sense of inclusion or exclusion in the educational community, have an influence on Aboriginal students' choice of an academic career – thereby impacting the future employment pool of Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate.

Do you believe that the purpose of education is to provide an environment in which Aboriginal students reach a postsecondary level of education (college/university level)? I ask this question to gather your impressions concerning whether or not you believe postsecondary education is a goal for most Aboriginal students; some of the literature suggests that this may not be a goal for some Aboriginal students and their communities (i.e., Handsome Lake's prophecy). Also, given your previous discussion concerning conditions of systemic oppression and discrimination in the Ontario educational system, is there in your opinion, any reparative options which would eradicate barriers to educational attainment?

Do you believe that the Aboriginal community is willing to work with the non-Aboriginal community to address the current inequities in the Ontario educational system? Would the Aboriginal community advise 'mainstream education' concerning how the system could acknowledge different knowledge systems? In your opinion, how could Aboriginal worldviews be rightfully supported and valued in education? And if so, how might the expected resistance to this change by the educational system be challenged - moving beyond the rhetoric?

Do you believe that changes which promote social justice in education, and eliminate barriers by fostering a welcoming climate in Ontario classrooms, can ultimately affect the future pool of potential Aboriginal scholars in the Ontario professoriate?

APPENDIX F
Focus Group Interview #3
Major Area of Focus: Are universities welcoming institutions?
Recruitment and Retention Issues

During this 3rd focus group interview I invite you to participate in an interactive dialogue with all your co-participants (there are sixteen participants in this study - 11 who are currently members of the Ontario professoriate, and 5 who are former members of the Ontario professoriate), in sharing your stories and lived experience in response to the questions: Why do Aboriginal Scholars stay, and conversely, why do they leave, the Ontario professoriate?

I am hopeful that through discussion of your lived experiences we can inform the westernized epistemology of university recruitment and retention practices to create spaces which honour and respects different worldviews. I believe this need was clearly articulated by this participant's viewpoint - there is a need to critically review and "...translate if you will, to measure your research concepts against Anishinaabe, Haudenasaunee and other well-articulated Aboriginal worldviews, so that we each understand the other."

I invite and encourage you to respond to these questions in an interactive dialogue, sharing your experiences, insights, recommendations, etc. However, I do recognize the complexity and multi-layered aspects of these questions, and therefore I thought it might be helpful to provide you with some background information concerning existing employment equity program policy - the purpose of providing this information is for your review, and as stated above, to 'measure' these policies through the lens of Aboriginal worldviews, in an effort to inform a westernized policy framework.

And so, I am sharing with you here what is referred to in current employment equity policy, as an 'Employment Systems Review'. In my previous role in employment equity, I collaborated with a group of university faculty and staff (approximately 40 persons at all levels of the institution and including representatives from all eight union groups), in a process examining all aspects of what might be considered an effectiveness audit of the university's systems (policy/practices) related to:

- Recruitment and Selection (including recruitment via outreach, selection including issues of credentialism, and testing - examining bona fide requirements)
- Training & Development (examining orientation, training, equity training and career development opportunities)
- Upward Mobility (secondments, special assignments, job rotation, transfers, special training, special committee or task force participation)
- Job Evaluation System (objective criteria vs. subjective opinion, pay equity)
- Compensation System (pay equity, leave policies reflecting sensitivity for the needs of members of the designated groups - women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities and persons with disabilities)
- Working Conditions System: (availability of flexible work arrangements if needed, decisions based on bona fide job requirements vs. subjective)
- Lay-off, Recall, Disciplinary Action and Termination System (based on clearly defined job-related, objective criteria)

I found the review process to be a worthwhile examination in which each policy and practice was measured against the following assessment criteria:

1. Legality: Does the policy or practice conform to human rights and other legislation
2. Adverse Impact: Does a policy or practice have unequal impact on designated group members compared to others? What is the impact on all colleagues?
3. Job relatedness: Is this practice based on bona fide occupational requirements?
4. Accommodation: If the policy or practice is determined to be job related, but tends to exclude designated group members, can an accommodation be made which would result in less or no adverse impact? It is important to remember that even if a job requirement is important to performing the job, accommodation must be made if possible.
5. Consistency: Is this policy or practice applied in a consistent manner to all colleagues?

During the employment systems review, if the committee identified a policy or practice as disadvantaging one (or more) of the four designated groups as defined by the Federal Contractors Program (women, Aboriginal peoples, members of visible minorities, and persons with disabilities), then a recommendation for reparative action to remove this barrier was made. In all honesty the review was remarkable primarily because of the commitment of the individuals involved; however, implementation of the recommendations proved to be a different matter altogether.

Your experiences as current/former members of the Ontario professoriate may extend well beyond what this limited employment systems review process examined, and as well you may have comments/suggestions concerning the assessment criteria used in this process. As I stated earlier, I offer this information not to limit the content or context of our discussions, but rather as a starting point of consideration - an example of a current employment equity policy in practice.

APPENDIX G
Focus Group Interview #4
Major Area of Focus: Social Justice & Equity – Policy Implications for the Academy

In addition to reviewing and posting your comments at your convenience during this time period, in an effort to promote more online dialogue and inter-participant response, I also invite you to participate during a few 'live' sessions where I am hopeful that you will join me and other participants in a synchronistic discussion.

* Additionally, as always, I am available and most interested in speaking with you personally at your convenience. Please contact me and we can arrange a date/time to speak together.

In preparing for this final interview, I have reflected on the comments and insights you have shared in our discussions, and how it is most evident in my opinion, that the issues you have identified have significant implications for recruitment and retention policies in the academy.

In an effort to inform westernized policy, I believe it is necessary to not only to examine the issues themselves, but also how they are addressed; it is imperative to carefully consider this 'how', or the policy process if you will. And so, what I have prepared for your consideration as we begin our final online discussion, is an overview of the issues you have identified in the context of recruitment and retention issues supporting inclusion, or fostering ongoing oppression and marginalization in the academy, along with a proposal concerning how the process of transforming policy development and implementation may be operationalized in a manner that is respectful and reflective of the ways of knowing of some Aboriginal peoples. I invite your discussion!

Focus Group Interview #4: Policy Implications for the Academy (see below):

Recruitment & Retention	Supporting Inclusion	Marginalization
Recruitment Issues: Outreach	- honouring the gifts and "unique voice" Aboriginal Scholars bring to the academy by making a concerted effort to extend the invitation to apply for available positions - "building a critical mass of Aboriginal faculty & administration in academia" -"...long-term persistence…need to band together to form a pan-Canadian University Indigenous Association"	- "How is it that the cream of the intelligencia can have zero knowledge of aboriginal peoples in this province? Is it a planned educational strategy in the interest of promoting the hegemony agenda? - "I left due to the lack of support, lack of interest in Indigenous culture - "...they used their power to silence me..." - "...it was a fight to the finish." - "...there is no Aboriginal intellectual critical mass in many universities in Ontario."
Recruitment Issues: Selection criteria	- Demonstrating at an institution-wide level, "respect for our cultures, languages and worldviews" - "respect for the contributions to the communities (non-university & university)"	- "[it is] pointless to bring more abor[iginal] scholars into the 'hostile' academy environment without making the necessary changes to improve the environment." - "credentialism continues to be a barrier to employment in the academy" - "[credentials] are not necessarily on paper"
Retention Issues: Orientation	- educating the academic community concerning the histories, contributions, and cultures of Aboriginal peoples - "respect for our cultures, languages, and worldviews"	- "lack of respect for cultures, ways of knowing"... "Explaining oneself constantly on basic issues…"
Retention Issues: Career development	- valuing research and scholarship germane to Aboriginal cultures and "offering incentives and opportunities to grow"	

Recruitment & Retention	Supporting Inclusion	Marginalization
Retention Issues: Scholarship	- "respect for our forms of scholarship & research"... "we have brilliance in the Aboriginal worldviews, we are just thinking differently..."	- "… being made aware covertly and overtly that what I do is or is not considered by those who know not 'native studies'…those who know are white…" - "it was obvious that a western view of work would only be accepted – colonialism" - "there was no one to oversee my M.A. thesis because there was no one who gave a damn about Indigenous issues." - "many professors in Ontario simply do not see Aboriginal people as relevant to their disciplines…"
Retention Issues: Tenure	- "acknowledging our status with granting tenure"	- "I have been told, on a couple of occasions to wait for about 10 yrs before being permitted to teach a graduate course…"
Retention Issues: Working conditions	-Acknowledging our place with appropriate salaries"	- being tokenized, ghettoized within the academy - "disrespected in terms of workload, recognition, and status"

Issues Influencing Recruitment & Retention in the Academy:
• Systemic discrimination & oppression • Lack of knowledge and respect for the cultures, histories, languages, and contributions of Aboriginal peoples • Eurocentric hegemony pervasive in the academy • Isolation • Tokenism (First Nations Studies/Indigenous Studies Programs) • Epistemic barriers to scholarship • Credentialism • Policy reformation – authority, power and funding required • Lack of authentic consultation with Aboriginal Educators • Collaboration with nonAboriginal peoples required - "social justice in education first requires social justice at a personal level".

The process of transforming policy:
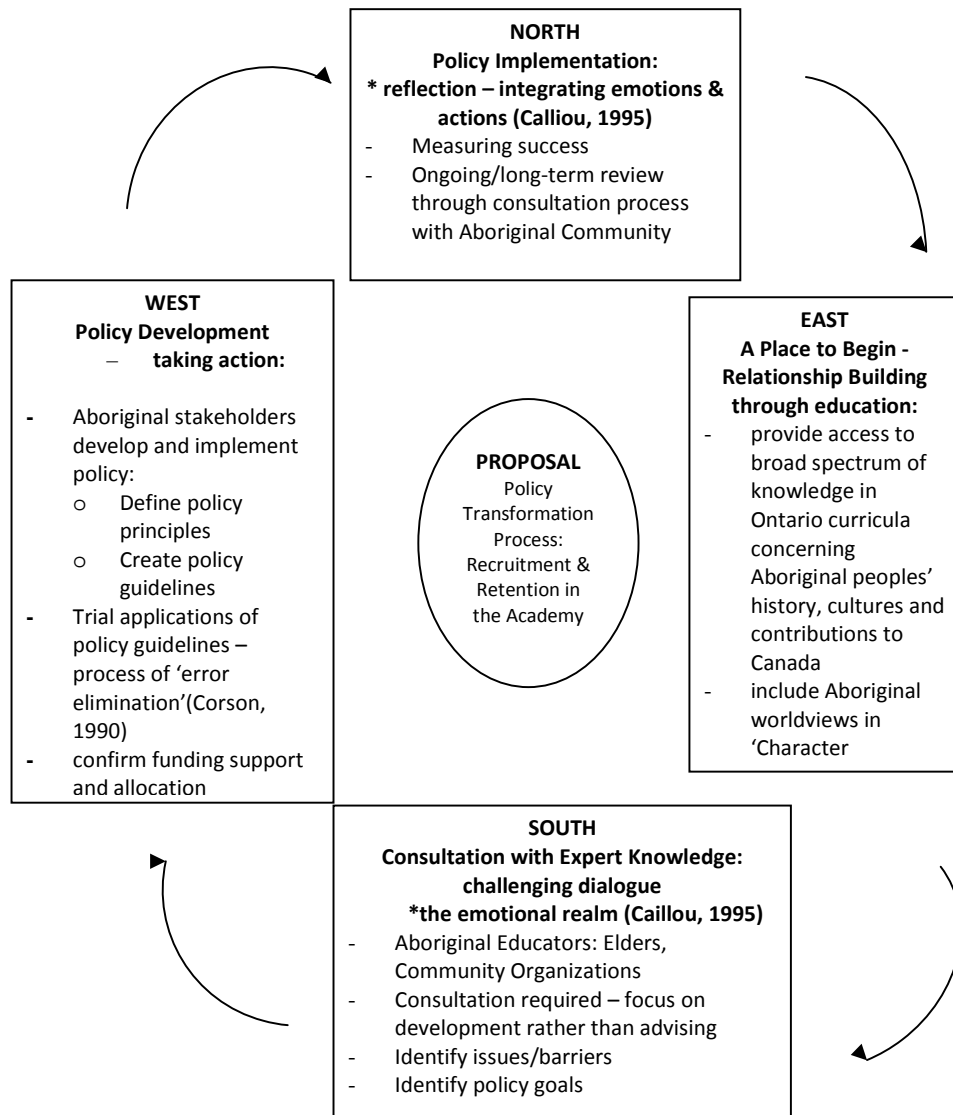
As Raven has shared, and as I have earned through readings and personal learning opportunities, the circle or medicine wheel is an important archetype of the worldviews and spirituality of many Aboriginal Peoples; the circle reminds us that everything in creation while related, must follow its own unique instructions (Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies, 2007).

I became personally familiar with the influence of the circle as a student in the Joint PhD program in Educational Studies program. Prior to my oral exams I was required to prepare and present a comprehensive portfolio – the comprehensive portfolio being a collection of personal reflections and artifacts documenting authentic tasks which demonstrated my growth as an academic scholar. In preparing my portfolio, and throughout my coursework, a number of readings and learning opportunities with members of the Aboriginal community had a profound influence on my development. I acknowledge that as a product of western culture, I tend to view policy development along a linear path with a beginning (identify the problem), middle (identify possible solutions), and end (implement solutions) – what is missing is as Corson (1990) suggests, "…recognition that all aspects of the universe (including knowledge about those aspects) can only be properly understood if we accept that they are in a constant state of evolutionary change…" (p.264). Readings and other learning opportunities helped me to reflect on how I truly felt about education (in my opinion there really is no end to learning), as well as other facets of my life. And so, in preparing my portfolio I developed a learning circle to illustrate my personal scholarly development as depicted by the stages of life and corresponding to the seasons; the analogy being that while scholarly development involves stages of growth and maturation, it is also paradoxically a never-ending cycle of personal ontological and epistemological evolution, in other words, life-long learning. For me, this brought all aspects of a very complex and dynamic learning process together in a way that I hadn't conceptualized before.

And so, as we move along to the final weblog focus group interview, I have been reflecting on your dialogue and the need to inform westernized policy, and I am contemplating if the circle or 'medicine wheel' might be an appropriate archetype with which to organize a transformative policy process. I bring this to you for your consideration as a possible method to illustrate that policy is not static, and that effective policy must be developed through integrative stages, each reflecting an important aspect of development and implementation. I have incorporated the themes generated from our discussions along with the tenets of Sharilyn Calliou's medicine wheel illustrating a peacekeeping pedagogy. This policy circle or 'medicine wheel' has been built upon the following claims:

- A critical need for knowledge about Aboriginal peoples – their cultures, languages, histories and contributions to Canada in curricula at all levels of education including offering upper level courses at the postsecondary level, as well as the integration of this knowledge in professional teacher education programs;
- a significant need to create inclusive spaces in the educational system where ALL students feel supported and included – "student centred learning bridges all peoples and is the means of not only bridging the divide but teaching all students";
- authentic consultation with Aboriginal Community – not advisory panels/committees, but the authority to be directly involved in the development and implementation of change affecting the Aboriginal community;
- creating opportunities for collaboration with members of the nonAboriginal community – "Seeds of Change";
- addressing credentialism as a barrier to recruitment;
- respecting and honouring the "unique voice and contributions of Aboriginal Scholars" in the academy by:

- hiring policies with a stated goal to create a critical mass of Aboriginal Scholarship in the institution (combating tokenism and isolation)
- promoting the retention of Aboriginal Scholars through:
1. granting tenure, and
2. addressing epistemic barriers to scholarship and research.

Dear Participants, please continue to share with me your thoughts and insights concerning "Why Aboriginal Scholars stay, and why they leave, the Ontario professoriate," as we examine policy issues and practices in the academy which may influence the recruitment and retention of Aboriginal Scholars. And as stated earlier, given that as important as the 'issues' are, the manner in which policy is developed, implemented and reviewed is also of great significance – especially in terms of equity and respecting other ways of knowing, I invite you to share your impressions, suggestions, and comments concerning the proposed policy transformation circle shown here:

NORTH
Policy Implementation:
* reflection – integrating emotions & actions (Calliou, 1995)
- Measuring success
- Ongoing/long-term review through consultation process with Aboriginal Community

WEST
Policy Development
– **taking action:**

- Aboriginal stakeholders develop and implement policy:
  o Define policy principles
  o Create policy guidelines
- Trial applications of policy guidelines – process of 'error elimination'(Corson, 1990)
- confirm funding support and allocation

PROPOSAL
Policy Transformation Process: Recruitment & Retention in the Academy

EAST
A Place to Begin - Relationship Building through education:
- provide access to broad spectrum of knowledge in Ontario curricula concerning Aboriginal peoples' history, cultures and contributions to Canada
- include Aboriginal worldviews in 'Character

SOUTH
Consultation with Expert Knowledge: challenging dialogue
*the emotional realm (Caillou, 1995)
- Aboriginal Educators: Elders, Community Organizations
- Consultation required – focus on development rather than advising
- Identify issues/barriers
- Identify policy goals

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:
- Do you believe a policy process like this is viable in an academic institution? Why/Why not?
- In addition to Aboriginal Educators from the community, are there existing groups on campus that may be brought into this consultative model (i.e., Employment Equity, Human Rights, Aboriginal Education Council, Aboriginal Student Groups, etc)?

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