DIVERSE REALITIES AND POLICY PORTRAYALS: WHAT TEACHER EXPERIENCES BRING TO THE ANTIRACISM POLICY PROCESS

by

Jamie Robyn Makutra

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2003
B.Ed., Simon Fraser University, 2006

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Abstract

This project was inspired by my desire to investigate what teacher experiences could bring to the antiracism policy process. I provided a space within which study participants could talk about their experiences teaching racially and ethnically diverse students and asked them to look at how those experiences are represented in or framed by district multicultural or antiracist policy. Informed by critical antiracist theory, I collected qualitative data using critical policy analysis, individual interviews and a focus group whereby study participants came together to discuss and analyze a specific policy text issued by the school district. I enacted a critical policy analysis that set the context of these discussions by explicating the tensions and coalescences of educational policy, race and the city, and by providing an initial thematic analysis of the policy text in question. I then constructed assertions based on the discussion transcripts, asserting that: participants talked more in terms of bullying and anti-bullying than in terms of racism and antiracism; participants were concerned with how students understood racism and accusations of racism; participants talked about policy as disconnected from their everyday realities and as only minimally relevant to their teaching, and participants did not see the particular policy text analyzed as useful or relevant to their experience. In examining these assertions within the greater context of the city, I identified ways in which discursive maneuvering within policy and media impacts conceptions of race and racism. I also considered how teachers are simultaneously positioned as objects of and agents within policy, which may provide useful spaces for influencing the policy process. In conclusion, I argued for a more meaningful and relevant relationship between teachers and education policy, policy that must maintain the tenets of social justice, including antiracism, at its core.
Preface

This thesis is an original intellectual product of the author, Jamie Robyn Makutra. All fieldwork reported was conducted under approval from the UBC Behavioral Ethics Review Board, Certificate number H11-00022.
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I mean, causation by definition

is such a complex compilation of factors

that to even try to say why

is to oversimplify.

(Difranco, 2003)

I dedicate this work to those who are, nonetheless, trying to say why.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Statistics Canada released a study in 2010 projecting that visible minorities – defined under the Employment Equity Act as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” – will comprise 59% of Vancouver’s population by 2031 (Statistics Canada, 2010). The increasing diversity of Canada’s metropolitan centers is particularly evident in the city of Richmond, where according to the last census 65.1% of the population is a visible minority (City of Richmond, 2008). Inevitably, teachers in Richmond are working with increasingly diverse students, despite the fact that this diversity is rarely reflected in Canadian teachers (Egbo, 2011; Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2009) or those who choose to enroll in teacher education programs (Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, & Campbell, 2005). This research project seeks to investigate two interrelated issues pertaining to teachers, ethnicity and culture: one, how secondary school teachers make sense of their relationships with ethnically and culturally diverse students; and, two, the degree to which those teachers feel that their experiences are framed by or reflected in school district policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism.

Canada is often touted as a country that embraces and celebrates diversity. Multiculturalism, particularly what James (2011) referred to as ‘official multiculturalism’ – the vision of multiculturalism put forth in policy-based initiatives undertaken by different levels of government – is the discourse of the day; a discourse that results in the promotion of a very specific vision of what Canadian society is and should be, of who belongs and how. In discussing the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, Simpson, James and Mack (2011) asserted that it “broadly communicated the idea that in Canada there is cultural freedom and equality of opportunity for everyone” (p.287). The term ‘culture’ is used to amalgamate multiple aspects of
identity such as race, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, and language. The authors went on to state that by “focusing on the existence of a ‘cultural mosaic,’ those allied with a multicultural perspective simultaneously distinguish Canada from the United States and the racism there and render invisible or immaterial the ways in which race and racism operate within Canada” (Simpson, James & Mack, 2011, p.288). The vision of multiculturalism put forth in official government documents is therefore one that can both support cultural equality yet erase race from the conversation, denying that racial inequities are in fact adversely impacting racialized bodies and are preventing racial minorities from participating equally in all aspects of Canadian civic life. These same inequities are also working to maintain privileges for those living as ‘unracialized’ bodies, namely white people.

Many scholars have drawn attention to the need for multicultural and/or antiracist education in Canadian schools in response to inequalities stemming from racism (Amin & Dei, 2006; Lund, 2006). Proposed solutions to this dilemma vary. At the classroom level, many call for a culturally relevant pedagogy implemented primarily through teacher education programs (Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Others argue that teacher education programs ought to promote a critical pedagogy that seeks to disrupt the normalization of whiteness given that teachers are predominantly white (Giroux, 1997; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2000; McLaren, 2000). While the pedagogical implications of continued inequality stemming from racism in diverse communities are paramount, they are also well documented. I contend that in order to better encourage and enact social justice within the classroom as well as within the broader school community, teachers could use some guidance in the form of useful, meaningful policies, and specifically antiracist policies. This is only useful, however, if teachers are ready to embrace those policies and integrate the intentions thereof into their work as teachers. This is not always
the case as teachers are often framed as the passive recipients of policies that occur elsewhere (Ball, 1993, 2003; Ozga, 2000). If, however, there were mechanisms in place that would enable teacher experiences to continually inform policy rather than teachers being simply governed by policy and situated as objects within the policy process, I believe that school communities would be able to better engage in more relevant and meaningful policy processes. In turn, teachers would perhaps feel a greater sense of ownership and connectivity, and therefore be more willing to align their practice with the goals laid out in education policy – goals that would be more congruent with their experiences and needs. When connected to policy surrounding issues of multiculturalism or antiracism, this could in turn promote a more inclusive and socially just learning environment for both students and teachers. Teachers would perhaps be more willing to engage with multiculturalism as a construct since it would be seen as relevant to their work and to their larger school communities, not simply as another policy coming at them from above that bears no relevance or meaning. To achieve this kind of policy environment, it is therefore also important for education research to attempt to foster a more explicit and mutually productive relationship between teachers and education policy. It is my hope that educational research, and this study in particular, can play a role in promoting this kind of positive change by providing opportunities for teachers to draw on their own experiences to engage in policy analysis, and by questioning current policy practices at every level. This could be transformative in and of itself for the teachers participating in the research. In addition, by capturing, analyzing and sharing this process with those responsible for district policy, it could also encourage change within the policy process and better engage other teachers in the future. Both of these aspects are essential elements of this study.
Purpose of the Study

My intent in exploring the context of official multiculturalism in Canada is to demonstrate how teachers are then situated specifically in relation to conversations about race. Race in Canada is generally rendered invisible through discursive practices that focus on culture and that insist on perpetuating the cultural neutrality of its own institutions, schools included. Teachers, as mentioned above, are often considered the objects of education policy and framed as the front line workers responsible for implementing or adhering to policy decisions. Similarly, teachers, as workers within the school system, are responsible not only for upholding the values that underpin the system, but also for perpetuating these values through educating students to become active citizens in Canadian society. These values are not explicitly articulated but are embedded in the very structure and processes of schooling, making teachers integral to maintaining the vision of ‘official multiculturalism’ put forth in policy and common discourse in Canada. Just as teachers are situated as the objects of policy, they are situated as the objects of multiculturalism; however, teachers are erased from participating actively in these conversations. This study is intended to infuse teachers and their experiences into the conversation.

Research Questions

Thus, there are two aims for undertaking this study: one, to elucidate the complex negotiations, pedagogical and otherwise, of ethnic and cultural diversity as experienced by teachers; and, two, to identify how teachers engage with education policy relating to multiculturalism and antiracism in order to potentially inform these policy-making processes, specifically in the Richmond School District. The research questions are:

1. How do teachers characterize their experiences in relation to ethnically and culturally diverse students?
2. To what degree are these experiences framed by or reflected in Richmond School District policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism?

**Positionality**

As noted above, census data and statistical projections demonstrate the increasing diversity of Canadian society, and yet in Canada it would seem that “[r]ace is the big elephant in the room that nobody mentions” (Dei, 2006). Conversely, such a context ought to mandate that teachers explicitly consider what diversity means for education. As a student and teacher in British Columbia’s Lower Mainland, I have witnessed and participated in complicated and often difficult negotiations of racial identity and intercultural relationships between and among teachers and students.

My research interests stem from my experiences as both student and secondary school teacher in British Columbia’s Lower Mainland. I pursued an undergraduate degree with majors in French and Political Science at Simon Fraser University, followed a few years later by a Bachelor of Education and teaching degree. For three years I taught Core French at an independent school in Tsawwassen, BC. I then began full-time graduate studies at the University of British Columbia, working as a Teacher on Call, a part-time teacher, and eventually a full-time teacher in the Richmond School District. During my undergraduate education degree, I was exposed to a wealth of literature that encouraged me to begin recognizing my own position as a racialized subject – something I had never before considered, or been forced to consider. It was a bit of a rude awakening; however, I want to be careful not to over-emphasize this moment as some sort of ‘coming of age’ or ‘heroic’ story. I am conscious of Audrey Thompson’s warning:

When we measure our worlds in terms of personal progress towards a social goal, and particularly when we understand that progress in terms of blamelessness, heroism, or
exceptionalism — our status as “good whites” and, in the case of anti-racist white teachers, sometimes “unusually good whites” — we lose sight of justice. … We remain at the center of our anti-racist projects. (Thompson, 2003, p.391)

As such, though my educational intervention with regards to being a racialized subject is directly relevant to my current research interests and is thus worth noting, it is not sufficient to rest on this moment and imply that any kind of antiracist work has been done. It is the inaction of such solipsism that provokes anxieties in white teachers and scholars invested in antiracism, as we constantly risk ignoring our own privilege and roles within a racialized society by naming ourselves as ‘good whites’. We risk positioning ourselves as the ‘perfect stranger’, blissfully ignorant of the very real relationships that we have and have had with racialized Others, relationships governed by dominant representations of ‘them’ and ‘us’ (Dion, 2007). Worse, we risk reifying the centrality of whiteness in a way that continues to marginalize those very voices that ought to be both the start and end points of antiracist work. Recognizing these risks may not be enough to mitigate them, but I mention my educational experience as merely a catalyst, not as a progressive act in and of itself. I was encouraged to see things in my education contexts that had previously been invisible to me, such as the fact that my teachers and teaching colleagues were predominantly white, while the demographics of students were becoming predominantly non-white.

These experiences have led me to constantly question how my own position as a white teacher impacts the relationships I have with students, most of whom come from different racial and cultural perspectives. This quandary is also the basis for a wide array of literature regarding how teachers – a profession consisting predominantly of white females – are and/or ought to be negotiating teaching multicultural student bodies, as well as what the tenets of multicultural
education ought to be. Further, this study hopes to link this reflection to education policy, encouraging teachers to recognize the power of policy in defining multicultural education, and to become actively engaged in articulating a more accurate and meaningful vision of multiculturalism in schools.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework informing this work is critical antiracist theory as articulated by several Canadian antiracist theorists. Dei (1996) articulated the common underpinnings of critical antiracism in Canadian education as having “an academic and a political agenda, one that seeks to rupture the modus operandi of schooling and education. That is, to problematize and deal with how schools function to reproduce white (patriarchal) dominance” (p.250). This definition emphasizes that critical antiracism is necessarily rooted not only in its academic work, but also in the work of actively promoting change in our education system – it is a form of praxis. This vision of critical antiracism is congruent with the methodology of this study: critical policy analysis (CPA), the goals of which include deconstructing the policy process and ultimately transforming it for the better. In order to address the research questions, I combined CPA with individual interviews and a type of focus group in which all participants engaged in a collective reading of an antiracist policy text. This multifaceted, qualitative approach allowed me to focus on engaging in a textual analysis of a policy document as well as on exploring the lived experiences of study participants, both in relation to their work with ethnically and culturally diverse students and to their perceptions of district policy. I completed an initial policy analysis of the text used, which explored the relationship between education policy, race, and the city (Chapters 4 and 5). I also used transcriptions of all conversations with participants as a qualitative data set, from which I was able to construct a set of assertions (Erickson, 1986).
These assertions sought to articulate how the teachers participating in the study understood the relationship between education policy, race, and the city (Chapter 6). This process resulted in the construction of the following three assertions:

1) Participants talked more in terms of bullying and anti-bullying than in terms of race and antiracism.

2) Participants were concerned with how students understood racism and accusations of racism.

3) Participants talked about policy as disconnected from their everyday realities and as only minimally relevant to their teaching.

I also generated a minor assertion in support of this third assertion:

a) Participants did not see the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet as useful or relevant to their experience.

**Significance**

The goals of this research were humble, but were very much in line with the methodological and theoretical framework guiding the study. In using critical policy analysis, I set out to deconstruct and transform; however, the scale is small. I aimed to deconstruct antiracism policy through textual analysis linking policy, teachers and the city. I also aimed to engage teachers in this process so that they could involve themselves more actively with education policy, articulating how it does and does not reflect their experiences, and how it could better do so. By focusing on a policy document intended to address the increasing multicultural composition of the Richmond School District, I explicitly encouraged participants to reflect on how they themselves characterized their experiences working with diverse student populations and how the policy fits into those characterizations. This process pointed out many inadequacies
in the policy in question, resulting in feedback that I can now forward to the Richmond School District in the hopes that it will be considered in future policy amendments and/or in the policy process overall. Ultimately, I intended for the research to spark a review or updating of antiracism policy in the district, though this outcome remains to be seen. This study adds to the growing body of CPA research, as well as to the literature surrounding antiracism policy in education.

**Limitations**

Given the limited number of participants recruited for this qualitative study, findings are intended to provide in-depth analysis pertaining to the research questions within a very specific context. Findings are not, therefore, generalizable to other contexts, nor will they necessarily speak to the experiences of all teachers within the research site. This study may, however, provide data that could inform future studies or teacher activism within this particular policy context.

**Overview of the Thesis**

Chapter 2 of this study provides a review of pertinent literatures, starting with conceptions of multiculturalism in Canada and in Canadian education. From there I move toward a discussion on white teachers and whiteness, including proposed solutions to the systemic reification of whiteness within the school system. I then looked at the links between teachers and education policy, demonstrating the existing disconnect between the two and justifying the need for increased teacher engagement with education policy. Lastly, this discussion is contextualized within notions of and relating to the city. In combination, these bodies of literature assist in framing my research and in justifying the goals of this study.
The third chapter outlines the theoretical framework, discussed in tandem with the methodology for this study. I outline the tenets of critical antiracist theory and demonstrate the ways in which these theoretical underpinnings dovetail with critical policy analysis (CPA) as a methodology. I then outline the methods used to collect data, along with the reasoning behind those choices.

The following three chapters provide the data analysis of the study. Chapter 4 uses CPA to set up the context of Richmond, looking at how issues of race are framed through official representations as well as citizen opinions of the city. This context is then linked to the specific policy environment within the Richmond School District. Chapter 5 continues to use CPA to provide an initial thematic analysis of the policy document used in the focus group discussion with study participants. By highlighting the assumptions embedded in the policy text, I am able to lay the groundwork for the analysis of interview and focus group data discussed in Chapter 6. The final chapter summarizes the study and draws conclusions based on my analysis, including recommendations moving forward.

This study was inspired by both the increasing diversity of Richmond’s population and my own experiences as both student and teacher in Richmond. I identified a double-bind wherein teachers are erased from conversations about education policy and also, though separately, from conversations about race. It therefore became apparent that these two aspects ought to be connected and interrogated through the lens of teacher experiences; these erasures needed to be made visible and teachers needed to be written into the antiracist education policy process. Using critical policy analysis, interviews, and a focus group, this study enabled teachers to engage more actively with education policy, an element that is often missing from the policy process. It became apparent through my analysis, however, that this integration of teacher experiences into
the policy process does not guarantee that the process becomes more just. As such, the study provided feedback that will be forwarded to the Richmond School District regarding its antiracism policy in the hopes that this feedback will be considered in future policy processes. Ultimately, I hope that the current vision and articulation of multiculturalism will be questioned, reexamined and rearticulated in order to better engage and serve teachers and students.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

It is useful to begin by investigating the literatures promoting and critiquing conceptions of multiculturalism, the common neoliberal response to increasing diversity in Canada, and specifically in Canadian education. From there, it will become evident that polite notions of diversity and multiculturalism are inadequate as tools for social justice. I continue with an overview of the literature on critical multicultural/antiracist education, particularly discussions of whiteness, which may offer more useful insights into how teachers are or could better promote the tenets of social justice in their classrooms. Then, I delve into the literature on teachers and education policy, looking to paint a picture of the education policy context in Canada, and more specifically in British Columbia. Lastly, I explore notions of race, diversity, the city, and educational policy.

Growing up in British Columbia, I feel like I have always had a vision of what it means to be a multicultural country. Basically, I grew up defining Canada as a country where everyone is welcome, treated equally, and given equal opportunities based on the merit of their character and the fruits of their labour. Looking back upon the education that fostered this vision, it becomes clear that my definition of multiculturalism was misinformed and incomplete. Sadly, however, students today are growing up with very similar visions, and this despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. Many academics have noticed a similar trend and have taken the time to look more critically at the seemingly positive, outwardly just idea of multiculturalism and multicultural education and have exposed these concepts for what they are: neoliberal doublespeak. In an article looking at BC multicultural education policy, Shantelle Moreno (2010) used definitions of liberal ideology as put forth by Iris Marion Young and as articulated by Anne Bishop to provide a worthy analysis of current approaches to multicultural education in Canada.
She argued that liberal ideology promotes an a-historic and celebratory, yet superficial, approach to multiculturalism:

Introducing students to ‘other’ cultural celebrations, foods and customs is not considered poor practice because multiculturalism is entrenched in liberal ideology. Therefore, students are not provided with a holistic understanding of cultural difference which has undoubtedly been shaped by colonization, oppression and discrimination. (Moreno, 2010, pp.64-65)

Further, the discourse of liberal multiculturalism is enshrined not only in education policy, but also in federal legislation (Sensoy et al., 2010). One example of such legislation is the Canadian Multiculturalism Act, a policy that “has broadly communicated the idea that in Canada there is cultural freedom and equality of opportunity for everyone” (Simpson, James, & Mack, 2011, p.287). To frame multiculturalism in this way is to deny that inequality has or does exist in Canada, a discursive strategy that is effective in promoting the belief that any claim of unequal treatment or racism is therefore “isolated and singular and largely dependent on the individual’s interpretation of that experience, rather than on institutional constraints” (Simpson, James, & Mack, 2011, p.288). Treating such claims as isolated incidents reinforces the belief that there is no systemic racism embedded within Canadian institutions, which limits what can be talked about in discussions about race.

What also remains hidden behind the polite language of multiculturalism articulated within such policy documents is the reinforcement of an English-speaking, white norm that forms the root of what it means to be Canadian and against which all ‘others’ are compared (James, 2011). Therefore, while policy seeks to promote (and perhaps proclaim) the successful co-existence of all races and the preservation of the multicultural heritage of Canadians –
successful ‘social cohesion’ as identified by Joshee and Sinfield (2010) – it assumes that culture is something that has been and continues to be added to Canada, mainly through immigration, and the existence of whiteness remains unseen and unexamined. As James (2011) articulated, this means that “it is typical for ‘visible minorities’ (racial and ethnic minorities, except Aboriginals, are officially referred to here) whose heritage in Canada goes back generations, to be considered as having culture that is from elsewhere” (p.195), beliefs which prevent people ‘of colour’ from ever being considered or accepted as ‘true Canadians’. Further, in the increasingly neoconservative policy climate at the federal level, the interpretation of diversity is now swinging to the political right. Rather than interpreting this ‘addition’ of diversity as contributing positively to Canadian society (both socially and economically, as suggested by neo-liberal multicultural policy), diversity is presented as posing a “full-blown risk to social cohesion” (Joshee & Sinfield, 2010, p.65). This interpretation is taken even further as government officials publicly frame immigrants, and immigrant youth in particular, as potential threats to national safety and security (Joshee & Sinfield, 2010). The question then becomes this: how are the beliefs and assumptions implicit in both Canadian multiculturalism policy and multicultural education playing out in Canadian institutions such as schools?

James (2011) explored one way that this vision of multiculturalism has played out in school districts by investigating the call for an ‘Africentric Alternative School’ in Toronto in 2009. Reactions to the proposal by politicians, citizens and educators were largely negative, claiming that to create such a school was a step back to the days of segregation, and this despite ample evidence that black students were simply not succeeding in the traditional schooling system and required some kind of alternative. What James’ analysis most notably pointed to was the assumed cultural neutrality of the traditional schooling system, a system that purports to
welcome all cultures and insists that they are treated equally. In such a context, any difficulties that students experience are attributed to individual effort or circumstance rather than to the school system itself, however, the school system is not at all culture-neutral. Schooling is actually seeped in a specific vision of ‘Canadian’ identity, a vision “predominantly informed by, in English Canada, White middle class Anglo-European values” (James, 2011, p.197). To accept that an Africentric Alternative School is necessary is therefore to recognize the inability of the traditional schooling system to adequately meet the needs of Black students, which then calls into question the notion that all cultures in Canada can be and are being treated equally; such a school would call into question the entire paradigm of Canadian multiculturalism.

**White Teachers and Whiteness**

As mentioned previously, despite growing diversity within the Canadian population and within student populations specifically, teachers are still predominantly white (Egbo, 2011; Ryan, Pollock & Antonelli, 2009). It is therefore necessary to consider how these teachers and their own racial positioning as whites may work to challenge or reinforce the beliefs and assumptions outlined above. I have identified three common assertions articulated throughout numerous studies that focus on white teachers and teacher-candidates in particular: First, it is evident that these teachers are largely unaware of their own racial positioning as whites. Second, when confronted with their complicity in normalizing whiteness, they feel uncomfortable. Third, the normalization of whiteness is upheld through and within education, both individually (in response to the uncomfortable feelings evoked through self-recognition) and institutionally (via processes such as policy-making and the creation of administrative and teacher discourses).

Several studies conducted in this area have proposed frameworks for categorizing how white education students and teacher candidates justify or normalize whiteness, denying that they
are complicit in its maintenance or that they may be contributing to the unjust marginalization of non-white students. Hytten and Warren (2003) categorize student responses into four discursive appeals: appeals to self, appeals to progress, appeals to authenticity and appeals to extremes. Picower (2009) categorizes student responses into three tools of whiteness: emotional tools, ideological tools, and performative tools. Solomon, Portelli, Daniel, and Campbell (2005) categorize student responses into three themes: ideological incongruence, liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy, and negating white capital. Matias, Viesca, Garrison-Wade, Tandon, and Galindo (2014) sought to identify the dimensions of what they called ‘the white imaginations’ of teacher candidates, and also categorized student responses into four themes: candidates were emotionally disinvested in racial justice, they recognized that they are white but didn’t progress beyond that acknowledgement, they resonated in ‘white guilt’; students engaged and endorsed hegemonic whiteness.

Each of these frameworks is provided via specific analysis of the studies conducted; however, there are similarities across the frameworks that provide support for the notion that white students and teacher candidates play a role in perpetuating the normalization of whiteness through discursive practices. The future teaching practices of these students are therefore in danger of continuing the cycle with their own students (Picower, 2014), leaving little room for meaningful progress with regards to social justice. Kincheloe and Steinberg (2000) link articulations of ‘reverse racism’ or ‘unfairness’ (references to the liberalist notions of individualism and meritocracy) to the victimization many whites feel. This ‘poor us’ attitude is in response to the essentialist vision of all whites as oppressors of non-whites, despite the reality that not all whites have the desire or the ability to ‘deploy’ whiteness in the same way (see for example an analysis of ‘white trash’ put forth by Wray, 2006). The perceived injustice of being
labeled as oppressors based solely on skin color is exacerbated by the current economic climate in which jobs are hard to come by and affirmative action is challenging white (neoliberal) notions of fairness. This resentment is also drawn upon by the political right in efforts to reinstate white hegemony (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2000), adding layers to the discursive competition between white supremacy and social justice.

To combat these negative resistances among white student teachers, several scholars have called for a critical pedagogy of whiteness (Giroux, 1997; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2000, Maher & Tetreault, 2000; McIntyre, 2002; McLaren, 2000;). Common themes that persist throughout this literature linking critical multicultural or antiracist pedagogy and whiteness include fostering awareness, encouraging listening, and developing socially just practices in diverse classroom settings. These themes overlap substantially with the tenets of a culturally relevant pedagogy put forth by some multicultural education advocates (Banks et al., 2001; Howard, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1999). Specific strategies for enacting such a pedagogy have been documented at length by scholars and teachers, white and non-white, to provide a basis for improving practice (see for example Banks et al., 2001; McIntyre, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

**Teachers and Policy**

The purpose of this study, however, is not to reiterate the negative effects of whiteness, nor is it to congratulate those who attempt to implement a more critical or culturally relevant pedagogy. Rather, it is to elucidate how teachers make sense of their relationships with diverse student bodies, and to then have teachers explore how those experiences are framed by or reflected in district policy, with the goal of possibly informing future policy-making. The definition of policy that I am using here is *policy as process*, which refers to “the politics involved in the recognition of a ‘problem’ which requires a policy response, through the
formulation and implementation stages, including changes made along the way” (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997, p.24). This definition encourages recognition of the contestation occurring at all stages of the policy process. Further, it is necessary to define the scope of what I am considering as policy texts. I am defining policy texts in a broad sense, including but not limited to what would be considered ‘official’ policy documents. I agree with Weaver-Hightower, who argued that “today’s policies do not always look like policies and are not always named ‘policies,’ even when they function that way” (2008, p.157). As such, I open up my analysis to include documents that “act in the capacity of policy” and that “create or uphold particular discourses or become de facto policy in the absence of mandates” (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, p.158).

This link between teachers and policy, thus defined, is important given that policymakers often frame teachers as a workforce that needs to be ‘managed’ rather than attempting meaningful collaboration in the policy process. For example, Ball (2003) outlined the ways in which a culture of educational reform, brought about through education policy reform, draws on what he called ‘policy technologies’ – the market, managerialism and performativity – to manage teacher work. He defined performativity as “a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgments, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic)” (Ball, 2003, p.216). He then went on to discuss the impact of performativity on teachers and he observed how teachers, being judged by standards into which they gave no input and that are incongruent with how they perceive the purpose of education and the work that they are undertaking with students, can become disillusioned with education altogether.
Similarly, Ozga (2000) outlined the ways in which teachers are often framed by policy-makers as a workforce that must be managed, objectifying their role in the policy process. It follows that teachers within such policy contexts might react by disassociating from policy and attempting to go about their daily work regardless of what is happening outside of their classroom doors, or they may dissociate from education in its entirety and choose to leave the profession (Ball, 2003). Education policy could therefore be seen as either irrelevant to their everyday realities, or as unreasonably attempting to manage those realities. In either context, the relationship between teachers and policy is not productive, leaving teachers erased from and frustrated by policy conversations.

This erasure becomes twofold when considering the relationship between teachers and conversations about race, especially given that it is rare for these discussions to happen overtly in Canadian contexts. The degree to which this occurs is largely dependent upon how those making policy perceive the purpose of education:

The swings in the relationship between state and profession are connected not only to the nature of the tasks that teachers do, but also to the broader context within which they work – in particular to the economic context and the degree of pressure on education to contribute to economic growth, or the degree of pressure on education to build social solidarity or cultural cohesion. (Ozga, 2000, p.14)

Ozga’s research points to the fact that political will regarding the purposes of education is governed by the political agenda supported at a specific time in a specific place. On the scale between more conservative and more progressive political agendas, policy becomes about either management of teachers as resources, or about ensuring professional autonomy for teachers. In the current context whereby neoliberal market values clash with neoconservative romanticization
of ‘tradition’ (Apple, 2007), this means that teachers (and schools) are regulated and managed through, for example, performative measures, standardization, and parental (consumer) choice.

Though these scholars write in British and American contexts, their observations seem quite applicable to Canada given the current conservative leadership federally and the (neo)liberal leadership at the provincial level in British Columbia. The relationship between teachers and policy is therefore tenuous at best as teachers are positioned as the objects of policy, their experiences ignored or worse, negated within policy texts. In policy texts regarding multiculturalism, this may mean that teachers are expected to implement policy by ‘identifying’ racism in their classrooms or hallways and ‘dealing’ with it according to policy procedures. The assumptions embedded in this approach to antiracism are easily identified: First, racism occurs in clearly identifiable acts. Second, racism is something that occurs primarily among students. Third, teachers are willing and able to identify racism and can be trained to address it procedurally. Further, it is worth noting that other policy texts that are not overtly focused on multiculturalism also play into how teachers are managed or expected to manage ‘incidents’ of racism. For example, Joshee and Sinfield (2010) highlighted the ways in which policies addressing safety in schools are embedded with the same assumptions, though using the catch-all phrase of ‘bullying’ to describe any inappropriate behaviours that may threaten social cohesion, including acts of racism. This study will encourage teachers to reflect on their experiences and to explore any overlapping or incongruent assumptions put forth in district policy regarding antiracism. In so doing, this study seeks to infuse teacher experiences into the policy process.

Diversity, Race, the City, and Educational Policy

I begin this section by reinforcing that to speak of ‘race’ throughout this project is to speak of a socially constructed category, “one linked to relations of power and processes of
struggle, and whose meaning changes over time” (Frankenberg, 1993, p.11). This is to say that race in and of itself does not carry meaning but rather is assigned meaning in a situated process of racialization, a process that has very real consequences and effects in the world (Frankenberg, 1993).

In Canadian society however, as mentioned earlier, race is seemingly something that we don’t like to talk about (Dei, 2006). Instead, we turn to friendlier terms such as ‘multiculturalism’ or ‘diversity’, which may have different consequences and yet which nonetheless contribute to the process of racialization. As Ahmed (2007) pointed out in her genealogy of the rise to popular use of the term ‘diversity’, “[i]f ‘diversity’ emerges after the failure of the term ‘equality’ to work, then ‘diversity’ itself might be read as symptomatic of the failure to achieve equality” (p.238). Ahmed (2007) noted that practitioners sometimes strategically activate the term ‘diversity’ as an institutional ‘nice word’ – a word that speaks to difference in a way that does not threaten organizations such as universities. It is also a term that has the potential to evoke notions of social justice depending on who is advocating for it’s interpretation, but at other times it may merely invoke liberalist notions of management and marketing. For example, ‘diversity’ can be a powerful tool in the marketing of a university program that seeks to appear progressive through the amount of ‘diversity’ it can claim to have, usually through it’s ‘accumulation’ of diversity through the recruitment of people ‘of colour’.

Similarly, in visions of the city, of the national space, or in institutional contexts such as public schools, diversity can mean and do very different things. Within the Richmond School District, the term ‘diversity’ is most often referred to in a psychological sense as in the diversity of learners within a classroom, or classroom ‘composition’ whereby learners have differing academic and social needs and abilities. It does not necessarily have deeper evocations of social
justice or equality, but rather speaks to the ‘diversity’ that occurs with the addition and subsequent obligatory acceptance of students with different learning needs into the regular classroom. ‘Diversity’ is thus a modern buzzword and a catchphrase that encompasses many possible directions – social justice on one hand and perhaps marketing opportunities on the other – making the use of the term a convenient but problematic instance of ‘double-coding’ (Fairclough, 2000 as described in Gillies, 2008).

The discursive shift away from ‘race’ towards terms like ‘diversity’ and ‘multiculturalism’ also has implications in relation to both the city and educational policy, particularly given the ways in which ‘diversity’ has come to play out in multicultural cities. Outlining this relationship, Keith describes the modern urban context:

Locally, the city does not merely curate the exotica of difference, it realizes transnational (or global) politics in its streets and neighbourhoods, and reveals the contested and limited nature of the national settlement in its schoolrooms and town halls. Likewise, the nature of the local settlement of the multicultural highlights the limits of various sovereignties that stretch from the domestic arrangements of marriage through the public arenas of education to the welfare state rights of migrant minorities and the relatives of second- and third-generation diaspora communities. (Keith, 2005, p.3)

This quote helps us to understand the multicultural city as constantly moving, and that terms like ‘diversity’ and ‘racism’ are not static ideas but ideas that also shift in meaning. There is also an implication here that education is an arena in which the preferred discourse of ‘multiculturalism’ codes ideas of race and racism in schools, and I would further posit that educational policy is key to that process (see for example Gulson, 2011).
When speaking of ‘the city’ I am also invoking notions of space and place, and although I am not undertaking a spatial analysis entirely here – what Gulson (2006) refers to as a ‘spatial education policy sociology’ – I am cognizant that space can be understood as both produced by social relations, and as producing social relations (Gulson, 2006; Webb & Gulson, 2013). Place, in contrast, can be conceived of as “an articulated moment of social space, as an outcome of conflict, difference and social negotiation, [which] has resonance with educational policy change as the outcome of conflicting views, discursive manoeuvring and compromise” (Gulson, 2006, p.263). As such, I see educational policy as both created by and within the parameters of social relations, and as a factor in creating social space, the impacts of which play out in particular places.

This type of analysis has been undertaken in multiple inquiries into the intersections of race, education, educational policy and the city. For example, Leonardo (2009) theorized the multiple ways in which the imagined space of the urban work to construct education in certain ways for certain groups of people in certain places. The urban is seen as a ‘sophisticated’ space that holds just the ‘right’ amount of diversity (not too much) to enhance the education of white students. Another imagining of the urban positions it as essential to the ‘authenticity’ of certain cultural practices and therefore as the root of credibility for people ‘of colour’, whereby schooling – particularly success in schooling – is seen as a ‘white’ activity. Lastly, the racist construction of the urban as a ‘jungle’ positions particular urban spaces as crime-ridden and hopeless, and students in these places as ‘uneducable’, potentially resulting in less funding given the reduced value or potential of such students. The author further illustrated the ways that these imaginings “contribute to policy creation that predominantly endorses behavioral and cultural
responses to urban conditions instead of an institutional intervention to address its deep structure” (Leonardo, 2009, p.160).

In a Canadian context, Levine-Rasky (2008) looked at how white middle-class Jewish parents in one neighbourhood reacted to the inclusion of immigrant children from another nearby neighbourhood into the public school that their children attended. She found that these parents enacted their whiteness and middle-classness when talking about immigrant children and the effects of their inclusion on the school environment, and even on the quality of education available to their own children. Those parents with the available social and monetary capital were likely to choose to remove their children from the public school in question in order to avoid the ‘negative’ impact of increased racial and economic diversity. In her analysis of how parents talked about this shift in demographics, the author illustrates how social spaces are both discursively and materially constituted by race relations, and how the impact of these intersections play out in particular places such as schools. Additional studies looking at similar intersections in other contexts also demonstrate how certain subjectivities are promoted or vilified through the discursive and material spaces of education and educational policy (Lipman, 2011; Zine, 2007). I illustrate some of these ideas within the context of this particular study in Chapter 4, after the following discussion on methods.
Chapter 3: Methods

In this chapter I outline the theoretical and methodological frameworks informing this study. I begin with a discussion of positionality and its impact on the research process. I then articulate how critical antiracist theory informs the research questions posed, and subsequently discuss the links between theory and critical policy analysis as a methodology. I conclude with sections on the research design and methods, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations.

When reading educational policy research, my initial instinct is to question who is conducting the research and to what end. Without this information, I find it difficult to discern the legitimacy of the work. The following quote succinctly outlines why this may be the case:

Contemporary accounts of research methodologies in the social sciences stress the significance of reflexivity to quality research. Reflexivity demands transparent articulation of researcher positionality and the significance of this to data collection and analysis. (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.48; emphasis added)

My assumption (and perhaps that of these authors) is that if the researcher fails to explain her reasons for choosing the work she does and thus fails to question how her own experiences and assumptions inform and guide that work, she is claiming objectivity. In the historically dominant positivist paradigm, an assumed independent relationship between the researcher and research ‘object’ was deemed necessary to ‘quality’ research (Guba & Lincoln, 2004); however, I chose to adopt a more critical approach whereby it was necessary for me to articulate my own positionality and reflect upon how it influenced my research choices.

Theoretical Framework

The theory informing this study is critical antiracism as articulated by several Canadian antiracist theorists (see for example Dei, 1996; Henry & Tator, 1994; James, 2011). These
theorists, while articulating antiracism in multiple ways, work from a common framework in which critical antiracism seeks to acknowledge the realities of racism in Canadian society, as well as the potential for change. As Dei (1996) eloquently stated, critical antiracism:

… is an action-oriented strategy for institutional systemic change that addresses racism and other interlocking systems of social oppression. It is a critical discourse of race and racism in society that challenges the continuance of racializing social groups for differential and unequal treatment. (p.252)

To enact critical antiracism is to deconstruct the structures that systemically perpetuate racial inequality and to disrupt them in a way that promotes social change – it is a form of praxis. It acknowledges the existence of racism in a pluralist society that officially embraces multiculturalism (James, 2011), yet does so under the guise of cultural neutrality whereby ‘culture’ is something that is imported through (mostly ‘visible’) minorities that come from elsewhere (Ahmed, 2007). Education is therefore a site very much requiring our theoretical and practical attention in that it is an institutional structure through which “dominating values, principles and traditions are actualized in everyday experience” (Dei, 1996, p.250). It is this recognition of schooling as a site for the reproduction of certain ways of envisioning race and racism that led me to pose the research questions for this study.

**Methodology**

Critical policy analysis (CPA) formed the overarching methodology for this research project, and although theorists define CPA in diverse and contested ways, there are a couple of characteristics that are consistent throughout the literature. First, CPA is concerned with deconstruction: to “defamiliarise the current ways in which policies pose problems” (Simons, Olssen, & Peters, 2009a, p.viii); to “deconstruct the many ‘taken-for-granteds’ in policy process
and policy texts” (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010, p.69); and to be concerned with “unpacking reality” (Troyna, 1994, p.82). This study focused primarily on this first aspect of CPA in its attempt to ‘unpack’ or ‘defamiliarize’ specific policy processes and texts. CPA, however, is not only concerned with describing what’s going on. In addition, its analysts are concerned with transformation: “doing something about it” (Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard & Henry, 1997, p.38); demonstrating “a deep commitment to influence the social and political world” (Simons, Olssen & Peters, 2009b, p.28); and “suggesting ways of altering it; to provide genuine support … in the struggle against the structural oppression of discernible groups” (Troyna, 1994, p.82).

As a researcher invested in a political project that seeks to deconstruct and transform, I am inclined to agree with Patton (1990) who asserted: “[h]ow you study the world determines what you learn about the world” (cited in Anfara & Mertz, 2006, p.xxiii). By deconstructing and looking to potentially reconstruct the current policy context in schools, I am inevitably looking at a site where I believe transformation is necessary, as mandated by the theoretical framework of critical antiracism. Guba and Lincoln further explore Patton’s assertion, stating that “the methodological question cannot be reduced to a question of methods; methods must be fitted to a predetermined methodology” (Guba & Lincoln, 2004, p.22). Similarly to critical antiracism, the methodology here implies praxis – the joining of theory and action.

To do critical policy analysis is thus to deconstruct the realities being shown to us and to work towards improving them, recognizing that the notion of ‘improvement’ is a value-laden concept that requires further definition. It is perhaps easy to identify the seemingly normative principles that CPA seeks to promote – broadly conceived of under the term ‘social justice’ – and yet these principles are in fact heavy condensation symbols that are only useful when defined more specifically.\textsuperscript{iv} The social justice aims of this particular study are humble, yet important.
First, I sought to provide study participants with an opportunity to engage with policy in a collaborative environment; a process that recognizes the social nature of knowledge and values the co-construction of meaning. Such a process was new to some participants, and I hoped that the experience would encourage them to form a more active relationship with education policy in the future and to meaningfully engage with their own conceptions of race and racism. Second, I am eager to report study findings back to the Richmond School District in order to inform their policy-making processes and to potentially influence future policy texts produced at the district level.

**Research Design and Methods**

The previous section explored the overarching methodology for this study as critical policy analysis (CPA), which is generally concerned with understanding policy processes and practices and with advocating change (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; Simons, Olssen, & Peters, 2009a; Troyna, 1994). The theoretical underpinnings of this approach are rooted in the belief that knowledge and meaning are co-constructed, social phenomena. I am therefore interested less in the formal aspect of policy ‘implementation’ in a traditional linear sense, and more in understanding the lived experiences of those actually participating in policy processes and practices. It is very much in this spirit that I posed these research questions:

1. How do teachers characterize their experiences in relation to ethnically and culturally diverse students?
2. To what degree are these experiences framed by or reflected in Richmond School District policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism?

Once the approval to conduct research was granted by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, I sent a completed application to conduct research to the Richmond School District (RSD), which...
was subsequently approved. Participants were then recruited via an Invitation to Participate (see Appendix A: Invitation to Participate) that was forwarded by the district’s Research Approval Committee to school principals, who were then invited to distribute the invitation to their staff via email or school discussion boards on Richnet (the district’s electronic communication system).

As per RSD guidelines, the Invitation to Participate outlined the aims and significance of the research as well as the research methodology. Participants were asked to commit to one 30-minute individual interview, followed by a 90-minute focus group. In addition, participants were required to have at least three years of experience teaching or working in secondary schools in Richmond and be willing to discuss the themes of education policy, teacher/student relationships, and ethnic and cultural diversity.

Although I anticipated that some respondents may be representative of what can be considered dominant teaching demographics (white and female, as discussed below), this was by no means a requirement for participation in the study; all teachers meeting the set of requirements outlined above were considered for participation. Participants were also asked to review and sign a letter of consent prior to participation (see Appendix B: Participant Consent Form). I had four teachers respond to the Invitation to Participate, all four of whom met the requirements outlined therein, as outlined in Table 1.1. Correspondence with participants outside of the interviews and focus group occurred primarily via email and was as minimal as possible.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Years as an educator</th>
<th>Number of Richmond Schools worked in</th>
<th>Current teaching area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary French</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To situate these participants within the larger group of Richmond teachers is somewhat difficult, particularly given the limited data available. The BC Ministry of Education publishes data focusing mainly on years of experience, age, gender, certification, workload, and salary. Thus, there are a few notable trends and absences. First, just over 70% of teachers employed in the RSD are female, which is comparable with the province in general (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011b). Second, teachers in the RSD have become less experienced over the past 5 years. The number of teachers with 1 to 4 years of experience has increased, while those with 20 years or more have decreased. The number of teachers with 10 to 19 years of experience has been the most consistent since 2006 (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011b). Though the average age of teachers in the RSD is consistent with the provincial average, Figure 1.1 (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011b) shows a more detailed breakdown of age groupings. This chart indicates that the district employs fewer teachers between the ages of 20 and 24, as well as fewer teachers between the ages of 50 and 64, with the largest age groupings being between 35 and 44 years of age. Fewer young teachers coming into the district may be attributed to hiring freezes due to declining enrollment and funding and subsequent teacher layoffs, particularly after the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years.

Table 1: Study Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Years as an educator</th>
<th>Number of Richmond Schools worked in</th>
<th>Current teaching area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Janet</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Elementary, Grade 5/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophelia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Secondary Counseling</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To situate these participants within the larger group of Richmond teachers is somewhat difficult, particularly given the limited data available. The BC Ministry of Education publishes data focusing mainly on years of experience, age, gender, certification, workload, and salary. Thus, there are a few notable trends and absences. First, just over 70% of teachers employed in the RSD are female, which is comparable with the province in general (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011b). Second, teachers in the RSD have become less experienced over the past 5 years. The number of teachers with 1 to 4 years of experience has increased, while those with 20 years or more have decreased. The number of teachers with 10 to 19 years of experience has been the most consistent since 2006 (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011b). Though the average age of teachers in the RSD is consistent with the provincial average, Figure 1.1 (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011b) shows a more detailed breakdown of age groupings. This chart indicates that the district employs fewer teachers between the ages of 20 and 24, as well as fewer teachers between the ages of 50 and 64, with the largest age groupings being between 35 and 44 years of age. Fewer young teachers coming into the district may be attributed to hiring freezes due to declining enrollment and funding and subsequent teacher layoffs, particularly after the 2008-09 and 2009-10 school years.
Absent from teacher statistics collected by the BC Ministry of Education are any indicators of race, culture or ethnicity, whether through ‘visible minority’ identification or language used at home. In fact, such data is very difficult to come by, as noted by Ryan, Pollock, and Antonelli (2009). These authors recognized the lack of data regarding teacher diversity and worked to gain access to and triangulate multiple data sources, coming to the following conclusions:

… in Canada the number of elementary and secondary teachers and school counsellors of colour have not kept pace with the phenomenal growth in the number of citizens of colour, and by extension, the number of students of colour. In fact, despite the increase in the number of teachers of colour over the years, the ratio of racialized teachers to the racialized Canadian population is falling, and in some instances, dramatically so. (Ryan, Pollock, & Antonelli, 2009, pp.596-597)

Though no data was included in this study for Richmond in particular, Vancouver was deemed to have a mere 20% of the teaching force that identified as a ‘visible minority’, despite the fact that 49% of the student population identified as such – a difference of almost 29% (Ryan, Pollock, &
Antonelli, 2009). This supports the conclusion that teaching in Canada remains a mainly white, female profession. The teachers that participated in this study are indicative of the ranges in age, years of experience and gender found in the district at large, and all participants were white.

**Interviews and Focus Group**

Because my research questions sought to explore lived experiences, the methods used to explore them were qualitative. I therefore began my inquiry with individual interviews with study participants. These interviews were semi-structured in order to draw out how participants interpreted and made sense of their experiences teaching diverse students in Richmond. Interviewing was an appropriate and necessary choice of research method for a few key reasons well articulated by Irving Seidman (2013). First, as mentioned above, choosing to interview participants implies a belief in the co-constructed, social nature of knowledge, a belief that underpins CPA. Second, interviewing places importance on language as a vehicle through which human beings make sense of their experiences (Seidman, 2006, p.7), which continues in line with CPA as a methodology. Lastly, interviewing is a way of accessing people’s stories – their lived experiences. The research questions in this study sought to explore the lived experiences of teachers teaching in a specific context and to draw on those experiences when looking at education policy. During these interviews, participants were invited to talk about their experiences working in Richmond schools as well as their prior knowledge of district policy regarding multiculturalism, antiracism and/or diversity (see Appendix C: Individual Interview Guide).

I then facilitated a type of focus group whereby the participants came together to do a collective reading of an antiracist pamphlet published by the Richmond School District. In a cursory investigation into the policy context of the Richmond School District, it is evident that
the subject of race is rarely addressed in explicit terms. Rather, policies often position diversity in relation to Canadian law, referencing documents such as The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms or The Employment Standards Act.

In the context of teaching, diversity is most often used to reference classroom composition and inclusion of students with disabilities, or in reference to extra-curricular clubs or activities. At first glance, it appears that the district takes a fairly ‘colourblind’ approach to race, an approach that advocates ‘race-neutrality’ – the idea that we are all the same and should therefore be treated the same way (James, 2011); however, the district has provided some materials that explicitly address race and advocate for an antiracist school environment, such as the pamphlet entitled *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* (Richmond School District, 1991). This pamphlet is unique in that it addresses the reality of racial tension within a multicultural context and overtly advocates for the equal treatment of students from all racial backgrounds. This material was therefore useful as a platform for openly discussing the realities of teaching diverse student bodies.

The purposes of reading and discussing this pamphlet as a group were twofold: one, to provide the participants with a common reference point and focus for discussion; and two, to encourage comparison between the framing offered by the pamphlet and the experiences of the participants. The group interaction provided an opportunity to create collective interpretations and understandings of diversity as well as multicultural/antiracist policy. The focus group was relatively unstructured, with the policy text providing the catalyst for conversation (see Appendix D: Focus Group Interview Guide).
Data Interpretation and Assertions

All conversations (individual and collective) were audio-recorded and transcribed, a process that led to the collection of four individual interview transcripts and one group interview transcript, totaling 72 pages. I then collated the individual interview transcripts and the group interview transcript into charts organized by interview question. I analyzed the charts by seeking common themes pertaining to students, teachers, diversity, multiculturalism, antiracism, and policy, which I then sought to construct into a set of assertions. I also undertook a brief discourse analysis of the policy text itself in order to highlight any themes that were not discussed during the interviews and to provide more in-depth textual analysis.

It is necessary here to explain why I call specifically upon the notions of data construction and assertions (Erickson, 1986, 2004). I aim to point to two important assumptions underlying my method of analysis. First, I support the position that “‘data’ in qualitative research must be found – they do not simply appear to the researcher – which is to say that they are not apprehended passively by the researcher as natural entities” (Erickson, 2004, p.486). Just as data collection is not an objective or unbiased process but rather is done through the subjective lens of the researcher, data analysis follows suit as something constructed by the researcher through that same subjective lens. In other words, data does not already exist within the information sources collected, simply waiting to be uncovered; it is an active process. I therefore support the subsequent position that “patterns or themes in the data also must be found … in a process of progressive problem-solving” (Erickson, 2004, p.486).

The idea of assertions (Erickson, 1986) is congruent in that I am not claiming to ‘uncover’ something that already exists, but rather to make claims and demonstrate how they can be confirmed or disconfirmed through the data as I have constructed it. And, while I appreciate
Erickson’s important distinction, I have decided to use the term of ‘construction’ – as in how I constructed my data – rather than his term of ‘found’ because it more strongly reinforces the important relationship between researcher and researched.

The next step in this problem-solving process was to code participant responses according to which assertion(s) each response supported or refuted in an attempt to validate my initial assertions. As Erickson states, “to test the evidentiary warrant for an assertion the researcher conducts a systematic search of the entire data corpus, looking for disconfirming and confirming evidence, keeping in mind the need to reframe the assertions as the analysis proceeds” (1986, p.146). Some assertions, therefore, were outright refuted by the data when considered in its entirety, and were therefore abandoned or reframed. The result of this work is discussed in Chapter 6.

**Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Work**

Issues of validity and reliability have been vigorously debated in qualitative research. In this project I followed Lincoln and Guba (1985, then Guba & Lincoln, 1994) who proposed two main alternatives to issues of validity and reliability in qualitative research: trustworthiness (which addresses criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability) and authenticity (which addresses criteria of fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity). This means, for example, that ‘trustworthiness’ is a crucial part of answering the question: “What criteria are appropriate for judging the goodness or quality of an inquiry?” (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.114). In this sense, ‘trustworthiness’ asks the following questions: ‘Has there been prolonged engagement with data sources?’; ‘Has there been persistent observation of emerging issues?’; ‘Have raw data been
adequately checked with their sources?’; and ‘Has there been sufficient triangulation of raw data leading to analytical statements?’ (Bassey, 1999, p.75). By constructing assertions using the framework outlined in the previous section, I committed to engaging with the data sources collected and demonstrating an evidentiary warrant for each assertion. I did so by “reviewing the data corpus repeatedly to test the validity of the assertions that were generated, seeking disconfirming evidence as well as confirming evidence” (Erickson, 1986, p.146), interpreting ‘validity’ as the notion of trustworthiness put forth by Guba and Lincoln (1994).

**Ethical Considerations**

The central ethical consideration of this study is mitigating any negative consequences for people due to their continuing participation as school teachers in the Richmond School District. Procedures for safeguarding confidentiality and anonymity were used, including the use of pseudonyms for sites and participants. Despite these procedures, however, anonymity is difficult to guarantee in this case. ‘Insiders’ reading the finished project may be able to identify both the site and the participants. Additionally, insider recommendations add further to insider identification, while the focus group will reveal to each participant the names of the other participating teachers (see Miles & Huberman, 1994; Punch, 1994).

Other considerations include respecting the rights of participants, as well as ensuring the security of study data. A key aspect to respecting the rights of participants is seeking their “free, informed and ongoing consent” (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2010). Participants were informed in advance of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and were given contact information in the event that they should need to express concerns regarding their treatment as research participants. Participants were also
informed of any potential risks of participating in the study, as outlined above. This information was shared with participants in the Participant Consent Form (Appendix B), which each participant signed prior to participating in the study.

In order to ensure the security of study data, all audio files and transcribed interview and focus group data have been stored electronically, protected by password. Tape recordings and notes have been stored in a locked cabinet in my home. Participants were also informed of and agreed to this security plan in advance as part of the process of consent. Approval to conduct this study using these ethical parameters was granted by both the University of British Columbia Behavioral Research Ethics Board and the Richmond School District.

The methods outlined in this chapter – methods grounded very much in the methodology of critical policy analysis and the critical theoretical underpinnings thereof – provide further situating of myself within this research project. It is because of my own epistemological and ontological beliefs that I have chosen to undertake this inquiry in this particular way. The following chapter sets up the context of the research site: the city of Richmond and the Richmond School District. I provide further situating of the participants themselves, and of the policy context in which they work. I then undertake a thematic analysis of the policy text used during the focus group in order to draw out some of the assumptions embedded therein, and to help situate the data analysis that follows.
Chapter 4: Education Policy, Race, and the City: Richmond School District and the Flows of ‘Diversity’

In order to analyze how teacher experiences are framed by or reflected in Richmond School District policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism, it is important to first look at how those policies are situated within (or framed by) the social and political environment of the city. In this chapter I therefore analyze some of the ways that race and diversity, the city, and educational policy interact. I outline the demographic context of Richmond, explicating the diverse constitution of the city’s population. I then examine the socio-political context evidenced by the political positioning of concepts of ‘diversity’ and ‘racism’ through local debates in the media about the realities of multiculturalism in Richmond. These discussions work to contextualize how multiculturalism is generally taken up in the city and, by extension, in the Richmond School District. I then analyze the ways in which education policy interacts with and within the local context in order to ground the textual policy analysis that follows in Chapter 5.

The City in Context: Richmond, Race, and Education Policy

As mentioned previously, the increasing diversity of Canada’s metropolitan centres is particularly evident in the city of Richmond, a city located adjacent to the city of Vancouver in British Columbia’s Lower Mainland. It is home to a population of approximately 185,000, 65% of which is categorized as a ‘visible minority’, demographics that stand out in comparison to Vancouver, British Columbia, and Canada (City of Richmond, 2008). As demonstrated in Figure 1.2 (Statistics Canada, 1996, 2001, 2006), the percentage of Richmond’s population that identifies as a ‘visible minority’ is greater than its larger neighbour, Vancouver, and stands out significantly against the percentage of population identifying as a ‘visible minority’ in the
province and in the country at large. Though there is a trend of increasing ‘visible minority’ populations across the board, Richmond has undergone the greatest increases by far, catapulting from 49% to 65% within just ten years.

![Figure 2: Percentage of Population that is a Visible Minority, 1996-2006](image)

It is understandable that the student population in Richmond would reflect the demographics of the city at large, and though the BC Ministry of Education does not collect data on the ethnic or racial demographics of its students, it does collect data on languages spoken at home. This data indicates that 37.2% of students in the Richmond School District (RSD) categorize the language spoken at home as Mandarin, Cantonese, or Chinese; of students speaking one of the top 10 most common languages in the district, 50.7% speak a language other than English at home, compared with 42% who use English (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011a). This, of course, does not account for those families that perhaps identify as a ‘visible minority’ but choose English as the language spoken at home, as do some families who have been Canadian citizens for multiple generations; however, this data is generally in line with the city language demographics. Further, approximately 28% of students in the RSD are enrolled
in English as a Second Language (ESL) programming (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2011a).

This ethnic and cultural diversity is often celebrated and positioned as a key characteristic of Richmond’s identity, particularly by the city’s governing bodies. The city profile posted on the City of Richmond website describes the current population demographics:

Today, Richmond is a dynamic, multi-ethnic community. Much of the recent population growth has been made up of Asian immigrants. People of Chinese or South Asian ancestry represent more than sixty percent of Richmond residents. Newcomers have contributed significantly to the growth of the small business and retail sectors and have added to the diversity and vibrancy of the City of Richmond. (City of Richmond, 2011b, Profile, para.4)

The idea that Richmond’s immigrant population contributes to the growth (likely economic growth), vibrancy and diversity of the city points to such a celebratory stance. It also elucidates the vision of ‘diversity’ that the city is promoting – one summarized by Ahmed (2007) when referencing Ang and Stratton:

They show us how multiculturalism posits difference as something ‘others’ bring to the nation, and as something the nation can have through how it accepts, welcomes or integrates such others. This model of cultural diversity reifies difference as something that exists ‘in’ the bodies or culture of others, such that difference becomes a national property: if difference is something ‘they are’, then it is something we ‘can have’. (p.235)

The City of Richmond can hereby capitalize on the diversity it acquires through its acceptance of immigrants, benefiting from their contribution to small business and retail sectors. This provides a positive economic incentive to invite immigrants to establish themselves in the community,
which then has consequences for city spaces and future development. What the city’s website does not acknowledge, however, is the potential social tensions that this diversity may foster, and one needn’t look very far to find examples of the social tensions that exist within this diverse metropolis.

For instance, a debate carried out in the editorial section of The Richmond Review demonstrates the highly contested terrain that lay beneath the vaunted surface of this dynamic, multi-ethnic community. On March 4th, 2011 the paper printed a letter to the editor in which the author expressed frustration with non-English language speakers and some of the retailers in Richmond who choose to have non-English signage and marketing material for their businesses. The author explicitly stated that Chinese people are not to blame for their lack of English language, but rather city council is to blame for offering translations in Chinese and therefore, according to the author, discouraging new immigrants from learning English. The author ended the letter by stating:

I challenge and encourage the Chinese community to be the ones to take the initiative to let city hall know they don’t want all this translation thank you, but want to fully be Canadian citizens and integrate. Multiculturalism, integration and assimilation must go together—let’s bring Richmond back into Canada (North, 2011).

This letter is interesting in its assumptions regarding what it means to be a Canadian citizen and in the author’s vision of what the national space ought to look like – equating multiculturalism, integration and assimilation. The author argued that Richmond has been removed from what it means to be Canadian because of its large non-English speaking Chinese population, expressing the assumption that integration actually means assimilating to the pre-existing norm of English-speaking (and therefore colonial, and generally white) Canadians.
The author clearly felt comfortable expressing this vision of what it means to be Canadian, and this comfort can be interpreted as an example of ‘national managerialism’ as presented by Ghassan Hage (1998). In his book *White Nation*, Hage (1998) analyzed the ways in which race relations and racism are embedded in fantasies about a specific territorial space (in his case, Australia), and what that space ought to look like. Those who feel they have the ability or power to dictate the parameters around how that space is constituted – for example, who ‘belongs’ and who is ‘undesirable’ inside that space – are those whom Hage referred to as ‘nationalist managers’. These nationalist managers claim ownership of the national space and see themselves as occupying “a privileged position vis-à-vis the nation, a privileged mode of inhabiting it” (Hage, 1998, p.42). The author of this letter took on this role of ‘nationalist manager’ by publicly declaring a vision of national identity, one that is closely tied to the ability to speak the English language.

Hage’s spatial concept of managerialism also highlights the ways in which language, particularly the official languages of a nation, contribute to the nationalist manager’s vision of the national space, becoming an indicator of belonging within that space. Yoon and Gulson (2010) studied this phenomenon in Vancouver by looking at parental school choice in a multilingual East Vancouver community. Their study showed how white, middle-class parents chose to send their children to one neighbourhood school over another in an attempt to ensure the quality of their children’s education in the official languages (either English or French). The other neighbourhood school, in contrast, was home to a significantly higher percentage of ESL learners. This division of space based on language use creates what the authors referred to as a ‘stratilingual’ city wherein languages play an important role in the hierarchy established to protect and perpetuate ideas of a white nation: “[w]hile all Canadians are by definition citizens of
the country, with ostensibly equal rights and freedoms, some migrants face socio-economic stratification on the basis of their mother tongue and its associated profits” (Yoon & Gulson, 2010, p.714). Yoon and Gulson explicated the links between language, ethnicity, race, city and nation, demonstrating how language becomes a substitute for talking explicitly about racial and ethnic exclusion from the national space by those who use their linguistic and social capital to occupy positions of power – Hage’s ‘nationalist managers’:

… it is inadequate to suggest the choice of language or other cultural learning in the particular national context is simply personal preference. Parental school choice is not a random, individualistic choice, but rather needs to be understood as a choice to maintain advantageous social positions through the accumulation of pertinent symbolic capital.

(Yoon & Gulson, 2010, p.715)

The letter to the editor discussed here is another example of how language is tied to visions of the City of Richmond, and more broadly of the nation: English speakers and the whiteness associated with the colonizing language are privileged – are ‘pertinent symbolic capital’ within the national space – leaving non-English speakers to either remain outside of that space or to assimilate in an attempt to enter therein.

This letter provoked much response, including a controversial response by one Ray Lin that was published on March 26th, 2011. In Mr. Lin’s letter entitled Assimilation was never intended, he argues that many Chinese view themselves as merely expatriates, “living in Canada for a short-term purpose, be it providing our kids to an easier education environment, setting up a business, or even just taking a long vacation” (Lin, 2011). He goes on to say that many Chinese enjoy the resources that Canada provides to them and they are willing to take advantage of them, but that they have very little desire to become Canadian. These statements infuriated many
Richmond citizens and nine responses, all in the form of letters to the editor, were published in the following two editions of The Richmond Review.

Many of the responses came from first to third generation immigrants who refuted Lin’s claims, insisting that immigrants come to Canada to make a long-term commitment to this country; however, some responses pointed to the politics of immigration and the federal government’s supposed policy shortfalls. One letter pointed out that vacationers cannot take advantage of social assets such as healthcare and education, including ESL training offered by schools (Pooransingh, 2011). That author went on to state, “[p]erhaps Immigration Canada should start asking a new question in the citizenship application: How long will your ‘vacation’ in Canada be?” (Pooransingh, 2011). The debate has made its way onto the agenda of the Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee, a committee mandated to “enhance intercultural harmony and strengthen intercultural co-operation in Richmond” (City of Richmond, 2011a, Advisory Committees, para. 14), and City Hall recently heard a formal proposal brought forth by a group of concerned citizens calling for a by-law enforcing the use of English on all retail signs in the city. This motion was turned down initially by city council, however the debate continues and became a hot topic among candidates in the 2014 municipal election race.

I mention this series of letters in order to demonstrate the volatility of the state of multiculturalism in Richmond. Along with the celebratory aspect of diversity presented by the City of Richmond, there are very real and contested debates occurring within the community regarding the definitions of Canadian identity, the role of immigrants in the city, and, further, the role of government and policy in setting those definitions, linguistically and otherwise. Immigration in particular is a common theme throughout these letters, urging readers to consider (and critique) Richmond’s unique immigration context. Census data for Richmond indicates that
immigrants “make up 57% of the City’s population (99,660 in 2006), which is the highest proportion of any municipality in Canada” (City of Richmond, 2008). Figure 1.3 (Statistics Canada, 2006) demonstrates how this percentage compares with the province and the country.

![Figure 3: Percentage of Population that is Immigrants, 2006](image)

Approximately two-thirds of Richmond immigrants have immigrated since 1991, with the peak immigration boom taking place between 1991 and 1996 and the vast majority (81.6%) of immigrants coming from Asia and the Middle East (City of Richmond, 2008). Similarly to the concept of language, immigration acts as shorthand for more explicit dialogue about ethnicity and race.

In a second letter by Mr. Lin, he added to the debate regarding immigration, stating that “many immigrants are no longer ‘refugees’ or the poor seeking a better life in Canada; rather, many of them are actually the wealthy and gifted people exploring more opportunities in this land” (Lin, 2011b). Interestingly, Lin’s comments work to perpetuate stereotypes regarding
immigrants (Chinese immigrants in particular) that are not supported by census data and yet that may work to fuel resentment of that community. In his first letter, he claims that Chinese immigrants come to Canada to take advantage of its resources; in this letter, he claims that many immigrants are wealthy and gifted. Conversely, income levels of Richmond families are, in general, slightly lower than those in Vancouver and in the province, as demonstrated in Figure 1.4 (Statistics Canada, 2006). vi That said, unemployment in Richmond sits at a fairly low 5.7% compared with the national average of 6.8%, and the city has the highest jobs-to-labour-force ratio (1.24) of municipalities in Metro Vancouver (City of Richmond, 2008).

![Figure 4: Median After-tax Family Income, 2006](image)

Similar debates about immigration, class, and race have sometimes taken on a cruder and more explicit character, resulting in blatantly visible acts of racism. For example, in the summer of 2010 The Vancouver Sun ran a series of articles reporting racist, anti-Chinese graffiti in central Richmond. City spokesperson Ted Townsend responded to the incidents publicly: “‘[C]ertainly it’s not symbolic of Richmond,’ he said. ‘Obviously it’s upsetting and it’s disturbing. I don’t see this as a part of an epidemic. It’s a couple of isolated incidents.’” (Bennett,
Townsend dismissed these incidents as isolated acts not indicative of a more endemic anti-Chinese sentiment in Richmond, once again reinforcing the tendency to celebrate diversity without recognizing its constant volatility or providing any real recognition of how multiculturalism is being lived in Richmond. Further incidents of racist graffiti occurred and were reported on in the news, with one incident occurring at an elementary school in Richmond (ctvbc.ca, 2011). In all graffiti cases, Richmond youth were either charged or were assumed by police and community members to be behind the racist remarks.\textsuperscript{vii}

These stories point to a number of trends within the city of Richmond: First, the city and its officials formally celebrate the diversity of its population. Second, there are tensions created by such diversity that are rarely acknowledged and explored. Third, racism is downplayed in the media and by city officials as easily identifiable acts undertaken by ignorant, uneducated youth rather than examined as an indication of social tensions that are more deeply rooted, more complicated, and more difficult to grapple with.\textsuperscript{viii} Lastly, it is evident that there is a double-coding occurring both in the media and by those who take on the role of nationalist managers. The voices of youth in these debates are marginalized at best and criminalized at worst, leaving us to assume that the education system is failing to create the kind of harmony in diversity that the city seeks to celebrate. This also creates an atmosphere in which public servants such as teachers are encouraged to celebrate diversity and think about or respond to racism only as individual instances occur. I discuss this idea in the following chapter.
Chapter 5: Thematic Analysis of the Policy Text

The context described in the previous chapter provides some insight into how teachers may read and respond to policy regarding multiculturalism and/or antiracism, as they were asked to do in this study. Initially, however, it is important to situate and analyze the *Racism: If we don't stop it, who will?* document as an example of policy, which requires a brief discussion regarding the definition of policy being used here. Though such definitions are always highly contested and constantly evolving, it can generally be said that more traditional definitions have been rooted in functionalism, defining policy as a linear process of formation, implementation, and evaluation. Through this definition, policy occurs in response to agreed upon problems that arise in a society with a shared set of values. There are, however, several reasons that this approach to defining policy is problematic. Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard and Henry (1997) provided a useful critique of this approach, recognizing that what are deemed social ‘problems’ are often the result of very political power struggles. The policy process thus begins much earlier than traditional functionalist definitions would have us believe; the process begins with the power dynamics of problematization – how problems become conceptualized as such:

Problems come into discourse and therefore into existence as reinforcements of ideologies, not simply because they are there or because they are important for wellbeing. They signify who are virtuous and useful and who are dangerous or inadequate, which actions will be rewarded and which penalized. They constitute people as subjects with particular kinds of aspirations, self-concepts, and fears, and they create beliefs about the relative importance of events and objects. They are critical in determining who exercise authority and who accept it. They construct areas of immunity from concern because those areas are not seen as problems. (Edelman, 1988, p.12)
It is worth quoting Edelman extensively here to demonstrate that investigating who holds the power to define a problem and to what ends are not only questions worthy of exploration, they are crucial questions in undertaking critical policy analysis. He also situated what has become known as the *policy-as-discourse* approach to policy analysis, investigating the language in which policy comes into being and how that language constitutes subjectivities. As such, it is necessary to explore the context in which the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet was deemed necessary, and how it was subsequently discussed, written, and published. Further, the more traditional, functionalist definition of policy restricts analysis to those documents that have been deemed ‘official’ policy by their makers, neglecting to recognize the broad realm of unofficial policy that governs organizations such as school districts. Although pamphlets are not ‘official’ policy documents, they are an important articulation of the discourse within which policy is situated and therefore offer insight into the complex policy process as described, for example, by Edelman (1988) and Weaver-Hightower (2008). As the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet was published, endorsed, and distributed by the RSD, it can be considered an example of policy, thus broadly conceived. As such, I begin with a brief genealogy of the policy document. From there, I will delve into an initial analysis of the document itself, using a *policy-as-discourse* approach as put forth by Edelman.

Researching the historical context of the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet proved somewhat difficult given that it was discussed, written, and put forth for publication by the Richmond Multiculturalism Committee (RMC), a committee that disbanded sometime in 2000. Minutes for these committee meetings were not recorded, but according to retired teacher and former committee member Roz Johns (personal communication, May 15, 2011), the RCM was an advisory committee to the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and other school
board personnel and was composed of a Richmond Teachers' Association Representative, a principal/vice-principal, a member of S.U.C.C.E.S.S., a member of the Richmond Multicultural Concerns Society (RMCS), a school trustee, an ESL Co-ordinator, an ESL teacher, a school counselor, and a few others. The committee was formed to discuss emerging issues in the district as the Richmond School District saw a high growth of newcomers mainly from Hong Kong, and later China and Taiwan. According to Johns, the pamphlet was created in the following context:

The goal of the *No Racism* brochure was to ensure that students and parents knew that policy existed to deal with racism in the schools, how to report incidents of racism and what responses could be expected. The population of “New Comers” grew very quickly and unfortunately, there were a lot of misunderstandings that resulted in name calling and bullying. Problems that had always existed in Richmond but had not been on the radar also surfaced. The committee identified issues, had discussions, made policy and immediate action suggestions to the appropriate school board personnel. The British Columbia Teachers’ Federation provided a lot of information, research, presenters and Workshops. (personal communication, May 15, 2011)

The pamphlet was written mainly by Tony Carrigan – the district ESL Coordinator and RMC chair at the time – with input from the entire committee. It was published in the early 1990’s, then again a few years later with some minor edits. Carrigan has since retired, but he had this to say about the context in which the pamphlet was created:

If you lived in Richmond in the early 90’s, you would know why it was deemed necessary. This community underwent extreme demographic change. It also went under extreme cultural change from a farming and fishing suburb to a modern, somewhat cosmopolitan city. (personal communication, May 18, 2011)
Based on these communications, it seems that the pamphlet was created in response to what were deemed racist acts occurring within the district, and to inform community members about what steps were being taken to address those incidents. It also provided a warning to community members regarding the consequences of such acts. Carrigan noted that the process of articulating the definitions and responses put forth in the pamphlet was difficult, and though he doesn’t recall the approval process for the publication, he states that it “was vetted through senior management at some point. … In those days, there was much more opportunity for individual initiative” (personal communication, May 18, 2011). The implication here is that individuals were welcome to take action surrounding the issues that were relevant to them or about which they were passionate, which is perhaps no longer the case in the current context of bureaucratization and restricted funding.

These comments also shed some light on the multiple ways in which racism in the RSD was constructed leading up to the creation of the pamphlet, as simultaneously the result of an influx of immigrants from Hong Kong, as problems that already existed but had not been ‘on the radar’, and as the result of the transition from a small town into a larger metropolis. These differing constructions point to the contestation that would have made consensus around the content of the pamphlet difficult, however, the resulting document says little about these potential ‘causes’ of racism. Rather, racism is defined in more individual terms, as the result of prejudice and discrimination. This change in discourse refuses to recognize the context that brought about the formation of the RMC and the subsequent publication of the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet and in so doing, individualizes racism as acts undertaken by prejudiced people rather than a wider socio-political phenomenon. This is similar to how racism is talked about in Richmond today.
The committee did have a variety of representatives at the table including multicultural non-profit societies and multiple school board personnel, though there are some voices notably absent from these discussions – particularly those of students and parents. It also worth noting that the pamphlet was only published in English, thereby obscuring access for many of the newcomers that the pamphlet sought to inform. Taking these absences into account, as well as the potential that dynamics within the committee itself may have prevented certain members from expressing their ideas or concerns,\textsuperscript{ix} it becomes clear that defining policy as response to agreed upon problems that arise in a society with a shared set of values is indeed an oversimplification.

The ways in which the city – particularly as portrayed through the City of Richmond website, through letters to the editor written by citizens inhibiting the role of nationalist managers, as well as through the public reactions of city officials to racist incidents – interacts with educational policy as portrayed through the policy process outlined above, are now becoming clearer. It is fair to say that the policy process to which I refer here took place before the internet age of city websites and even longer before the incidents and letters to the editor that I have included here as examples. That is not to say, however, that there is no impact of one upon the other. The immigration boom in the early 1990’s in Richmond brought with it a wave of economic growth as well as a fairly drastic shift in city demographics. This shift instigated a degree of social upheaval seen in institutional spaces such as schools, where teachers and school staff were now visibly confronted with racial tension that had previously either been avoided through a certain level of racial homogeneity, or simply neglected by the racial majority until the demographic shift made it impossible to ignore. To address these tensions, which began outwardly manifesting themselves in obvious racial incidents between students, teachers and the
district sought to develop a policy that would provide clarity regarding how to deal with such incidents and that would outline consequences in such a way as to deter such incidents from occurring in the first place. This framing of racism as happening in individual acts works to focus the attention of teachers and school staff towards identifying and dealing with racism in a certain way, while allowing or even encouraging them to ignore other manifestations of racism, such as social exclusion or discrimination through more systemically and institutionally ingrained practices. The current discourse of diversity put forth by the City of Richmond works to hide racism in similar ways. The city outwardly values the economic contribution of immigrants, along with the vibrancy that they add by virtue of their ‘otherness’, yet the same city passes off negative racial incidents as individual acts perpetrated by ignorant individuals.

The educational policy process and the vision of the city are therefore mutually constituted, and have been closely linked in the era following Richmond’s immigration boom. City spaces, which once again are produced by social relations and which in turn produce social relations (Gulson, 2006), are the grounds on which racial tensions are playing out, and they are distributed as much across the city streets as across the school yard. This happens literally, in physical spaces where graffiti litters public parking lots and then scrawls across the outside of an elementary school. The tension is also present in the discursive spaces created through signage and language debates in city newspapers, and the policy language written and either taken up or ignored by teachers when mediating racial incidents in school classrooms and hallways. It is this process of constant yet shifting mutual constitution and reconstitution that brings the spaces of the city and those of educational policy together.

On the other hand, when the policy process results in a written document intended to address a particular place – as in a particular social context at a particular moment in time – it is
almost as though it becomes (or attempts to become) frozen in time and space. In the case of this particular city and this particular policy document, I would say that this is the case, and that they are stubbornly attempting to remain relevant to one another despite the need for substantive change in how we frame racism in our city and in our schools.

**Racism in RSD: Policy Constructions of ‘Tolerance’ and Avoidance**

Having established the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* document as an example of policy and having illuminated some of the contestation and power dynamics present in its creation and in its relationship with the city, I now turn to an initial textual analysis of the document itself, highlighting some of the discursive strategies and assumptions embedded therein.

The document is divided into three sections: *Expressions of racism, General guidelines for response,* and *Consequences.* By dividing the pamphlet as such, racism is positioned as mainly (or even uniquely) expressed in visible, easily identifiable ways or ‘expressions’. There is also an assumption that the process of ‘dealing with’ racism is a fairly linear one, beginning with the initial ‘expression’ of racism – the ‘incident’ – and then moving on to the response, and then to the consequence, which applies only to the aggressor. It is worth looking at each of these sections in more detail to further support this analysis.

The first section, *Expressions of racism,* identifies and defines four distinct groups involved in ‘incidents’ of racism: the victim, the aggressor, onlookers, and staff. Labeling these roles and defining them separately from one another yet in relation to a common racist ‘incident’ implies that these roles are easily identifiable, are clearly differentiated, and do not overlap. As such, a staff member cannot be deemed the victim or the aggressor – staff are assumed to be either witness to the incident or made aware of the incident by others, not directly involved.
Though the pamphlet does concede that racial incidents can take many forms, the examples given are divided into the categories of verbal, written, and physical incidents. Perhaps these types of incidents are highlighted because they are common forms of expressions of racism, however, there is no acknowledgement of racism occurring in ways that are more systemic in nature and thus more difficult to identify.

Limiting the definition of racism to its overt forms is problematic in that it discursively limits our vision of what could be constituted as racism. Since this pamphlet assigns the role of responder to teachers and staff, it also works to provide us with a vision of what to look out for, potentially drawing our attention away from other possibilities. For example, the terms set out in this pamphlet do not encourage teachers to look for more subtle potential indicators or practices of racism such as segregation between groups in hallways or cafeterias, or practices embedded in school procedures such as hiring school staff or selecting who will be presented with scholarships and school awards at the end of the year. This is the exact process of construction referred to above, whereby problems, when framed a certain way, “construct areas of immunity from concern because those areas are not seen as problems” (Edelman, 1988, p.12). One must assume that the remaining sections of the pamphlet can therefore only be applied to these explicit expressions of racism and not to what may be hidden beyond our limited vision of what could be recognized as such.

The second section of the pamphlet, *General guidelines for response*, indicates that staff must ‘respond’ immediately to such incidents and outlines what such responses should entail, including support for the victim, follow-up with the aggressor, and learning as a school community. This section refers to human rights as documented in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and states that the Richmond Board of School Trustees “has a strong commitment
to the elimination of racial incidents in the school system” (RSD, 1991). This is to be achieved through promoting an atmosphere of *tolerance* and *respect for individual differences*.

The language used here indicates that the reality of multiple ethnicities and races within the school district (as brought about through rapid immigration) is something to be *tolerated*, reinforcing the centrality of the ‘norm’ that must *tolerate* those that do not fit into it – the ‘other’.

Myriad feminist critiques of this kind of multicultural language point to its problematic implications, as discussed earlier in reference to the city’s vision of diversity as something that ‘others’ have and that the city (or in this case, schools) therefore acquires through the presence of those ‘others’ – the addition of the ‘other’ that sits inside the same national space, but outside of the central ‘norm’.

While *tolerance* has the positive implication of an absence of conflict (read here as an absence of *racial incidents*), there is no movement towards deeper, more meaningful interactions between people. In contrast, the notion of *tolerance* goes against the seemingly positive ‘diversity’ put forth to the public by Richmond City officials, in which ‘diversity’ is something to be used socially and economically – the second part of the idea of ‘diversity’ offered by Ahmed. As noted earlier, the city positions immigrants as contributors, as adding to the *growth* and *vibrancy* of the community. The context in Richmond is therefore twofold – on the one hand, diversity is to be *tolerated* and on the other hand, it is to be used. Teachers working in a system with two vastly different yet equally destructive definitions of diversity are bound to be confused about the meaning of ‘diversity’ and how it ought to be talked about, in classrooms and in district policy alike.

The final section of the pamphlet, *Consequences*, lists possible “consequences to the aggressors” ranging from interviews to referral to police to expulsion from the RSD. These
consequences are all reactive in nature, stemming from a racial incident as put forth in the first section of the pamphlet. Further, the consequences are framed as happening ‘to’ the aggressor, reinforcing a hierarchical disciplinary chain whereby ‘aggressors’ have no input in the process, but are rather the objects of disciplinary action. There is no collaboration or restoration implied in the process of allocating consequences.

I have outlined thus far some of the ways in which notions of race and diversity, the city, and educational policy interact. I have outlined the contexts that have driven my research questions, both in terms of demographics and in terms of how local social relations are mediating the discursive space in which diversity and racism are articulated. Public debates about what should or should not be considered essential elements of the national space, such as language use on retail signs, are working to shape social relations in a particular way.

The city space as articulated by D.M. North (2011) in his initial letter to the editor, sits outside of Canada and what it means to be Canadian if it does not wholly embrace English as its everyday language and the language of local businesses. The author considers English an essential element of the national space, and so the language itself becomes important social capital, working to privilege those that are able to speak English over those who do not. Further, the articulation of this view attempts to maintain the norms and social structures that privilege certain bodies (‘Canadian’, English-speaking bodies) over others (‘non-Canadian’, immigrant bodies) in spaces such as the City of Richmond.

In this way, space is both produced by and working to produce social relations, as articulated by Gulson (2006) and as explored through school choice by Yoon and Gulson (2006). I further argue that Richmond city officials celebrate diversity without recognizing the volatility of multicultural existence in the city as witnessed through these local debates surrounding
language and immigration, and that this stance works to shape how racism is talked about and seemingly ‘addressed’ within education policy in the RSD. I have then provided an initial thematic analysis of the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* policy document to further demonstrate how racism has been articulated within education. In the subsequent chapter, I examine how teachers wrestled with issues of race and racism given this city and policy context.
Chapter 6: Teachers and Racism

I provided a justification of my framework for data analysis in Chapter 3. Here, I outline the assertions that I constructed using the data charts collated from the collective individual and group interview transcripts and in relation to the analysis conducted in Chapter 4. I discuss each assertion in relation to the interview data, as well as in relation to my initial analysis as outlined in the previous chapters. I do so using Erickson’s (1986) format of stating my findings as assertions. Erickson believed that a goal of qualitative research should be to generate assertions, “largely through induction” and to “establish an evidentiary warrant” for these assertions by systematically searching for disconfirming as well as confirming data (1986, p.146). I followed this advice and thoroughly read, re-read, categorized, and re-categorized the transcripts accumulated from our discussions. From these readings and from the research questions – how do teachers characterize their experiences in relation to ethnically and culturally diverse students and to what degree are these experiences frame by or reflected in Richmond School District policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism – I generated three assertions that withstood subsequent analysis of disconfirming cases. In order to establish the validity of the assertions, I excerpt the transcripts. All quotations are presented in ways to illustrate the interpretations I make. The assertions are:

1) Participants talked more in terms of bullying and anti-bullying than in terms of racism and antiracism.

2) Participants were concerned with how students understood racism and accusations of racism.

3) Participants talked about policy as disconnected from their everyday realities and as only minimally relevant to their teaching.
Furthermore, I generated a minor assertion to support #3:

a) Participants did not see the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet as useful or relevant to their experience.

**Assertion 1**

**Participants talked more in terms of bullying and anti-bullying than in terms of racism and antiracism.**

Participants often referred to the issue of racism as being part of the larger anti-bullying discourse that attempts to repudiate discrimination rooted in multiple oppressions, race included. For example, during the group interview I asked teachers about their initial reactions to the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet and the first comment was regarding the terminology:

Jamie: So I guess the first thing that I’m wondering about is, just having kinda read through it quickly, what are your initial reactions?

Ophelia: I had a reaction because I was thinking of the terminology and I guess more recently that Barbara Coloroso bullying, the bully, the bullied and the bystander. I was looking at the words thinking ‘oh, they call them onlookers in here’. That’s why I thought it was old.

Jamie: Hmm.

Ophelia: Because that, those are the new buzz words lately.

In the same segment of the discussion, Charles concurred that the pamphlet seemed out of date saying, “I think also if it was a bit more recent I think you would have, like, references to cyber-bullying”. Janet also contributed to the conversation by talking about a series of lessons
delivered at the elementary level by ACT (Area Counsellor Team) regarding socially responsible behavior:

Janet: … what it’s doing is trying to empower in particular those children who are the bystanders, because that’s most of them really. You know, if you think about 100% of what a school student body, um, bullies you know are a really a small percentage, right? The victims? Probably you know a little bit more, but most of them are bystanders and most of them become adults who are bystanders right, and that’s the thing that, that’s the cycle they’re trying to change, that if you are seeing a younger child or someone being bullied, here are the things that you need to do, because the more that the peer group steps in, in actual fact, the more powerful it is.

By outlining the strategies undertaken through ACT lessons Janet demonstrated how at the district level as well as at the personal level emphasis is being put on bullying and social responsibility rather than naming specific forms of discrimination such as racism. Interestingly, further along in the conversation Ophelia pointed more explicitly to what she viewed to be a more pressing issue than racism:

Ophelia: See, I don’t like the term racism because for me I think a really common one, and I’m sure everyone here has heard it probably, is when you’re going down the hall or even group work and kids, mostly boys, are goofing off and they call each other, you know, uh, derogatory like sexism terms or homophobic terms. I mean how many times do you hear ‘stop being a faggot’? I think that is more common when you happen upon things than you know, ‘you are a …’ whatever other negative term you could say about a cultural group.

Jamie: Hmm.
Janet: It’s more being intolerant than anything…

During the group interview, participants avoided an explicit discussion about racism and instead, preferred to discuss the pamphlet in other terms such as bullying and intolerance, and to even to rank-order oppressions. Ophelia’s desire to refocus away from issues of race toward more pressing or common problems (homophobia) is similar to what Hytten and Warren (2003) call an ‘appeal to progress’ under a ‘discourse of mark-it’, a discourse drawn upon “in order to show how far we as a society have come in race relations” (pp.74-75). In Ophelia’s mind, we have moved beyond racism being an urgent form of discrimination to address. Rather, we need to be looking at homophobia since it is more common in schools. Just as the neoliberal notion of ‘diversity’ works to celebrate certain aspects and cover or conceal certain other aspects of the realities of living in ethnically and culturally diverse cities, the discursive shift in education away from antiracism toward anti-bullying and social responsibility also works to focus our attention in particular ways.

This shift or double-coding results in drawing our attention away from the very particular historically rooted injustices that have resulted from specific forms of discrimination. Additionally, this shift draws away from a focus on rights, which have legal and procedural attachments. However, when I posed this question to the group, the following interchange was useful in mediating my initial response:

Jamie: … I feel like to accuse somebody of not being socially responsible doesn’t have the same procedural, legal terminology behind it that something would be done.

Janet: However, if you use the word ‘bully’ in our generation here and now, bullying does have procedures right?

Jamie: Hmm, ok.
Kristin: Yeah.

Janet: Right? Bullying, especially given what’s happened to children over the last few years who’ve committed suicide or kids who have been killed by bullies, bullying I think actually right now, packs a bigger punch than that [referring to the pamphlet].

Kristin: And it’s more encompassing.

Janet: Yes, of they’re dealing with, so you have cyber-bullying, you have bullying in the classroom, bullying at school.

Kristin: And not just based on race, based on whatever it might be, yup.

The group hereby points to a procedural attachment to bullying in our current education culture: to invoke bullying is to set in motion a sequence of reactions/consequences that previously were attached to specific discriminations such as homophobia or racism (as referenced in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms). So, although it’s vague and all encompassing, and therefore loses power on the one hand, it gains power and perhaps ‘does the same thing’ in practice. Just as Ahmed poses the question, “what does diversity ‘do’ when it is ‘put into action’?” (2007, p.237), I ponder the question: what does naming something as bullying ‘do’? Based on our group discussion, it seems possible that it may do the same thing as naming something as racism. This is not to say that the replacement of racism with bullying is unproblematic – the mobilization of racism as an act of bullying dangerously flattens discrimination into categories that do not identify the disproportionate effects of discrimination onto different racialized groups – however, it is perhaps being mobilized in similar ways.

While participants were hesitant, as demonstrated above, to use explicit terms such as race and racism when collectively analyzing the policy document Racism: If we don’t stop it,
**who will?**, they did express concern regarding how students were using these terms. I used this part of the conversation to construct my next assertion.

**Assertion 2**

**Participants were concerned with how students understood racism and accusations of racism rather than how they themselves understood these ideas.**

Participants shared a couple of stories regarding how accusations of racism have played out in their classrooms and in their schools. First, Janet spoke of an incident where a student accused five other students of making fun of him for wearing his traditional clothing as part of a cultural exposition. Her opinion was that the student had misinterpreted the laughter of the group of students:

Janet: … And the question that I then reflected on and talked to many teachers about is: how do you disprove racism? When somebody claims that someone is being racist, how in heaven’s name do you say, ‘you’re actually wrong’? That, you know, this was a totally innocent thing – those kids were laughing at something totally different and you were so sensitive to this that you felt they were laughing at you when in effect you just came in in the middle of a joke or, you know what I, like how do you disprove it? As soon as somebody –

Ophelia: Uses that card, yeah

Janet: – Uses that word, plays that card…

Then, later on in the conversation, Ophelia offered another account of students ‘playing the race card’ in scenarios that she felt were unjust:

Ophelia: I can think of a couple of situations where a student has, has um, attempted to go the route of accusing a teacher of being racist.
Jamie: Hmmhmm

Ophelia: And sometimes, in the cases I’ve known of, which are not that many, I don’t feel that they were racist. I think that they, it was a matter of not liking the way they were marked. And so there’s gotta be, ‘the teacher doesn’t like me’. It’s taking ‘the teacher doesn’t like me’ to another level.

Kristin: Well, one that will maybe get a response.

This segment of the conversation is notable perhaps less in terms of what these incidents say about how students make accusations of racism, and more in terms of what these descriptions say about teachers. Specifically of interest is how these teachers themselves perceive accusations of racism playing out in their school contexts. Janet and Ophelia both feel that, in their experiences, accusations of racism that have been levied by students against other students or teachers are in fact false; they are ‘misunderstandings’ or attempts to change grades or otherwise gain sympathy.

There are a few different lenses through which to interpret this discussion. First, these comments point me to the work of Henry and Tator (1994) in which the authors stated: “White Canadians tend to dismiss easily the accumulated body of evidence documenting racial prejudice and differential treatment, including victims’ testimonies and experiences” (p.1). The authors describe what they call a climate of ‘democratic racism’ in Canada – the result of the inherent conflict between Canadian society’s coexisting egalitarian values and racist ideologies. Instances where the democratic vision is threatened, for example through accusations of racism, are combatted with an articulation of various myths and values (Henry & Tator, 1994), or discourses of denial (Solomon et al., 2005). The comments presented fit into this pattern in that they work to disregard or even discredit victims’ testimonies: the student was ‘so sensitive to it’ that s/he
clearly overreacted; the student was so upset due to feeling that the teacher ‘doesn’t like me’ that s/he was looking for a way to express that and inappropriately (or vengefully) turned to accusations of racism.

These statements also work to promote the idea that Canadian society has become too ‘politically correct’ or ‘hypersensitive’, arguments also used to further deny or dismiss the experiences and testimonies of racial ‘others’. Janet went further to express how she feels false accusations of racism are enabled within the school system:

Janet: Because as soon as you use that word [racism] in our culture, there are many things that start a process, right? Especially in our school system, we’re so sensitive to it that right away, you know, there’s that idea of guilt, right? But, um, that’s why I agree with you – I don’t like this word [racism] at all because I think some people draw on it too quickly.

Ophelia: Or become really hypersensitive to it. Like, it might not even be a fault of theirs, it’s just the way things are, or have…

Kristin: Evolved almost…

Ophelia: Yeah, progressed.

Here, these teachers are articulating a cultural shift toward ‘hypersensitivity’ whereby naming something as racist is too easily taken seriously, the implication being that complaints ought to be better investigated before setting in motion the ‘process’ that Janet mentions. Dei, Karumanchery, and Karumanchery-Luik (2004) offer refutation to this kind of challenge to claims of racism, speaking specifically to those that are racially oppressed in Canadian society and who wish to undertake antiracist work:
Such questions and challenges to the reality of racism are always fraught with problematics in that they serve to silence and devalue the subjective account. … [W]e must always remember to ask ourselves: Who requires this proof? To whom must racism be made both perceptible and understandable? … (We) are assigned the task of providing the evidence and (they) are vested with the authority to either dismiss or validate it. (p.8)

I quote these authors at length to demonstrate that what these teachers are describing are in fact instances of white teachers requiring such ‘proof’. They see themselves as holding the ‘authority to either dismiss or validate’ the claims of their students, and they commonly dismiss them.

Claiming such authority suggests that these teachers are also taking on the role of Hage’s (1998) ‘nationalist managers’ in ways similar to the authors of the letters to the editor described in the previous chapter. If teachers, who are predominantly white and female, perceive themselves as holding the authority to decide which claims of racism are and are not of real value, and if they are thereby dismissing student experiences of racism in the classroom, then they are playing an important role in establishing a vision of what can and cannot exist within the national (or city, or classroom) space. Those incidents or experiences not considered valuable or trustworthy may never make it to any formal review or resolution process simply by virtue of teacher interpretation. In this sense, while teachers are often situated as objects of policy and expected to merely implement policy by ‘identifying’ racism in their classrooms or hallways and ‘dealing’ with it according to policy procedures, they simultaneously hold an important degree of agency with regards to if or how policy becomes activated. Students are therefore taught that ‘real’ racism looks and sounds a certain way, and that if their experiences fall outside of these notions, then they are either wrong to assume that what is occurring is actually racism, or they are right but there is no use in speaking up about it because what they have to say will likely be
disregarded and their experience invalidated. It is very much in this way that teachers, by taking on the role of nationalist managers, may be restricting the vision of what is actually racism to include only incidents that are recognizable to them in very specific ways. If, as I suggested earlier, the city as well as educational policy documents such as the pamphlet discussed here are both putting forth similar visions of what constitutes racism, then there is hardly room for other possibilities. National, city and school spaces are presented and preserved as spaces within which white people hold the authority to define, value and mediate experiences of racism. Charles further expresses the assumption of such authority:

   Charles: Well, it happens, you know, sometimes in the classroom that you would hear like, somebody says to another student, ‘Oh, racist!’ or you know they would say that and like, you know, whenever I hear that I’m like, ‘wait, stop. You just said that, you know, he was racist – what happened? Do you have a reason to use that word? Because this word means something and if you’re just, like, throwing it like this. If he said something racist I’m gonna do something about it and I need to know what it is, but if you’re just using it like a slur, like any other word… if it’s not true, like, that’s not a joke.’

   Charles feels that students are using the term ‘racist’ in situations that do not warrant its use and, although students are using the language of racism quite readily, the implication is that ‘real’ racism does not really occur. Once again, the existence of racial prejudice is put into question. Although in Charles’ comment he does imply that the students themselves may be the ones that have to make the distinction between which accusations ought to hold weight, he ultimately has the power to validate or invalidate their claims as he will be the one to ‘do something about it’.

   Charles does not accept responsibility for enacting any kind of antiracist pedagogy whereby students are taught about what racism is and means and how they can counteract it or avoid
participating in it. Rather, he situates himself as the person responsible for merely responding to a critical incident.

Within this discussion there is also a sense that if ‘real’ racism were to occur, there are processes in place that would adequately address it – the ‘process’ that Janet spoke of, or Charles’ ‘I’m gonna do something about it’. This is perhaps plausible given that the Richmond School Board supports the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and there are also very formal consequences for an ‘aggressor’ outlined in the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* document. However, during the individual interviews prior to seeing the pamphlet none of the participants were aware of any policies specifically addressing racism, antiracism, or multiculturalism. It is therefore unclear whether teachers would be able to adequately or appropriately identify and/or resolve racial conflicts within a climate that seems to deny the existence of such conflicts from the start, and in which teachers are uneducated about how to address such instances if they were to occur. Participants were therefore confident in invoking district policy as necessary, though they were mostly vague regarding where they might find such a policy or what the exact content of the policy may be. I constructed my next assertion based on these observations.

**Assertion 3**

**Participants talked about policy as disconnected from their everyday realities and as only minimally relevant to their teaching.**

In the first chapter of this project I attempted to highlight the contested nature of the relationship between teachers and policy, whereby teachers are positioned as the objects of policy and as regulated and managed by policy within the current neoliberal provincial regime. In the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* policy document, teachers are positioned as those
responsible for responding immediately to racial incidents, and are also positioned as sitting outside of the categories of victim, aggressor, or onlooker. This assumes first that teachers are able to identify what constitutes a ‘racial incident’, that they can be trained to address it procedurally, and that they are willing to do so. In discussing both the pamphlet and their experiences in schools and classrooms, however, it is apparent that these teachers viewed policy as somewhat irrelevant to their everyday experiences.

To make this assertion, I must begin with an exploration of how these teachers defined policy, outlining how their definitions differed or overlapped with the definition I am using throughout this project. It is important to recognize the different visions of policy circulating between these teachers in order to better understand how they positioned policy in relation to their work and their reasons for positioning it in such ways.

When asked to define policy, all participants took a few moments before responding, perhaps caught off-guard by the question or looking to find the ‘right’ definition as though the question were a test. I attempted to assuage their apprehension by insisting that there was no one right answer. For Ophelia, she created a definition in terms of associations and opposites:

Ophelia: When I think of the word policy a few things come to mind. Um, one is um, consistency. Um, one is rigidity or lack of flexibility. … I’m thinking of the opposite of chaos and confusion. … Not a free-for-all. Um, policy. Disconnect. My word game, I can’t, I can’t put it all into sentences but these are the words that come to mind when I hear the word policy.

Ophelia’s definition appeared to be in line with a more traditional view of policy as linear and focused on outcomes. While policy promotes structure and consistency on the one hand, it imposes rigidity on the other. There was a sense of policy as a top-down, linear process with
teachers on the receiving end and yet from which they are disconnected. For Kristin, the definition was similarly traditional in scope:

Kristin: I would say a policy is, it’s the expectations and the rules and it’s, it’s more solid than a guideline. Like a guideline is something you may or may not follow. A policy to me is, is more along the lines of rules. But it also kind of includes expectations, so that’s to me what a policy is.

She emphasized that policy is somehow more enforceable than a guideline and that it is something to be taken more seriously, allocating a sense of authority to policy. Charles defined policy in terms of a reactionary process:

Charles: Policy. Now, um, something that’s developed by an administrative body to respond to a problem that’s been recognized or like, to have a policy I think something has been observed before and we’re trying to um, change the behaviour; we’re trying to set rules or set standards to make sure that we are all on the same page. Yeah, something like that. Yeah, that people would have to follow but they’re not necessarily followed by everyone. Or it could be a recommendation sometimes, and most of the time it’s kind of implicitly assumed that it’s mandatory.

Charles hinted in his response that the policy process, although still defined somewhat traditionally as a response to an identified problem, is perhaps a broader and more contested process. In viewing recommendations as potential policy, Charles pointed to a broader reading of policy than the other participants and he also articulated the potential for resistance. Teachers, for example, who might be expected to implement policy, may resist or choose not to follow. Lastly, Janet defined policy in terms of the following questions:
Janet: Uhuh. Who creates the policy? Based on what? What’s the criteria for the policy and how are you supposed to even bring that policy about when you don’t have enough money usually? Um, I think the policy-makers should have a sabbatical year that every seven years they should be forced into the classroom, because if you’re making policy that affects students and people in the classroom, you need to have people who actually remember what that was like. … So there, that’s as close as I can get to policy.

Janet’s questions and comments are interesting in that they demonstrated an intersection between a sense of political engagement that is somewhat in line with critical policy analysis (CPA), and a sense of disconnect as expressed by Ophelia. She questioned the problematizations leading up to policy and attempted to deconstruct the policy process; she also expressed the belief that those making policy are disconnected from the realities facing teachers in classrooms.

What these differing definitions show is that, as I posited earlier, defining policy is a contested and constantly evolving process. Their definitions also demonstrated tensions between policy as resulting in seemingly positive outcomes (such as consistency), policy as an authoritative process (as rules versus guidelines), and resentment toward policy as imposed by disconnected authoritative bodies. I therefore wish to keep these definitions in mind as I turn to a discussion of the relevancy of policy to the everyday experiences and work of these teachers.

Throughout the individual interviews, teachers reflected on their awareness of and relationship to policy, as well as on the relevance of policy to their teaching. For Charles, policy is relevant in that it provides a chance for teachers to reflect on their practice: “I think it gives us guidelines, stuff that you would already do, but sometimes being reminded is never bad. It always put it back to your face and always questions you, you know, what do I do? Is it right?”
For Kristin, she stated that the level of relevancy is dependent on the ‘strength’ and ‘visibility’ of the policy:

It depends a lot on what the policy is and how much teeth it has… if it’s a policy that people are paying attention to and watching then it would affect your teaching because you would be looking to really follow that policy. But I think if there, I think there are probably a lot of policies that don’t really impact our teaching very much because we don’t know about them or we’re not thinking about them or nobody’s watching to see if it’s happening and I think you really, I think whatever you measure is gonna, is gonna be what people are paying attention to…

Here, Kristin pointed to the highly political environment in which policy is created and implemented: which policies receive attention and have regulatory measures attached to them, which do not, and what that allocation of resources says about the relative importance of those policies. Further, although Charles and Kristin’s accounts seem quite different from one another, they both touched on the performativity of the teaching profession and the need to follow, or at least be perceived as following, the rules. If under a microscope, teachers will do what they have to and alter their programs as necessary to comply, even if it may compromise their sense of self-worth (Ball, 2006). Charles’ comments showed how this plays out in that policies encourage him to ‘question’ his practice and his decisions. He went further in his response to touch on how even the process of being involved in this research project encouraged him to question his way of interacting with students in the classroom, expressing a worry that perhaps he isn’t ‘doing enough’. Kristin highlighted the ways in which policies are or are not successfully implemented depending on how much attention and regulation are occurring. If a policy is highly publicized and regulation is in place to ensure compliance, then she felt that
teachers would pay close attention. If, however, ‘nobody’s watching’, then policies have very little impact. The relevance of policy to the everyday decision-making of teachers can hereby be linked to how strongly teachers feel they must comply in order to continue doing their jobs.

Kristin also pointed out in her individual interview that there are likely many policies that have no impact “because we don’t know about them or we’re not thinking about them or nobody’s watching to see if it’s happening”. When asked about the relevance of policy to her teaching, Janet talked in terms of the kind of policies she would like to see in place, implying that there aren’t many policies that she finds useful in her own work. She concluded that it didn’t seem realistic that policy-makers would have the time to create the kind of policies she would find useful given other, more pressing priorities. She further concluded that policy has very little to do with what she does in the classroom. So if teachers are feeling like policy is fairly irrelevant to their work unless it is a political hot topic, the question then becomes: where does the Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will? pamphlet sit in terms of relevance to teachers?

**Assertion 3a**

**Participants did not see the Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will? pamphlet as useful or relevant to their experience.**

During the individual interviews, I asked teachers about their level of familiarity with policies in the district that specifically address themes of multiculturalism, ethnicity, and/or race. Ophelia noted inclusion policies, though ‘inclusion’ in Richmond most often refers specifically to students with disabilities being included in mainstream classrooms. Charles mentioned the guidelines present in student agenda books (which reference the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms), but couldn’t name anything specific: “In terms of specific documents on that, I don’t know. I’m sure there are guidelines or well, to be, you know to some extent it’s kind of common
Kristin stated, “No, I’m not aware of any of them [policies], but I feel like they’re probably there”. These teachers assume that there is something in place, but don’t know for sure. Janet, on the other hand, pointed to the fact that even if policies do exist, they don’t really have an impact:

Janet: You know what it is, Jamie, it is the fact that truly, people are tired, and people are trying to put emphasis on math and social studies and literacy and social responsibility and daily PE [physical education], and really it doesn’t even matter if policy exists. It doesn’t even matter if there are brand new teacher guides for dealing with multiculturalism. It doesn’t matter. Unless it’s one of the teacher’s passions, it’s not gonna get taught; it’s not going to really be addressed.

Janet assumes that these other areas that require emphasis are somehow separate from the legacies of racism or racist events, and therefore ignores that these subjects could in fact be approached through antiracist pedagogy. Rather, issues of race will only be taught (again, separately from other curricula) if an individual teacher is passionate about doing so. Policy, according to Janet, will not change this.

Based on these responses it appears that policies surrounding multiculturalism are assumed to exist, yet are largely ignored even if they do exist. The pamphlet, which we looked at together in the group discussion, was new to all of the teachers, though Ophelia felt that she had come across it before in the counseling centre. I told them that I had picked it up at the School Board office and they were somewhat surprised that it wasn’t included in new teacher packages or found anywhere else. By the time the discussion was drawing to a close, Janet and Ophelia expressed the need to really work towards valuing diversity:
Janet: … I’ve spent a lot of time on culture and language and all those things, but if you don’t, right? They [students] don’t look at it as a positive.

Ophelia: It’s what you value.

Janet: Hmm, right? And so it has to be valued at school and at home and in the community. This [referring to the pamphlet] doesn’t do it.

Ophelia then went on to inquire about when the pamphlet was written and who was involved, because when she first came to the district in 1995 there seemed to be more focus on multiculturalism then. She stated:

Ophelia: I think it probably happened when we started, I mean, my sense is that we had a lot of Asian immigration, of you know, people moving here and having families or having satellite families here and big ESL thing, like influx of numbers and I think there was money attached to that, and I think that’s where that came from…

The fact that the pamphlet is now over twenty years old, is still in distribution through the Board Office, and has not been updated points to the fact that those funds have perhaps dried up, or that the ‘problem’ of racism is no longer viewed as relevant or as important as it was during Richmond’s immigration boom. When asked if the document is at all useful, Janet said no. Kristin said she was going to give it back to me when we were done. Ophelia said that it needed updating and Charles said that it is what it is – a reminder for us to be aware. Procedurally, they didn’t find it useful or helpful for teachers or for students, and they found the fact that it is only published in English problematic. In short, they found that the pamphlet is not representative of their experiences, nor is it useful in helping themselves or students address racism in schools.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

My intention in conducting this research has been to investigate what teacher experiences bring to the antiracism policy process. I did this in order to potentially inform future policy processes within the Richmond School District (RSD), and so that teachers may have an opportunity to engage with the mechanisms of policy as well as to recognize and discuss the impact of racialization in schools. I did this by providing a space within which teachers could talk about their experiences teaching diverse students and by asking them to look at how those experiences are represented in or framed by district multicultural or antiracist policy. This research was very much grounded critical antiracist theory, as well as in my own experiences as a student and teacher in the RSD, and as a long-term citizen of Richmond. As such, I was invested in this as a personally and politically charged project.

Concluding Thoughts: Multiculturalism and the City, Schools, and Teachers

I began exploring how notions of multiculturalism play out in schools and classrooms by looking at the larger contexts of the country and the city. Canada’s official policy context creates an aura of celebration around multiculturalism, positioning it as something that ‘we’ have achieved: as an area of pride for the nation. In Richmond, the city makes similar claims, creating a discursive space within which racism seemingly has no place. This tendency to historicize racism in contrast with today’s celebratory vision of multiculturalism is very much aligned with what Hytten and Warren (2003) call ‘appeals to progress’ whereby racism is positioned as no longer relevant; as something that we have progressed beyond. This vision is not, however, reflected in how citizens talk about their everyday experiences of multiculturalism. City debates over issues such as the languages that businesses use on their signage have become battlegrounds over immigration and cultural assimilation. I argued that certain citizens take on the role of what
Hage (1998) calls ‘nationalist managers’ – people who feel entitled to determine who is and is not welcome inside the national space. In my discussions with teachers, they furthered these contradictions by simultaneously using ‘appeals to progress’ to state that racism is no longer where our focus ought to lie and taking on the role of ‘nationalist managers’ in assuming the authority to decide whether or not claims of racism hold legitimacy. The likelihood of teachers acknowledging an act or incident as racism is questionable considering their insistence that racism is no longer the problem it once was, and in this way the discursive spaces within which racism is being mediated are limited.

Further, once confronted with acts or incidents interpreted as ‘racist’, both city officials and teachers were likely to emphasize the individual nature of racism. By framing racism as acts undertaken by ignorant or hateful individuals or, worse, as acts simply misinterpreted by overly sensitive students, other forms of racism are rendered invisible, which has important implications for the city and for schools. Primarily, these framings of racism work to hide from interrogation the very structures of local government or school institutions – institutions that carry significant weight in reproducing unequal power dynamics rooted in histories of oppression. The teachers I spoke with tended to further ignore these power dynamics and histories by placing racism as merely one oppression in a long line of oppressions under the umbrella of ‘bullying’, and while bullying may carry the same procedural weight as the term racism in schools, I wonder to what extent this erasure of race translates to the city level. Can institutions be accused of bullying? If so, does that accusation hold any legal or procedural weight in the same way as discrimination based on race? I argued that this discursive shift is problematic in the way it minimizes the disproportionate effects of discrimination on racialized people and in how it demands
justification from those making claims of racism. It may also be problematic in that it enables institutions to sidestep our scrutiny.

**Concluding Thoughts: Educational Policy, Teachers and Race**

It was in analyzing this greater context and exploring how teachers characterized their experiences teaching diverse students that I could better situate my discussion on educational policy. I sought to answer the question of how teacher experiences are framed by or reflected in District policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism. I initially argued that teachers are often positioned as the objects of policy, whereby they are expected to play the role of disciplinarian by ‘enforcing’ or ‘implementing’ policies. With regards to policies on multiculturalism or antiracism, this means that teachers are expected to be able to identify racist ‘acts’ and then react according to policy procedures. The policy text that we read and analyzed together very much situates teachers in this way, but even the objectification of teachers is only effective if teachers are informed of the policy to begin with. These teachers were not informed of the policy text prior to my introducing it to them, and they found that it was not useful or relevant to their experiences. In fact, they expressed a general disconnect from policy, seeing it as only minimally relevant to their work as teachers, and then only if someone was holding them accountable.

In this sense, it seems that teachers potentially hold an important level of influence within the policy process in that they can choose to what extent they do or do not fulfill the roles assigned to them within policy – they are simultaneously objects and agents of policy. While my analysis suggested that this ability to take on an active role in the policy process is negative in that teachers may wrongly dismiss claims of racism made by their students, other interpretations are possible. The space to decide what does and does not ‘count’ in terms of racism could also be
an insertion point for activism: for advocacy on behalf of students. I did not see evidence of this in the discussions I had with teachers, however it seems plausible that teachers could in fact disrupt the policy process in this way.

**Implications: Reaching out to Practice**

The process of constructing and affirming assertions was long and difficult. It was long in the sense that I had many pages of transcriptions to sift through, and difficult in that I struggled with the assertions I felt compelled to make and with how to make sense of them. In having these discussions with teachers, I found myself often sitting in the uncomfortable spaces between my own subjectivities as researcher, colleague, teacher, and student. Each of these roles overlapped and yet resisted one another as conversations unfolded. I found myself yearning to interrupt, to insert myself into the discussion, to reframe sentences and words and intentions that sat uneasy in my ears once spoken. In constructing my analysis, I was cognizant of the danger of what Gerwitz and Cribb (2002) call ‘critique from above’, or critique outside of the realm of practice:

> From this perspective, the role of the analyst is to offer a critical account of educational policies and practices from outside the education system. In so far as such analysts view their work as informing practice this is limited to pointing out to practitioners the social, economic and political contexts that shape or constrain their work or the mechanisms of social reproduction to which they are often presented as contributing. (Gerwitz & Cribb, 2002, p.500)

It is therefore important that I ensure that this work does not end with a condemnation of teachers, but rather some useful implications and recommendations that recognize “the practical difficulties that teachers have to face in trying to implement socially just practices, particularly within a hostile context” (Gerwitz & Cribb, 2002, p.500). Given my analysis of multiculturalism
and the city, it is clear that teachers are being and working within a rather hostile context – they live within discursive spaces that limit what can be considered as racism; spaces that frame racism and their role in addressing it in narrow and restrictive ways. This is not to say, however, that there is no way to change the conditions in which teachers are teaching and students are learning.

I argued in the introduction that if teachers could be more actively involved in the policy process, and if their experiences could inform policy directions, then teachers may feel a greater sense of ownership of and connectivity to policy. If this were the case, they may be more inclined to align their practices with policy, and, in turn, potentially promote a more inclusive and socially just learning environment. I still believe this to be true, but there are conditions necessary to its success.

First, the policy process must be opened up to teachers. Administrators and policy-makers in the Richmond School District encouraged this kind of engagement at one time – in fact, this is how the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* document came into being. It was a group of concerned teachers that instigated the policy process, and it may have been a very usable, living document upon its inception. The problem lies in its continued circulation today, over twenty years later, and the lack of resources put into revisiting its relevance in a very different present context. Participants in this study were adamant that this document is no longer useful or relevant to their work. I therefore encourage the RSD to allocate resources to updating and better distributing its antiracism policy and encouraging teachers to infuse their current experiences into that process.

Teachers also need to take on the responsibility for engaging in the policy process, similarly to how the participants in this study have done. By lending their voices and experiences
to the policy process, it becomes much more likely that the resulting policies will be meaningful and useful to them. This is not, however, a simple request to make given that the current context of teaching is one that asks much of teachers, and the weight of performativity (Ball, 2003) weighs heavily on their minds and bodies. In British Columbia, public school teachers have just fought a heated battle against their employer and the provincial government, and while a new collective agreement has been signed, the overall sentiment is mired in fatigue, financial loss and unsatisfied demands. I understand this as well as anyone. I have been living it alongside my colleagues, and I too am tired. I therefore recognize the weight of my request; a weight that could perhaps be lightened if the district were to provide resources for teachers to engage in such discussions without unnecessarily burdening their work. This support could be in the form of paid release time to attend meetings, or perhaps increased funding for professional development.

Further, there needs to be a commitment to ensuring that the policy process is undertaken with the tenets of social justice at its core, including antiracism. These tenets will of course be contested and constantly evolving, but they must be a continued part of any policy conversation, “[f]or in our everyday lives we must struggle to ensure that our personal relations with others are informed by principles of social justice and that the institutions in which we operate take social justice concerns seriously” (Gerwitz & Cribb, 2002, p.504). The responsibility for this lies with both the District and its teachers, so the policy process ought to be thoughtful, iterative, and meaningful. I hoped to instigate this type of process through this study, and I am grateful to the teachers that volunteered to be a part of it. Without their willingness to engage, I would not have been able to explore these issues in these ways.
Future Considerations

As indicated previously, this research is limited to the experiences of a small number of participants within a specific research context. It is therefore intended to provide in-depth analysis pertaining to the research questions and is not intended to be generalizable in any way. It does, however, contribute to the areas of critical antiracism and critical policy analysis by providing a detailed deconstruction of this particular social and policy context and by investigating what teacher experiences bring to discussions regarding said processes. It also points to a few areas for future research to consider. For example, how would greater teacher engagement in antiracist policy processes influence teacher pedagogy and student experiences of education? Would infusing teacher experiences into antiracist policy processes result in increased awareness and buy-in at the school or district level, and could this eventually lead to greater racial equality in schools? Perhaps most importantly, how do we guarantee that antiracism and the tenets of social justice stay at the forefront of the policy process, particularly given teacher resistance to recognizing and validating experiences of racism in their classrooms? These are questions that I contemplate as I draw this study to a close, and I open them up in the hope that further exploration may guide us towards a more socially just educational sphere.
Notes

i I would like to note here that this definition of ‘visible minority’ wrongly reinforces whiteness as the central norm against which all others are compared. When using the term ‘visible minority’, I am referring only to the category as put forth by the Employment Equity Act.

ii Similarly, in discussing post 9/11 incidents of racism in America, Hing (2002) articulated how immigrant communities are ‘de-Americanized’ by those who consider themselves ‘real’ Americans. He stated that “[i]ncreasingly, the victim community’s possible longstanding status in the country, its members are regarded as perpetual foreigners. The victim community is forever regarded as immigrant America, as opposed to simply part of America and its diversity” (Hing, 2002, p.444). This experience is replicated in many racialized communities (see Chavez, 2013; Tsuda, 2014).

iii Leonardo (2009) gave another example of this in his discussion of imagining the urban. He referenced how the University of Wisconsin “digitally inserted a black male into one of its marketing photos so that the university could project a particular image of itself for the public” (Leonardo, 2009, p.146). His analysis went on to show how universities sometimes use the signifier ‘urban’ to “describe themselves in a way that seems diverse (and therefore sophisticated), without having to bear the burden of difference” (Leonardo, 2009, p. 146).

iv I use the term ‘condensation symbol’ to signify key words or terms that can be read multiple and even oppositional ways – a tool often used in political rhetoric. This definition is in reference to the work of Murray Edelman (1988).

v In contrast to Hage’s analysis of Australian society, it seems that immigrant populations in Canada may in fact step into the role of nationalist managers more often (or at least more publicly) than immigrants in Australia. The letters mentioned here were written by citizens of many different ethnic backgrounds, all of whom were confident asserting alternative visions of the national space and its inhabitants.

vi In another editorial debate in the Richmond News, several citizens implied that child poverty statistics released in 2011 for Richmond were in fact inflated by immense amounts of unreported offshore income by immigrant families with a family member living and working overseas, further fueling resentment of immigrant communities (Greenholtz, 2011).

vii It is worth noting that those youth charged by police were charged with mischief and their acts were not pursued as hate crime investigations.

viii One article in particular focused explicitly on the inability of the perpetrators to spell correctly, pointing to a supposed lack of education and thereby encouraging readers to conceptualize racism as isolated acts by ignorant individuals (Bennett, 2010).

ix See, for example, Nancy Fraser’s discussion of the public sphere and the need for counter-publics as a response to the power inequalities present therein (Fraser, 1990).

x Here, the notion of tolerance acts as an instrument of Foucauldian governmentality, as outlined in depth by Wendy Brown (2006).
Ball (2006a) articulates the ways in which performativity creates in educators a “high degree of uncertainty and instability. A sense of being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies. There is a flow of changing demands, expectations and indicators that makes us continually accountable and constantly recorded. We become ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent” (pp.147-148).
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Appendices

Appendix A  Invitation to Participate

**Do you teach ethnically and culturally diverse students?**
**Are you interested in issues of multiculturalism and antiracism?**
If so, **YOU are invited to participate in a research project being undertaken in the RSD.**

RESEARCH STUDY TITLE: *Diverse realities and policy portrayals: Infusing teacher experiences into the antiracism policy process*

FOCUS OF STUDY: to investigate how you as a secondary school teacher make sense of the ethnic and cultural diversity of your students, and the degree to which you feel those experiences are framed by or reflected in district policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY: to further understandings of ethnic and cultural diversity in a Canadian education context. This study will also provide an opportunity for teachers to engage with and discuss district policy in collaboration with colleagues.

WHO ARE THE RESEARCH SUBJECTS AND HOW MANY ARE REQUIRED:
I am seeking 3-4 secondary school teachers who are willing to discuss education policy, teacher/student relationships, and racial and cultural diversity. Participants must have a minimum of three years of experience teaching at the secondary level in Richmond.

DURATION OF STUDY AND DATES OF DATA COLLECTION: Participants will be asked to participate in one 30-minute individual interview, one 90-minute focus group, and potentially one 30-minute follow-up interview. These will be held off-site between February 15th, 2011 and March 18th, 2011. Email correspondence will be minimal.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: This qualitative study will use individual semi-structured interviews to draw out how participants interpret and make sense of their experiences as teachers teaching diverse students in Richmond. During these interviews, participants will also be asked about their prior knowledge of district policy regarding multiculturalism, antiracism and/or diversity. The participants will then come together as a focus group to discuss an example of district policy on multiculturalism and antiracism. The group interaction of a focus group will provide an opportunity to create collective interpretations and understandings of diversity as well as multicultural/antiracist policy. All conversations will be audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for common themes. Though participants will be known to each other due to the nature of the focus group method, confidentiality will be guaranteed through the use of pseudonyms in all study documentation. Research findings will be published as a graduate thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Participants will be offered tea, coffee and light snacks.
If you would like to participate, please contact Jamie Makutra prior to February 4th, 2011.

Co-Investigator:
Jamie Makutra  
M.A. Candidate  
Department of Educational Studies  
Faculty of Education  
xxxx Main Mall  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6T 1Z4  
Phone: xxx.xxx.xxxx  
Email: xxxxxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx

Principle Investigator:
P. Taylor Webb  
Associate Professor  
Department of Educational Studies  
Faculty of Education  
xxxx Main Mall  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6T 1Z4  
Phone: xxx.xxx.xxxx  
Email: xxxxxxx.xxxx@xxx.xx
Appendix B  Participant Consent Form

Study: Diverse realities and policy portrayals:  
Infusing teacher experiences into the antiracism policy process

Dear _________________________,

You are invited to participate in the following study.

Purpose:
This study will investigate how you as a secondary school educator make sense of the ethnic and cultural diversity of your students, and the degree to which you feel those experiences are framed by or reflected in district policies relating to multiculturalism and antiracism. You are invited to take part in this research study because you are an educator in the Richmond School District with at least three years of experience at the secondary level.

Principle Investigator:  
P. Taylor Webb  
Associate Professor  
Department of Educational Studies  
Faculty of Education  
xxxx Main Mall  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6T 1Z4  
Phone: xxx.xxx.xxxx  
Email: xxxxxxx.xxxx@xxx.xx

Co-Investigator:  
Jamie Makutra  
M.A. Candidate  
Department of Educational Studies  
Faculty of Education  
xxxx Main Mall  
Vancouver, BC, Canada  
V6T 1Z4  
Phone: xxx.xxx.xxxx  
Email: xxxxxxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx

Study Procedures:  
If you participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following:  
- Participate in one 30-minute individual interview.  
- Participate in one 90-minute focus group.  
- If necessary, participate in one 30-minute follow-up interview.  
Correspondence outside of the above conversations will occur via email and will be as minimal as possible.

Potential Risks:  
No foreseeable harm should come to you as a result of this research. The primary risk of your participation is that the research will conceivably elicit information of a personal nature in the presence of colleagues from the Richmond School District. You can be assured that pseudonyms will be used in any publications emanating from the research and by signing this letter of consent all participants agree to maintain the confidentiality of other participants. Results of this research will be published as a graduate thesis and possibly used for future publications such as scholarly articles and presentations.
Potential Benefits:
The potential benefits of participating in this study include contributing to scholarly understandings of how educators negotiate ethnic and cultural diversity in their classrooms and the degree to which those experiences are framed by or reflected in antiracist policy. The study also provides you with an opportunity to learn more about district policy in collaboration with colleagues. There are no material benefits to participating in this research.

If you would like a copy of the final report of the study please tick this box. ☐

Confidentiality:
While I cannot guarantee you anonymity due to the nature of the focus group method, I will use pseudonyms for all participants and any identifiers of participants will be removed from the study findings and reports. Your identity will only be known to the Co-Investigator and to other study participants. Data will be transcribed and stored electronically, protected by password. Any tape recordings or notes will be stored in a locked cabinet in the home of the Co-Investigator.

Contact for information about the study:
If you have any questions or desire further information with respect to this study, please do not hesitate to contact Jamie Makutra via telephone at xxx-xxx-xxxx, or via email at xxxxxxxx@xxxx.xx.xx.

Contact for concerns about the rights of research subjects:
If you have any concerns about your treatment or rights as a research subject, please contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or, if long distance, via e-mail at RSIL@ors.ubc.ca.

Consent:
Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. As such you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Your signature below indicates the following:
  You have received a copy of this consent form for your own records.
  You consent to participate in this study.
  You agree to maintain the confidentiality of all participants in the study.

_______________________________________   ______________________
Signature                                      Date

____________________________________________________
Printed Name

Thank you.
Appendix C Individual Interview Guide

1. How long have you been teaching at the secondary level in Richmond? Which subjects?
2. How many schools have you worked at in that time?
3. Please describe the current demographics of your students.
4. What about the current demographics of your school faculty and administration?
5. Do you feel that the ethnic and cultural positioning of teachers is relevant to their teaching in the context you’ve just described? If so, how?
6. How do you approach teaching in the context you’ve described?
7. What tools and/or strategies do you use or do you know about to teach ethnically and culturally diverse students?
8. What support for teaching ethnically and culturally diverse students is provided by your school, administration, and district (through professional development, resources, or other education/training)?
9. Is ethnic and/or cultural diversity discussed openly in your school and/or in your classes?
   If so, in what context is it usually discussed?
10. What is policy?
11. Who makes policy?
12. Are you aware of any school or district policies that specifically address ethnicity/race/multiculturalism? If so, what are they and do you find them useful or pertinent? If not, where might you look for them?
13. How do you find out about district policies in general?
14. In what ways is district policy relevant to your teaching?
Appendix D  Focus Group Interview Guide

1. Have you ever seen this document before? If so, where? If not, where might you look for this type of document?

2. Having read through the *Racism: If we don’t stop it, who will?* pamphlet, what are your initial reactions to the document?

3. What assumptions does this pamphlet put forth regarding racism?

4. What assumptions does this pamphlet put forth regarding the role of teachers and/or students in antiracism?

5. As a teacher, have you ever experienced a racist incident of the type described in this pamphlet? If so, how was the situation addressed by you, by the school administration and/or by the district?

6. As a teacher, have you ever experienced or witnessed what you would consider to be racism? How was that experience similar to or different from the type of racism addressed in this pamphlet?

7. Does this pamphlet provide useful information to you as a secondary teacher? How so?

8. Is there anything missing from this pamphlet that ought to be included?