

**HEARING THE VOICES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL
LOBBYISTS AND THEIR ROLE IN LOBBYING FOR EDUCATION**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to hear the voices, life experiences and lobbying practices of four African American educational lobbyists and their role in lobbying for education. There is a void where the voices of African American educational lobbyists are limited. They are almost non-existent due to past practices in the nation's history that ensured African Americans would have no representation at the decision making table. As a result, we have not heard the voices of African American educational lobbyists in the 21st century, nor do we know how they feel about their ability or inability to influence and impact educational decisions.

This study provides a snapshot of how African American educational lobbyists describe their personal characteristics; how African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying; and how these African American educational lobbyists describe their influence or impact on education. Findings from the study reveal that African American educational lobbyists believe that they can influence and impact educational policy despite unique challenges they face.

New findings from the voices of the African American educational lobbyists reveal that they benefit from a reaper, are immersed in a *dual credibility standard* and utilize *reverse interest convergence* as they Navigate the System. In order to be effective, have the ability to impact and influence and focus on African American achievement, there are avoidance factors in lobbying that should be employed in order to establish a *New Lobby*.

DEDICATION

Without God in my life, this study would not have been possible. I have been blessed with the ability to put thoughts into words and to think dimensionally. I am grateful for his favor on my life and those who have made this study possible.

This study is dedicated to the late Vance Heard and First St. Jimmy Davis, ESSAYONS! “First”, Jimmy, you were one of my driving motivators to begin a Doctoral program. Our conversations and debates still ring in my ears; your memories stay with me. I wish you were here to see how your friendship continues to be appreciated. Coach Heard, you were a great teacher and role model to so many. I still follow your teachings every day.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The conceptual landscape of public education in the United States of America is an ever evolving reform and restructured product of needs, necessities, negated negotiations, and negatable returns. According to Auble (2013) the top 5 lobby spending sectors in 2012 were Finance at \$482, 246,644, Health at \$481, 408,431; Communication and Electronics at \$388,750,254; Energy and Natural Resources at \$ \$377,475, 052, and Transportation at \$240,727, 201. Education as a sector did not make the list.

However, according to OpenSecrets.Org (2013), education dropped from 8th to 10th from 2010 to 2012 on a list of top lobbying spending industries at from \$109,505,659 million dollars 2010 to \$91,206,854. As of 2015, current education spending on lobbyists has dipped to \$38,991,122. This is in some part due to lobbying regulation following 2007 resulting in industries cutting away some of their lobbyists and lobbying spending. However, reports show that although these lobbyist to not lobby for clients in the Finance Sector, they still work for the companies in some capacity (Auble, 2013).

Reports such as the *Center for Responsive Politics Report* (Auble, 2013) show the lobbying expenditures by industry and where education as an industry and sector ranks in its ability to gain access. To gain access, one needs the resources to do so. Resources that mobilize interests cost money. Money buys access. Failure to produce enough opposition, via mobilized interests, results in one's ability to impact and influence becoming limited. Education is limited in its ability to influence and impact. It was once thought "that education enabled individuals to pursue success, and therefore equipped

them to be good citizens and lead lives of freedom and productiveness” (Bierlien, 1993, p. 125). In the 21st century, the lingering and looming question we are forced to answer as the U.S. populace is “why do we educate?”

We appear to educate toward the neoliberal ideology and belief that “open, competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development” (Brenner and Theodore, 2002, p. 350). Education has become a neoliberal tool toward that development. According to Jessop (2002), “neoliberalism involves enhanced state intervention to roll forward new forms of governance (including state intervention) that are purportedly more suited to a market-driven (and, more recently, also allegedly knowledge-driven) globalizing economy” (p. 2). Each interest group according to Bierlein (1993) wanting to ensure funding for its agenda, must scramble to acquire resources from a finite pool. Several questions arise:

How much fiscal equity exists in the current system, what impact have the courts had in this debate, and does additional money translate into increased educational excellence and efficiency (p. 27).

Education is usually at the losing end of these questions without the needed access to provide the data and the communication via grassroots or grass tops efforts to garner support otherwise.

Over the course of the 2008 to 2013, education ranked as high as 8th in 2011 but slipped to 11th in 2012 and 2013. In 2014 education dropped to 13th and is currently ranked at 15th for 2015 behind Defense Aerospace (OpenSecrets.Org, 2013). The answer

to “why we educate” remains an ever fleeting *exchange theory* example of politicized rhetorical discourse and jargon about economic viability and international competitiveness, hidden beneath the slogan of “Career and College Readiness” – a *purposive incentive* centered on the greater good. Within the scope of why we educate however is the intersection of race, economics and education.

As a result, in the post-Brown era (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954), it appears that public education has made a triumphant return to the pre-Brown era where “separate but equal” schools are the norm. Triumphant is the word of choice due to the inescapable reality that “separate but equal” schools are now the reaccepted norm in U.S. society. Public educators in the United States are 76% White female according to the National Center of Educational Statistics (2015), which includes poor urban communities where the population is largely people of color.

Kozol (2005) revealed that “almost three fourths of Black and Latino students attend schools that are predominantly minority” (p. 19). In addition, more than two million, including more that a quarter of Black students in the Northeast and Midwest, “attend schools which we call apartheid school” in which 99 to 100 percent of students are non-white (p. 19). “In this context teachers become socially, culturally, and economically isolated from their students and parents (Kincheloe, 2010, p. 7).

The distinction in the make up of the majority of Urban schools in the United States is not meant to gain an understanding of how political and economic policy promotes and provides severe and detrimental repercussions for urban impoverished areas, including the schools the communities support, but for the point of identification,

acknowledgement, and recognition. Noted as a cyclical breeding ground for discipline and academic disparities, this environment offers minimal benefits to the Black, poverty-stricken, racism induced, academically marginalized student (Watkins, Lewis, and Griffen, 2014, p. 1)

Understanding is an uncompromisingly abstract term that is relative to the individual, entity and constituency based upon socially constructed and paradigmatic assumptions, norms, and acceptances. Only a contrasting paradigm act could elicit the attention essential to actually provide such an audience to the plight of the urban youth of the U.S. public school system. One should not seriously expect an upper middle class mother to identify with the plight of a lower class mother who has to decide between missing work or sending their asthmatic child to school, “I sent my sick child to school, just to keep that job...Asthma forces me to make calls like that” (as cited in Henry-Beauchamp and Sielder, 2010, p. 252).

Therefore, the point of identification, acknowledgement, and recognition should be the expected revelation for any person, group, or being claiming to be concerned with the state of public education in the United States of America. Contrarily, due to a lack of return on investment in public education, there is a garrison of policy politics and educational reform mechanisms seeking not only to revitalize and exemplify the dual caste educational apartheid system of pre-Brown in the United States, but to also ensure the economic vitality of special interest groups through a focus on work force mobilization in the global economy.

As we view the current state of public education, there looms the growing disenfranchisement and marginalization of the United States of America's urban youth, specifically children of color – African American and Hispanic. The urban children of color are voiceless and therefore have provided no input as to how to best provide “least restrictive environment” and best “free and appropriate public education” for themselves. Since they are unable to provide a voice for themselves, they are left only with limited hope that through grassroots efforts of their parents, communities, schools, school systems, and others (interest groups), they may find a voice to champion their inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. However, one cannot and does not have a voice when one's socially defined position and status renders them invisible and therefore “rationalized out of existence” (Ellison, 1980).

Theoretical Framework

Two theories I used in my theoretical framework is *Critical Race Theory (CRT)* and *Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT)*. The purpose for using Critical Race Theory was to find the voice of African American educational lobbyists. Critical Race Theory is grounded in the counter narratives and stories of marginalized groups of color, which in this case is the African American educational lobbyist in a pluralistic environment with exceptionalities. In this study, African American educational lobbyists provided stories related to their experiences as a lobbyist in the United States and what characteristics they display in order to be successful at their craft. In addition, *interest convergence* another tenet of CRT, was studied closely to determine how, when, and if interests converge or

diverge when African American educational lobbyist attempt to gain access to legislators or to the policy making process.

Critical Race Theory (CRT)

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is both an outgrowth and a separate entity of critical legal studies which began by Derrick Bell and Alan Freeman. CRT has a number of premises: “Racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society” (Bell, 1992, p. ix); the use of storytelling to challenge racial (and other) oppression; and interest convergence. What makes CRT significant to this study and the development of African American educational lobbyists is its view on race. CRT sees race as a part of America. To be American is to experience race. I argue to be American is to experience racism. Some may say they have never experienced racism. I argue that if you have seen it, employed it, read about it, or heard about it, you have experienced it.

Experiences do not have to be felt or lived, experiences are transformative and transferrable the same as knowledge and culture. Experiences are individualized despite the real self of each person being a bi-polar self in which individual actions are the expression, not of any individual initiative, but the tribal conscience (Bawden, 1904). No two people experience the same experience the same way. Dewey (1938) state’s that “Not all experience is educative, some are mis-educative; they halt or distort further experiences”. They can be imagined and/or pictured based on socially constructed definitions and narratives.

It does not mean racism does not exist simply because one states, “I don’t think that there are unique challenges to being an African American male lobbyist, accept for what

you put on yourself...If you perform and are successful, clients will continue to use your services...If you do not, they will...choose another direction” (as cited in Kimble-Ellis, 2010). By saying "race does not matter" proves that it does, in fact, matter.

“All people with black skin and African phenotype are subject to potential [W]hite supremacist. Hence, all [B]lack Americans have some interest in resisting racism-even if their interest is confined solely to themselves as individuals rather than to the larger black communities (West, 2001, p. 25).

“Despite undeniable progress for many, no African Americans are insulated from incidents of racial discrimination. Our careers, even our lives, are threatened because of our color” (Bell, 1992, p. 3).

CRTs use in this study and the education of African American educational lobbyists will prove that race matters, for CRT sees the official knowledge of the school curriculum and [economic policies] as culturally specific artifacts designed to maintain a current social order (as cited in Billings, 2004, p. 59). There is a master scripting on display in the classrooms and legislative floors of America. The master scripting is most prominently displayed in urban classrooms where children of color are not permitted to express themselves culturally unless it fits into the microcosm of the style of the teacher, which is usually a middle class White female. They were also on display when Delay and his supporters developed the “K” street project.

“Applying critical race theory to education enables us to investigate and analyze how many White educators assume normative standards of “Whiteness” in the classroom and how these values, attitudes, and behaviors impact the development and academic

achievement of African American students (Williams, 2009, p. xvii). Applying CRT to this study permitted the same investigation and analysis of African American access and influence in policy decisions. “The hope is that...stories describing the reality of [Black] lives...can help...bridge the gap between their worlds and those of others...stories can help us understand what life is like for others, and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p. 41). Providing a platform for African American educational lobbyists to engage in narratives about their experiences, roles as lobbyists, and development as effective education lobbyists gives them an opportunity to express unique perspectives to the world of politics and the national and state policy agenda.

To contradict the impediment of reform Delgado and Stefancic (2001) states, “To litigate a law reform case, the lawyer needs a flesh and blood client” (p. 30). Ladson Billings (2004), through the lens of CRT described the work of teachers whose sociopolitical consciousness infused their teaching in a community of primarily African American students called *cultural relevance*. These teachers taught with the understanding of racial and political perspectives for their work and took on oppressive structures from the school administration and state mandates (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 60). They sought a flesh and blood client versus a cause.

Cultural relevancy provides teachers with pedagogical practices which position the students and the teachers as political beings challenging the status quo by questioning a variety of perspectives. Students are able to recognize how they exist in society and what their role is in society – where they can potentially change their outcomes – or as

Chaucer wrote in *The Knight's Tale*, "they can change their stars". This approach will be utilized in the development of African American educational lobbyists, in the recruitment and retaining of potential students to the field, for the training of mentors, and for developing internship opportunities and partnerships.

Critical Race Theory's tenet of *interest convergence* provides that the *Brown* decision actually was more to the benefit of Whites and to the detriment of people of color.

"When [W]hites perceive that it will be profitable or at least cost-free to serve, hire, admit, or otherwise deal with [B]lacks on a nondiscriminatory basis, they will do so. When they fear...that there will be a loss, inconvenience, or upset to themselves or other [W]hites, discriminatory conduct usually follows" (Bell, 1992, p. 7).

In the post-Brown era, schools and urban centers are more segregated now. This is one result of "White Flight" where White parents started private schools using private funds. In addition, magnet programs were used to enforce desegregation, but only the White children benefitted from the program. Critical Race theorists argue that the Brown decision produced an inherent advantage for Whites.

Another example is *affirmative action*. White women statistically have been the greatest beneficiary of affirmative action policy. Seeing that White women attaining positions and education would add to the economy of White households ultimately led to this policy along with Brown moving forward. The issue of *property rights* and education becomes a question when CRT is applied to education and this study. There are three central propositions:

1) Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States; 2) U.S. society is based on property rights 3) The intersection of race and property creates an analytic tool through which we can understand social (and, consequently, school) inequity (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995, p. 48).

When one looks at the first proposition, one notes that race does play a factor in inequity. The United States of America has an Apartheid public school system as indicated by 86% of students of color being situated in urban schools. Furthermore many of these schools, specifically in New York, Chicago, New Jersey, and Baltimore are 99% children of color. Of the approximate 20,000 registered federal lobbyists in the United States, 200 are African American. That is less than .01%.

Kozal (1991) wrote “Most of the urban schools I visited were 95 to 99 percent nonwhite. In no school that I saw anywhere in the United States were nonwhite children in large numbers truly intermingled with White children (p. 3). Contrarily, most lobbying firms are 95 to 99% white. This is where the property rights issue becomes a focus of CRT. In schools fitting the description, Kozol provided there is an extreme property deficit. Not only are students not receiving equitable funding, but there are intellectual property deficits as schools such as these do not offer the “gateway” courses such as Advanced Placement, which provide opportunities for students to go to college.

The development of African American educational lobbyists will begin on HBCU campuses, but will extend to urban schools where frameworks such as the *Minority Mentorship Project* (Larke, Wiseman, and Bradley, 1990) can be applied. Harris (1993) argues that the “property functions as whiteness” – rights of disposition, rights to use and

enjoyment, reputations and status property, and the absolute right to exclude – make the American dream of “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” a more likely attainable reality for Whites as citizens (as cited in Ladson Billings, 1998, p. 15). As a result, children of color who attend urban schools have no rights to economic equity because they have no *conceptual Whiteness*; they are *conceptually Black*.

Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) was used as a narrative analysis tool to identify group consciousness. Through the study of multiple narratives, I hoped to recognize the emergence of a rhetorical community among the participants. In addition, myth and fantasy will be discerned from the social realities that were contrived and manipulated based on socialized experiences and inexperience. These social experiences and/or inexperience results in a shift in beliefs and realities – a paradigm shift, either voluntarily or involuntarily.

Symbolic Convergence Theory explains the appearance of a group consciousness...not in terms of individual daydreams...but rather in terms of socially shared narrations or fantasies (Bormann, 1985). In order to utilize Symbolic Convergence Theory, this study analyzed multiple narratives in order to establish shared emotions, motives, and meanings (p. 128). There are a total of four interviews, all of which are African American educational lobbyists. The hope of utilizing Symbolic Convergence Theory was that an established trend for communication realities would emerge which explains how African American educational lobbyists are able to function effectively in an environment where they are often the only person of color in the room when legislative decision making is occurring.

Bormann adds to the broad framework that accounts for human communication in terms of *homo narrans*. (Bormann, 1985, p. 128). SCT has a three part structure:

The first part deals with the discovery and arrangement of recurring communicative forms and patterns...the evolution and presence of a shared group consciousness. The second parts consists of...the dynamic tendencies within communication systems that explain why group consciousness arise, continue, decline, and disappear and the effects such group consciousness have in terms of meanings, motives, and communication within the group...the dynamic of people sharing group fantasies. The third part of the theory consists of the factors that explain why people share the fantasies they do when they do...fantasy refers to the creative and imaginative shared interpretation of events that fulfills a group psychological or rhetorical need (p. 129).

What one finds when identifying Symbolic Convergence across narrative stories is that the group functions communicatively as either a *psychological unit* or a *rhetorical unit*. Discursive language is identical across all communication of events through shared myths, and stories focusing upon agreed upon symbols. This can be found among the *inside joke* where a gesture, a familiar look to the group, a noise, a work, or particular innuendo will result in group anger, hostility, laughter, crying, joy, or even sadness. For this study, individual interviews were conducted during separate times. The participants did not engage in a group discussion.

What constitutes evidence that symbolic convergence has taken place is that numbers of people have shared a group consciousness (Bormann, 1985, p. 131). The *inside joke* is

one form of constitutional evidence of SCT. Participants can get so caught up in their fantasy, they cannot analyze them. (p. 131). The narrative form includes good and bad characters in a sequence of interrelated incidents (Bormann, 128, p. 130). In a group consciousness, the good characters and bad characters have been established even among opposing groups.

For example, two separate groups such as the Republican and the Democrats will have similar stories about the other, leaning upon mythical facts and fantastically informative events that occurred in truth but have come to be symbolic of how the converged groups view one another. In the case of this study, the bad character is *the system* while the good characters are the individual educational lobbyist themselves. It is important to note that myths may be seen as untrue in the rational world paradigm where to tell stories is to recount falsehoods...for those using the narrative paradigm, the stories or myths or fantasies are central (p. 136).

For the purpose of this study there were no opposing group consciousness identified or studied; however, studies provided for this work establishes a group positioning in which dominant groups have established a group consciousness of how they position other racial groups, particularly people of color, in a persistent subordinate role (Blumer, 1958). They utilize group spokespersons across multiple communicative outlets to continue to perpetuate the same message about the dominant superiority over the group perceived to be inferior. The spokesperson accomplishes this message through a script, which is a personal way of organizing experiences that are analogous to the way communities use fantasy types for that purpose...the *archetypal fantasy* allows

members...to generalize from a specific incident without the abstractness that characterized much generalization...thus, it has the sense-making advantages of generalizations and the persuasive power of the specific (p. 132).

According to Blumer (1958) *group positioning theory* is found in the group condemnation of the subordinate group with use of generalized language – lazy, dishonest, greedy, unreliable, stupid, and immoral (p. 4). The persuasive power of the specifics is found as an individual becomes a part of the group. Within the group is the feeling of proprietary claim, which due to affiliation through membership (Bormann, 1985) – induction ceremony such as rights of passage – provides the sense that one is entitled to...exclusive prior rights... [Specific] choice lands... [specific] occupations or professions... [specific] lines of business...and [specific] exclusive membership to certain kinds of schools and social prestige (Blumer, 1958, p. 4). In the case of Symbolic Convergence, such group dynamic will develop into rhetorical communities where membership may be formalized through such symbols as induction and initiation ceremonies, confirmation and baptism, dues paying, and carrying a card (Bormann, 1985, p. 133).

The African American educational lobbyists for this work were not necessarily a part of any identified social network such as the Washington Government Relations Group (WGRG) that was formed as a way for African American lobbyists to connect to one another, a symbolic climate and culture that allows people to achieve empathetic communion as well as a “meeting of the minds” (Borman, 1985, p. 134). Neither were they necessarily a part of the Association of Government Relations Professionals

(formerly American League of Lobbyists) which according to “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet,

“...changed its name to capture all components and positions under the lobbyist profession, including public relations and grassroots advocacy. It also changed its name to address the negative perception of the word ‘lobbyist’”.

As a result, I posit that Symbolic Convergence will be found within and without the exclusivity of any particular group. The African American educational lobbyist, who is often the lone face of color, pigeonholed into social areas, lacking credibility in economic areas of legislation, and thought of as deficient have “identified and formulated the good and bad characters to establish a social story with a cluster of fantasy themes and types they have integrated into a coherent rhetorical vision of some aspect of their social reality” (p. 133).

Personal Story

I am 1 in 10,000 – “the exceptional N_____” (Tarantino et al., 2013). My exceptionality unlike my positionality in this study creates a “biased objectivity”. An oxymoronic existence, experience and familiarity rings through in this study as I seek to find my place at the proverbial decision making table. As a small child, I would stand on the wooden porch of our one bedroom apartment staring at the skyline of downtown Corpus Christi beneath a stream tears wishing and wondering how to achieve enough to be allowed a position, a way out, and a voice in one of the big buildings where my feelings told me decisions about me, my condition, and my broken family were being made. I am, therefore, seeking and searching and conjuring images of me positioned

next to those whose objectified expertise drive the national educational agenda as it relates to the education of a designated population while those with exceptionalities are left to linger on the promises of rhetorically retorted rhetoric. To find a speaking place, a voice, and a position at this table will result in the shroud of objectivity to which I claim to pursue in this study to collapse amidst a reckoning of past transgressions and hope filled migrations.

My claim of objectivity is contrasted within my personally contrived and motivationally meandered realization that I am not supposed to be here writing this study. I am the product of drunks and gamblers and an environment where drugs and violence are the norm. I am Richard Wright's "Black Boy". I have witnessed stabbings within my home as a child and the commonalities of addiction and hopelessness in my neighborhood. I have laughed as I observed men beg for their life and have known crack addicts, heroin addicts, drug dealers, prostitutes, and murderers. I have the distinct honor to have observed "James Brown" in concert on the corner of Leopard and Staples every morning while I awaited the bus to go to school. You see normal to me is an aberration to the perpetuated normalcy of "All-American Youth". "James Brown" is un-American. The drug dealers, prostitutes, murders, and drunks are un-American. Therefore being the offspring and product of this environment makes me un-American. We have been rationalized and conceptualized out of American existence.

However, I double as a contrast to Aesop's "Wolf in Sheep's Clothing". I am a sheep in wolf's clothing. I am a guppy swimming in the skin of a shark amidst other sharks in the great American ocean blue. I am a ghetto child pretending to be middle class. When

I wake up as an adult every morning, I understand and hate the acknowledgement of being un-American. Like Ralph Ellison (1980) “I am an invisible man”. How I am viewed before I speak makes me un-American. I am “a matter of construction of America’s inner eye” (p. 3). Therefore, I wear a universal diction translator. I purposefully render myself invisible. As “Irony” proclaims, “clocking in equity”.

My vernacular, my articulation, my conjugated verbs and compound complex sentences allow me to blend in with the American view of what it means to be a hard working successful American. “Invisibility...gives [me] a slightly different sense of time, [I] am never quite on beat...Sometimes [I am] ahead and sometimes behind” (Ellison, 1980, p. 8). I never fit into my ghetto environment as a youth for my language was often confusing and compounding to my peers. Amongst adults I was considered a “smart a___” sometimes “disrespectful” and I “talked to d___ much”. I have always been an anomaly – not quite understood and never considered as a possibility. I am not the rule, but the exception, which makes me exceptional and at the same time invisible.

As a school leader who will eventually face multiple conceptualizations of the public school system, including that of a School to Prison Pipeline, I am propelled to seek the interests of lobbyists, particularly educational lobbyists. It is my exceptionality and invisibility which drives my passion for this study. Like the African American educational lobbyists in this study, I will become alive as a result of our discovered invisibility (Ellison, 1980). Our discovered invisibility gives us voice. Our voices will be heard.

Statement of the Problem

This is a national topic and concern. Lobbyists influence public opinion, legislation and industry expenditure. As of 2009, there were approximately 40,000 lobbyists at the state and federal levels and 40,500 in 2014 according to Lobbyinfo.com. Education is one of the many areas a federal and/or state lobbyist may take part; however, the number of educational lobbyists is minuscule. Looking at the African American educational lobbyist's role in impacting education is something that should gain national attention. According to the nonpartisan PoliticalMoneyLine.com (2013), the total number of registered federal lobbyists was 29,702. Of these 29,702, only 200 were African American. However, according to Fang (2014) the number of registered federal lobbyists in 2013 dipped to 12,281, the lowest since 2002.

The reason for the discrepancy could be linked to the number of firms providing research and monitoring, which show that the industry has "gone underground" and is actually far larger than just the 12,000 registered federal lobbyists ... it's more like 100,000 people bringing in north of \$10 billion annually" (Newton-Small, 2013, p. 2). The "lobby" may not be in the corridors of Congress any more, but it's just as lucrative, estimating that although the registered numbers are \$3.2 billion, Thurber estimates around \$9 billion. There is a void where the voices of African American education lobbyists are limited. We have not heard the voices of African American education lobbyists in the 21st century, nor do we know how they feel about their ability or inability to influence and impact educational decisions. Additional studies are necessary in this area.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to hear the voices, life experiences and lobbying practices of four African American educational lobbyists and their role in education. This study examined those who have limited access to and are often unable to mobilize the special interests of those with the access to impact educational reform and structure, with the historical knowledge to reshape and align educational and economic policy, and with those who ultimately decide who is educationally investible and who is not. More specifically, the focus of this study sought to identify approaches to and develop ways to gain access to power and interest in order to positively affect educational funding, curriculum development and instruction. Through the research literature and a cross examination of the narratives provided by African American educational lobbyists, I sought to establish events where interests converge, diverge, and potentially converge in reverse convergence where African American lobbyists, lobby for and accept lobby from other lobbyists for interests that are to their client's benefit. I used narrative analysis and constant comparative analysis to determine the constructed meanings of their personal and professional acts of lobbying as it related to education.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is its ability to provide insights about African American educational lobbyists and how they view their influence and impact for mobilizing interests for education, providing equity and access to education, and how they view the importance of educational interests. This study also provides knowledge of lobbying experiences at the federal and state levels. One will identify effective lobbying practices,

characteristics effective lobbyists possess and how they influence educational policy and fiscal allocation. Finally, this study of African American educational lobbyist experiences and perspectives provide a national snapshot of how legislators view the importance of education for marginalized groups.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to examine and interpret the life experiences and lobbying practices of four African American lobbyists in the United States. The following questions will guide this study:

- 1) How do African American educational lobbyists describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position?
- 2) How do African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying?
- 3) How do these African American educational lobbyists describe their influence or impact on education?

Definition of Terms

Advocate/Advocacy: Used to describe one or the act of publically recommending and supporting a particular (individual cause or policy). On the contrary, a lobbyist is one who is a group representative.

African-American: This term describes a very diverse group of people in American society. They are made up of different ethnic backgrounds that consist of: The Caribbean Culture; The African Culture; and The American Black Experience. (Cohen & Grace,

1992, Cohen, 1993). This term is used to describe an individual exhibiting any of the above ancestry or ethnic backgrounds.

Black: Although used interchangeably with African American within citations throughout this study, the term Black is merely conceptual, based in contrast to conceptual Whiteness (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2009). Black, however, according to West (1993) has no meaning outside a system of race-conscious people and practices...and means being minimally subject to white supremacist abuse and being apart of a rich culture and community that has struggled against such abuse (p. 25). Thusly, whenever the term is read, one must consider that blackness is used to identify one group versus another, and us and them perspective.

Brokering: A term used to identify an activity where a lobbyist and/or advocate will provide information or call in a contact on behalf of another in order to put together like minded interests.

Educational Lobbyist: An activist who seeks to persuade members of the government, both Congress and Senate, to impact legislation, policy or law that would benefit educational interests: higher education, public education, education consultants, and educational programming. They are also defined as one who has lobbied for an educational interest, lobbied for an educational organization, and/or lobbied for education as a part of another interest such as oil and gas, computers, medical, Civil Rights, etc.

Grassroots/Grasstops: Grassroots strategies and movements are those that get citizens directly connected with their legislators while grasstops strategies and movements are those that are connected with a legislator or staff by virtue of the position in the

community such as opinion leaders (Vance, 2012, p. 104). Grassroots includes business leaders and corporations.

Legislator: An elected member of the House of Representatives. One who enacts laws.

Legislative Process: The process followed by the house which includes introduction of bills, testimony from legislators, lobbyists, advocates and other interest groups on behalf or in opposition to those bills prior to them passing into law. There is a multistep process.

Lobbying: Lobby is defined under four boundaries: 1) Lobbying relates only to governmental decision-making; 2) is motivated by a desire to influence governmental decisions 3) implies the presence of an intermediary or representative as a communication link between citizens and governmental decision-makers; and 4) involves communication (Milbrath, 1960).

Lobbyist: Also known as “Government Relations”, “Special Assistant”, and/or “Chief of Staff”. One who seeks to persuade or influence members of the government, both Congress and the Senate, to impact legislation, policy or law that would benefit the interests for whom they are representing. One does not need to be registered as a lobbyist according to the Federal Lobbying Regulation Act (1995) in order to be defined as a lobbyist for my study. “Lobbyists are group representatives almost by definition. A person who represents only himself is merely a citizen exercising his constitutional right”.

Mobilization: The act of assembling a group or groups toward a common cause in order to detract from or present opposition to another cause.

Network/Circle of Contacts: A group developed and utilized by lobbyists and/or advocates to secure support, information, or communication in order to influence decisions or provide insight.

People of Color: This term will be used in place of “minority” throughout the study to describe all those who are non-White.

Stakeholders: Anyone with a vested interest including parents, students, the community, legislators, and special interest groups.

Special Interest/Pressure Group: “They have an interest in adopting a policy which will benefit a certain segment of the public which may not be beneficial to the general public” (Milbrath, 1960, p. 29). These groups are comprised of large and small corporations, organizations and industries such as Tobacco, Pharmaceuticals, Railroad, Oil and Gas, and to a lesser power education and social services.

Superintendent: An “unelected political position” serving as the central executive officer of a school district.

Urban: Dictionary.com defines Urban as follows: Of, pertaining to, or designating a city or town. 2. living in a city. For the purpose of this study, urban is being defined as pertaining to the abundance of African American and Hispanic (Black and Brown) school children in a city, neighborhood, school, or community.

Voices: Who speaks for those who do not have access to the corridors of knowledge or the venues of the academic disciplines? To render one visible, they must have voice. For this study, the voices of four African American educational lobbyists are contradictory to

the “silences because their perspectives are ... counter-hegemonic” (Lincoln, 1995, p. 10).

Organization of the Study

This study organized into five total chapters which includes Chapter I – Introduction. The remaining four chapters are Chapter II – Literature Review, Chapter III – Methodology, Chapter IV – Findings and Chapter V – Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations. Chapter II – Literature Review notes that there is not much literature on African American education lobbyists or African American lobbyist in general. The literature review provides an introduction to the social position of African Americans posited against the norms of “American” society followed by a historical background on “American” education educational lobbying and African American educational lobbying. In addition, there are three unique challenges of African American educational lobbyists indicated in the literature on African American ability to mobilize and influence the political process. Furthermore, Chapter II provides studies which are significant to sections of the study categorized by Lobbyist Characteristics and Traits, Lobbying Tactics and Strategies, and Lobbyist Ability to Impact and Influence. Lastly, a seminal study is discussed which aided the significance of my study in that it did not include a person of color in the study when it was conducted in 1960 – a time when there was limited African American representation in Congress.

Chapter III – Methodology, discussed the plan of the study, data collection, analysis, and trustworthiness via triangulation, member checking and transferability. For this study, in Chapter IV the analysis is broken down by the conceptual framework and

research question and an analysis of the emerging themes that evolved as a result of the questions, resulting into multiple categories for each question. Lastly, Chapter V – Summary will include a discussion of the findings as they relate back to the literature in Chapter II. I will share how the findings tie back to the other studies Chapter II and whether the beliefs in the study were agreeable or negated.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The African American is by nature, physique, and definition a unique. The African American is an individual comprised of a “dual conscience” (Dubois, 1903) one in which the African American sees himself through his own eyes and, dually, sees himself through the eyes of others. As a result, the African American is in a perpetually persistent predicated battle with himself and conformity. Which ever one wins is dependent upon the circumstance, the situation, the experiences, and the desires of multiple moments in time, space, and reason. Conformity is not the nature of the African American, yet conformity is the expectation of those who have relegated the African American and other racial groups to a status of subordination.

Blumer’s (1958) *theory of group position* provides that race prejudice exists basically in a sense of group position rather than a set of feelings which members of one racial group have toward the members of another racial group – individually (p. 3). To ignore race when discussing African Americans or any other racial group would render the group invisible conceptually for it is through four types of conceptual feelings of race that “White”, “Black”, “African American”, “Native American”, and “Negro” became a way to substantiate and divide groups into positions of superiority and inferiority:

- 1) a feeling of superiority; 2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien; 3) a feeling of propriety claim to certain areas of privilege

and advantage, and 4) a fear of suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race (p. 4).

Through these conceptual feelings, African Americans and other racial groups, particularly people of color in general have had to endure a history of subordinate status influenced by legislative and judicial decisions which ensured that the dominant group remained dominant and those who were deemed subordinate and inferior remained dominated and marginalized.

Brown (2009) provides an example of such legislative and/or judicial decisions when she describes school closings in four Virginia counties of Black schools after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision was passed. She argues that “White Flight” was not necessarily a response to integration which resulted in “White academies” but a result of racial mobility. She finds strong evidence in support of *racial threat theories*, finding that restrictive policies emerged as a backlash not against Black population size per se but as a backlash against Black political activity (p. 1394).

Racial threat theories believe that when there are threats to the dominant group’s status and positioning, the dominant group will respond by making changes in laws and policy to ensure their dominance in those areas deemed as their inherent property. E. Schattschneider warned of inequalities between private, organized, and upper-class groups on the one hand and public, unorganized, and lower class groups on the other (Hall and Wayman, 1990, p. 797). He further argued about *mobilization bias* in national policy making in favor of [the upper-class groups], against the interests of the [lower-class groups] and hence against the interests of U.S. democracy (p. 797).

Studies of African Americans and their history reveal a long line of legislative policy and judicial decisions which ensured subordination, *Plessey v. Ferguson, 1857*, “separate but equal”; *San Antonio v. Rodriguez, 1973*, school finance in Texas; and *Bakke v. University of California, Board of Regents, 1978*, Affirmative Action. The legal decision in *Plessey v. Ferguson* set forth a national standard of “separate but equal” facilities for Whites and African Americans...solidifying the course of education that was rooted in inequality and legalized race-based segregation of people in public facilities, including schools (Carter, 1995). An argument can be made that decisions such as *Brown v. Board of Education, 1954*, ended “separate but equal”, *Edgewood v. Kirby, 1989* – attempted to provide equitable school finance in Texas; and Affirmative Action policy has leveled the field for African Americans, people of color and urban youth in education; however, research studies show that White women were the ultimate beneficiaries of Affirmative Action, which was not designed just for the benefit of African Americans but for all marginalized groups including women in general. As a result, White males became an indirect beneficiary of the Affirmative Action (Ladson-Billings, 1994).

Additionally, the *Brown* decision did not result in equity in education nor an end to segregated facilities, in education, rather the post *Brown* era has shown that urban schools are more segregated now than before *Brown* resulting in what Jonathon Kozol (2005) describes as the restoration of apartheid schooling in America. “Virtually all the children of Black and Hispanic people in the cities I visited, both large and small, were now attending schools in which their isolation was as absolute as it had been for children

in which I'd started out so many years before" (p. 8). The resulting re-segregation has impacted African Americans in multiple ways: an increase in drop outs, a decrease in graduation rates, particularly among African American males where 70% will not graduate with their cohort (Schott Report, 2010); and potentially most notably is the widening of the supposed "achievement gap" between African Americans and their White counterparts.

Educational researchers have long suspected that the reason for the "achievement gap" is not only because of the segregated schools but also because of the tracking and de-facto segregation policies within suburban schools, where African American students are disproportionately represented in Special Education (Neal, Davis-McCray, Webb-Johnson, 2001; McIntosh, 2002); African American males are disproportionately represented in subjective discipline – often receiving more severe punishment in comparison to their White peers for the same behavior (Butler, Joubert, and Lewis, 2009; Milner, 2007); and African Americans are underrepresented in *Gifted and Talented* and *Advanced Placement* programs (Daniels, 2002). Although, these misrepresentations are relative to many children of color, the causes of such educational misappropriations and the impacts on African Americans have been carried out of the classroom, into higher education, into the board room, and ultimately into the legislative process.

Historical Context of Education

Throughout the historical course of the "American" Education, several ideas and methods would appear throughout history time after time. The ideas and methods ranged from, but are not limited to, the common school, implementation of kindergarten, the

Montessori Method, religious education, and “self-activity”. Despite the multitude of approaches and methods immersed in the guise of the spread of Democracy through the conceptualized interpretations and arguments of what it means to be educated and the gateway education produced, it seemed throughout the state of education that the reoccurrence added up to one central tenet unwritten but understood in American democracy, “globalization”. Dewey (1900) claimed that there had been a profound revolution. Instead of small villages, there was a worldwide market. Vast manufacturing centers churned out goods. Cheap methods of transportation and communication distributed those products among the parts of the newly interconnected society.

Globalization

Globalization is the first of many typological changes that surfaced early in the history of “American” education. It would return under multiple premises throughout history where the interests of the few outweighed the interests of the many due to early access to the powerful and a lack of access to the powerless. Globalization as a concept and a movement began early in the history of the United States from the early colonization period. At this point in history, one may refer to globalization as imperialism and/or colonialism. A spotlight from the colonial period is cast on the contrasting viewpoints, reasoning, dogmatic approaches and philosophical underpinnings of imperialism, expansionism, and globalization. The education of the colonized people – the Native American and the American Indian – was used as justification for establishing colonies in the New World (Watras, 2008, p. 15). Hidden within this agenda was religion.

Religion is considered one of three “American” institutions responsible for the education of the American youth.

From these early beginnings of the United States of America, during the pre-colonial and in the currently conceptualized post-colonial era, the question of how to educate and in what form to educate non-European people and later people of color has remained an enigma. The contrasting viewpoints, reasoning, dogmatic approaches and philosophical underpinnings of imperialism, expansionism, and globalization that dominated the early educational history of the emerging colonial era as represented by two colonial empires - Spain and England – applied two divergent philosophies for educating the native people of North American.

When Christopher Columbus crossed the ocean blue in 1492, he did so under the order of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain in order to impart Christianity. This is more than the simple reason for what American school children are taught – “in search of a New World”. When indigenous people were conquered, Spanish soldiers were required to provide spiritual enlightenment (Watras, 2008, p.15). England on the other hand saw the “American Indian” as separate nations, divided. The focus of English colonization was to create separate self sustaining colonies. This vision was used to separate and conquer individual tribes who were seen as at odds with other tribes, offering support and protection. This resulted in an educational innovation that propagated English customs, ideas, and language, law and literature (Watras, 2008, p. 26).

Therefore the globalization concept was introduced early in United States under other terms and under the guise of spirituality and enlightenment. It would soon be termed “expansionism” as the newly formed United States began its expansionism under “Manifest Destiny”. Although the expansion took place on the same continent, it should be considered globalization because like Spain and England, the purpose was to spread the interests of the newly founded nation, which included conquering and educating indigenous people. The education of the colonial youth became a top priority during this time period with the implementation of the common school as a part of the Land Ordinance of 1785. The Land Ordinance of 1785 set the pattern for all other states seeking admission into the union (Watras, 2008) – states agreed to dedicate one thirty sixth of the land to the maintenance of common schools (p. 40).

The Common School

Besides land grants, property tax became a way to fund schools. In 1700, Connecticut required towns of more than seventy families to hold schools for eleven months and levy taxes that would support the schools – property tax (Watras, 2008, p. 46). In the article, “Plan for Establishing Schools in a New Country” (1787), the author argues that “by charitable donations, or by grants of state, adequate funds could be formed, to defray the expenses of the board and tuition of such children, the evils...would be remedied.” The evil the author refers to is “degenerative vice, irreligion, and barbarism” as a result of allowing sixty families dispersed over a large tract of country from twenty to forty miles rather than being collected in a [township] as recommended by the Land Ordinance of 1785. The issue would emerge when town’s people are asked to pay taxes to schools

outside the town, an early decision making process likely to have been made without the equitable amount of advocacy and voice on behalf of the parents who are being asked to pay taxes to other schools. The article notes, “Few parents will be disposed to incur heavy expenses of sending their children from home, and boarding them in a distant school”.

Along with the creation of a common school system there came the question of how to fund them. It would appear that the implementation of a fair and equal schooling system in the 18th century shared similar setbacks and conflicts and schooling systems in the 21st century. Initially, land grants were used in order to solicit funds to support the public schools. The tradition of donating land for schools began in England with Edward VI (Watras, 2008, p. 44). However, the land grants did not provide significant income. The misuse of the land became a major issue and land was sold in order to clear debts. By including the idea for land grants as resources with the unsettled lands, according to George Knight, “then authorities squandered the monies rather than dedicate them to education” (as cited in Watras, 2008, p. 45). Knight claims that proper management of the funds would have supported the needs of all levels of education for all time (p. 45).

School funding always creates its own question of equality vs. equity – the 18th to 21st century. In 1836, at the annual meeting of the Western Literary Institute and College Professional Teachers...a report was presented where it was determined that the methods used were inadequate because many children were left without instruction. Because they believed that in a democracy all students should receive equal education, they called for the adequate funding of common schools (Watras, 2008, p. 56). However, as with 21st

century schooling, when one has a lack of equitable advocacy for an equitable dispersement, leaving the decision to a few which impacts the many we find early equitable funding issues for education.

Early Education Divide

Questions of what counted as education; who was responsible for its dissemination; and who would receive it came with the development of the common school. “Thanks for Horace Mann and his fellow reformers, the common school was believed to have the capacity to provide young Americans with the independence needed to resist selfishness and vindictiveness” (Bierlien, 1993, p. 125). The goal of the common school was to encourage prosperity, civility, and social development, particularly for young boys and girls. The social development and civility included “both boys and girls [being] taught to read, write, and cypher. “The boys should also be instructed in every useful branch of husbandry and gardening, and the girls in the every kind of work necessary for farmers’ wives to know and practice” (Plan for Establishing Schools, 1787). However, early versions of *group positioning theory* Blumer (1958) would appear throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries continuing the intersection of race, economics and education. In order to keep marginalized groups marginalized, groups in power would mobilize interests to maintain their status quo. A lack of equitable resources to combat and mobilized front, the less powerful would eventually succumb to the more powerful and more resource heavy mobilized interest (Brown, 2009).

Without the proper information being provided to the lawmakers that could have been provided by advocates to mobilize and interest in equitable education, decisions were

made on hasty assumptions about a population of learners they truly did not recognize or could relate. The slaves and freedman had no one to speak on their behalf as they had to legislative representation nor any advocacy groups who could speak to their interests. Laws were enacted in order to prohibit slaves and freedmen from attaining the education which may enlighten them. In 1740, fearing that slaves in South Carolina could exchange written plans to rebel, the colonial legislature forbade the teaching of reading or writing to any slave (Watras, 2008, p. 96).

Timely and informed information about the benefits of educating slaves and freedmen alike likely could have dispelled some of the fear that by teaching slaves to read, they would have the mental capacity to do what the colonists did during the war for independence. Although this point is not made clear in the text, essentially, the growing fear may be another revolution by the slaves and freedman. For instance, the legislature of North Carolina forbade anyone from teaching slaves to read because literacy excited dissatisfaction and incited rebellion (Waltras, 2008, p. 96).

One finds similar fear in the State of Arizona's attempt to ban Cultural Studies. An unintended but supported consequence of laws that provided opposition to educating slaves and the Negro was the 90% illiteracy rate in the early colonial period (Anderson, 2004). Of course without information to show the negative impacts of an illiterate population of people via someone willing to voice these impacts on behalf of these people, we find another unintended but supported consequence is an education deficit that has accrued similarly to the national debt where funds of knowledge were not permitted for deposit into the education of the Negro. The education debt is difficult to

repay due to economic, social, and pathological issues plaguing urban neighborhoods that an early education may have ameliorated (Ladson Billings, 2006).

Maintaining the Social Order

In “A Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge”, the Committee of the Virginia Assembly (1779) indicates, “those entrusted with power have, in time, and by slow operations, perverted it into tyranny” (p.1). Inferiority vs. Superiority was ultimately the aim of the form of education discourse shelled out by Horace Mann and imitated by Calvin Henderson Wiley in the 1850s. While both argued about the importance of education and its impacts on society, both felt that education was a stepping stone to ensure the superiority and inferiority between the races and economics classes. Their methods differed.

Mann advocated to the elite classes of people that poor Whites needed an education in order to maintain the social order (Watras, 2008, p. 90). He espoused fear that the newly arriving immigrants would upset the social order of things – as the colonists did during the American Revolution. Wiley on the other hand advocated using a discourse that fit the Southern (Antebellum South) way of life. He argued that educating poor Whites was important because they might incite or assist in a slave rebellion (Watras, 2008, p. 91). He felt that the poor Whites might express hostility towards the elite class; therefore, allowing them to receive the education would enlighten them about the importance of elitism and slavery and about their proper order (p. 91). It was the fear of slaves reading the abolitionist literature that worried some.

A contradiction emerges from this statement. Whereas educating poor Whites would ensure an understanding of the eliteness of Whites over slaves and of the “American” citizenry over the new immigrants, educating slaves would incite rebellion. Both groups in this instance unlike earlier groups had advocates for both their interests, resulting in a decision later by Thomas Jefferson to ensure all Whites be educated under what is known as the Jeffersonian model. Left without a voice for their interests, the “American” Negro is again to be left uneducated. This permanent “symbiosis” of which Bell (1992) speaks ensures that the civil rights gains of the mid 20th century such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954 and the Civil Rights Acts of 1965 will be temporary and setbacks inevitable. “American society as we know it exists only because of its foundation in racially based slavery, and it thrives only because racial discrimination continues” (p.10).

Reconstruction

During the reconstruction years after the Civil War, the decision to educate or not to educate the Negro and how to educate the Negro became the question. Like earlier forms of mobilized interests, the interests of the Negro were never considered. Without a voice in the decision to educate, the decision was ultimately left to those in power, and all too often result continuing to plague educational decisions in the 21st century.

Although the expansion has ceased for the moment, how to educate the renewed union populace was a both a quandary and a puzzle. One issue was that “the teachers extended lessons into political areas by having young students sing songs celebrating the end of slavery, and they cited catechisms that Northern teachers used with the children praising the North for bringing freedom and castigating the slaveholders for exploiting

the slaves” (Watras, 2008, p. 120). Another argument surfaced regarding the Northern teachers in 1955 by George Bentley. He concluded that the Freedman’s Bureau mistakenly permitted the schools to teach the children subjects the Southerners did not want taught (p. 120).

Alternative viewpoints emerged which claimed that southerners should have accepted the missionary teachers policies (Waltras, 2008). After uncovering that most of the missionary teachers were “free, middle-class [B]lack men and women from the North, individuals such as Robert C. Morris claimed that these policies promoted “self-help, practical training, and the gradual improvement of racial conditions” (Watras, 2008, p. 120). This statement is a contrast to Baldwin (1899) where he asserts “We began at the wrong end. Instead of educating the Negro in the lines which were open to him, he was educated out of his natural environment and the opportunities which lay immediately about him”. This statement provides another conflict with the belief by Morrison that the schools only offered practical or industrial training which reinforced order and morality instead of encouraging radical reconstruction (Watras, 2008, p. 121). To encourage radical reconstruction; however, one would need radical Reconstructionist view points and voices when the arguments are made. A key historical issue with impacting legislative decisions is that those with limited access rarely have the resources or enough interests to be involved early enough in the process to truly impact and influence decisions. Often they are left out until the bitter end when there is no chance of change.

In the article “The Present Problem of Negro Education” Baldwin (1899) provides both support and disdain for Negro education and how its implementation has not

garnered the results quoted by Rutherford B. Hayes that education would ameliorate the conditions of African Americans (Watras, 2008, p. 121). Baldwin (1899) wrote, “Social recognition of the negro by the [W]hite is a simple impossibility, and is entirely dismissed from the minds of the [W]hite and by the intelligent Negroes. There is no need of social recognition. It is largely demanded by sentimental theorists, who would be the last to grant such recognition if they were to live with the problem...Any attempt to force it merely complicates the situation and injures the cause of the [B]lack man”. Such a statement silenced an entire population of people resulting in any attempts to voice their interests were left on deaf ears. They simply had no access to state any alternative motions.

He claimed that rather than teaching them to believe in equal rights through the gain of education and political power, the Bureau should have tried to change the attitudes of Southern white people (as cited in Watras, 2008, p. 120). To clarify, teaching the Negro child to believe in equal rights and to gain education and political power resulted in increased racial antagonism, an early form of blaming the victim for his circumstance. Baldwin (1899) illustrates, “What is all this problem, this Negro problem. This question to which some Southern white men answer, ‘You leave it to us’...I fear the Southerner’s answer means, ‘we will keep the Negro where he belongs, meaning where he is’. It is not sophisticated. It is not cerebral” (p. 54).

The Comprehensive High School

During the 1920s, one finds the ideas, development, and implementation of the “comprehensive high school”. The comprehensive high school model was used to

advance democratic ideals to other countries – Japan and Germany – after defeats in World War II. “Known as democracy’s high school, the comprehensive high school was supposed to allow every student to pursue his or her interest while developing skills and attitudes to advance the social order” (Watras, 2008, p. 241). The idea of the comprehensive high school is valuable because of its persistent existence as a socially progressive institution aimed at producing students who follow the national discourse of the moment. The comprehensive high school is a tool to ensure the social order is followed. “Educators offered the comprehensive high school as the means to solve social problems, including economic depression and international aggression” (Watras, 2008, p. 241). One needs only to reflect on the current state of high schools in the United States to readily identify the current social order of Career and College readiness and Common Core Standards. The goal is to produce learners who are able to compete in a global economy.

The ideologies which permeated early colonialization, the expansion westward, the antebellum south, the fight against communism, and the Nation at Risk are ever present and remain rhetorically attached to the same educational dogma of educating and developing an efficient workforce. Furthermore, John Swomley (1970) claimed that the United States used its military might to protect large companies as they expanded to other parts of the world (as cited in Watras, 2008, p. 3). Akin to an empire, the United States had conquered other peoples and established agencies to extract wealth from the subjugated groups.

Sputnik, 1957

The all out war on public education took a more tragic turn for educators and school children with the launching of Sputnik, 1957 – three years after Brown v. Board of Education and with the publishing of *A Nation at Risk*, 1983. Without the intercessions of advocates and lobbyists for on the behalf of high need students, politics have continually promoted policy and precedent versus student achievement. For example, the launch of Sputnik, 1957 began the national furor that the U.S. public education system was failing. As a part of the Cold War ideology, a vacuum occurred where the university academics, scientists, and defense analysts all began to capitalize on the Cold War fears that the Soviet Union was becoming more powerful than the United States.

According to “domino theory” Western leaders feared that if one country fell to a Communist regime, other neighboring countries in the region would fall under the sway of Communism (Allan and Burlbaw, 1986). This provided the opportunity for opponents of public education to blame public educators and schools specifically for the U.S. perceived failures in mathematics and science, resulting in a typological shift in education towards the development of the learning population towards fields that would greater enhance the U.S. global competitiveness. The typological shifts result in a focus of school curriculum and development that is guided by the perceived national interests at the moment, a moment in time where educational advocacy would be essential.

Cold War Interests Converge

Melby (1956) writes, “This problem is the overwhelming American preoccupation with Communism and Communist expansion which takes precedent over all other

considerations in American thinking, a preoccupation attended by a rather typical American sense of urgency and impatience” (p. 135). So, efforts were made to ensure that Democracy would be the ideology of choice, internationally and nationally. With the spread of Communism, specifically in Asia and Russia, a sense of urgency caused the American political narrative to change its focus:

“The launch of the satellite was translated into a story of educational deficiency for the American public by the media, following a line of criticism developed by academic critics of progressive education and abetted by a presidential administration unconvinced that the defense situation was as dire as critics alleged it to be” (Urban, 2010, p. 116).

Despite information in the Eisenhower administration that the U.S. was not lagging behind, the push to use the launch as a launching pad ensued. A short term infusion of money into education became a national focus most specifically in science and mathematics. This short term infusion has become a long term practice in funding for areas under S.T.E.M, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics, as Science and Technology advocates put forth informational efforts that would support funding of programs that would support their enhancements. Contrarily, mobilization interests in opposition to any federally role in education was based on protecting social and economic privilege by opposing any taxation to support public schools (Urban, 2010).

Watras (2008) points out three changes American educators were “forced” to undertake in schools because of the Cold War ideological conflict – Communism vs. Democracy: 1) use the schools to teach children to distrust communism; 2) reintroduce

strictly academic programs and to remove the social utility previously recommended for courses in mathematics, science, and foreign languages; 3) movement to end racial discrimination and segregation in schools (p. 321). The movement to end racial discrimination and segregation in schools unlike the other two changes was done so because the federal government recognized that communist agents pointed to racial discrimination and prejudice to show the world that the U.S. could not live up to its own ideals of democracy (p. 321). Through interest convergence - a tenet of *Critical Race Theory (CRT)*, legislative and judicial acts followed to ensure desegregation and integration would occur such as *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954.

NDEA, 1958

From the launch of Sputnik, 1957, however, came the National Defense and Education Act, 1958. It is...the case for all actors in the NDEA drama that without Sputnik the federal educational legislation was unlikely to overcome the constitutional objections of state and local government purists and the religious and racial controversies that plagued federal aid to education, constitutionally and more importantly, politically” (Urban, 2010. p. 80). There were a series of compromises that took place in order for the NDEA, 1958 to pass. Such compromises included funding in the south for the building and renovation of schools, funding for private schools -religious and non-religious, funding in the form of scholarships and loans, and ensuring that school systems were desegregating per *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954. One example of lobbying for exchange is when the Office of Education (OE) members received support for enhancement of the OE from the NEA, National Education Agency, in exchange for

support for financial aid for education, seeking to send more students to college (Urban, 2010, p. 127).

Lister Hill and Carl Elliot were leading the charge for NDEA to provide funds to the south, both of whom were from Alabama, for the purpose of building and improving schools. The emerging angst of improving math and science was a perfect springboard and they advocated for the improvement of science labs. The university academics pushed for and began to make headway in the adaption of a national and local curriculum focused on mathematics and science for the purpose of developing more engineers, scientists, and mathematicians. A renewed focus emerged for identifying gifted and talented youth and providing funding to those who could not afford to attend higher education in the form of scholarships and loans – an “appalling waste of talent” according to Carl Elliot (Urban, 2010, p. 65). Arguments were contradictory to the Jeffersonian model which provided that those who could afford to attend higher education schools should and those who could not would not.

The Powell Amendment

Of the compromises, the one most significant to this study is that of the Powell Amendment in relation to school desegregation. William Clayton Powell was an African American legislature who saw the passing of NDEA as an opportunity to ensure that desegregation was occurring in the southern states. The focus of the Powell Amendment was to deny federal funding to districts who had not desegregated. There were unintended but supported consequences represented by three main arguments against racial desegregation of schools in this era.

The first was that people would not accept it and violence would result. The second was that school integration would cause white parents to leave the schools, making desegregation much more difficult. The third was that the policies would make the school life more difficult for African Americans and harm their progress (Watras, 2008, p. 353). The last sentence is a direct contradiction and contrast to Justice Taney's stance in *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954 where he claimed that *Plessey v. Ferguson* has no place in education. The 'tangibles' mentioned earlier refers to buildings, materials, desks, etc. The Court further quoted the Kansas court, which had held that "Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law; for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group. A sense of inferiority affects the motivation of a child to learn" (Pearson Education, Inc., 2005).

Although this was an amendment that was added to a 1956 federal funding bill – which failed – it was attached in the final moments of the passing. Mobilized efforts ensued. The use of "solidary incentives" was used to argue that by adding the amendment, the federal government was now impeding on states rights. Solidary incentives, in lobbying, are a form of persuasion to gain access to like minded allies (Berry, 1958). As the final vote neared, assurances were provided that integration would not be a mandate to receive funding and that all "discriminatory language" was excluded from the bill. As a result the Powell Amendment was taken off the bill. Admittedly,

Elliot added “that the situation was tragic and that it hurt [B]lack people who needed new and improved school facilities more than [W]hites” (Urban, 2010, p. 68).

The Age of High Stakes Testing

Public educators’ lack and inability to help their long term occupational goals that was provided to others by Sputnik, 1957 is an example of having a lack of political power. This lack of political power is the result of lacking the access and knowledge of legislative process, often arriving “late to the ball”. Noted in Wolman and Thomas (1970), the NAACP for example does not get involved soon enough to actively influence the process. The resulting lack provides opportunities for public education to be blamed continuously for the nation’s drawbacks but never for the improvements. As the Nation at Risk, 1983 declared that our once dominance in commerce, industry, and science was now being threatened by a failure of public schools, proponents of the privatization of schools and national standards were making progress. The “Nation at Risk, 1983 report ushered in a new era of accountability with the development of standardized testing, which began No Child Left Behind, 2001. Under NCLB, 2001, states must developed assessments in order to test student’s academic readiness. Students are to begin testing in 3rd grade and continue through to the 11th grade. The premise was that testing results would be made public continuing with the report card on schools; however a national report card was developed called AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress. Through AYP, funding would be cut for states, districts, and schools who did not meet AYP overall and including sub populations of learners. Despite the efforts of the standardized testing movement, the gap between children of color and their White

counterparts still exists. The overall ranking of the United States in relation to other industrial nations is abysmal especially in reading, math and science – the later two being the publicized focus of NDEA, 1958. As of 2012, the United States ranked 20th among industrialized nations in Reading, 23rd in Science, and 30th in Math (NCES, 2015).

The all out attack on public schools and public education through *A Nation at Risk*, 1983 and *No Child Left Behind*, 2001 produced an “emphatic fallacy” similar to that of detailed by Critical Race Theorists. In Critical Race Theory emphatic fallacy occurs when hate speech is used against an individual or group. The resulting expectation is for the victim to “speak back to the offender...the cure for bad speech is for more speech” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p. 27). In the eyes of those who are making public policy and setting academic standards, the cure for low achievement scores on tests is more testing. “One of the significant issues that emerged from the commission’s report was the questioning of our national ability to compete globally, which led educators, business leaders, and political figures to revisit concerns about high-quality teaching and student achievement” (Carter, 2003, p. 9).

In 2008, however, President Obama ushered in *Race to the Top* where states could receive incentive based grants for providing innovative approaches to preparing students for college and career readiness and for showing certain academic growth and benchmarks. In addition, Common Core Standards have been implemented in all but four states, Texas, Alaska, Nebraska and Virginia. These standards are meant to prepare all students for College and Career Readiness by aligning national standards and measures for success on the ACT and college entrance exams. There is a push for students to

begin taking Advanced Placement Courses as early as 9th grade and possibly begin concurrent enrollment courses, courses that serve as dual credit for high school and college.

Historical Context Conclusion

Globalization is the recurrent theme throughout the history of American education. Initial concepts of globalization are imperialism and expansionism. We find through the history that efforts were put in place to ensure global dominance through the infusion of Eurocentric educational principles including religion and ultimately the Western ideology of Democracy. However, as the United States becomes more and more capitalistic, education has shifted not only to globalizing other nations but generating a work force to compete and ultimately supplant other nations. This can be found in the push to develop students into college bound citizens or career workers.

The current American educational system perpetuates the same tracking alignment which ensures that the same populations of students go on the college track while others take the career track to lower skilled lower paying jobs. The Jeffersonian Model is alive and well. The goal is not to improve the living conditions of the people but to ensure the economic viability of the nation. Through the education of indigenous groups, conquered groups, and marginalized groups, globalization is permeated throughout the ideology of democracy which is a “business that is always unfinished”.

Educational Lobbying

Throughout the history of American education, there are small samples rather than examples of educational lobbying. One could argue that most impactful lobbying in

regards to education has taken place as a result of a political or economic interest versus that of an educational one. For instance, the lobbying against the Powell amendment was not an educational lobby but rather a political interest in that, states did not want the federal government gaining any active role on state policies, including that of desegregation. To fully understand the role lobbyists play in education, which is often through other special interests or intermediaries, one must first realize that “lobbyists play an important and essential role in the legislative process (U.S. Senate, 2013).

Lobbying is probably as old as government (Milbrath, 1963, p. 12). In the United States, the likelihood that officials will receive lobbying messages is further guaranteed by the First Amendment to the Constitution which forbids the government to make any law abridging the freedoms of speech, press, peaceable assembly, or the right to petition the government for redress of grievances (p. 12). The definition of lobbyist for the current study is an activist who seeks to persuade members of the government both Congress and the Senate to impact legislation, policy, or law that would benefit their interest group. They are considered an integral part of the democratic process. However, this does not make an individual a lobbyist. The term “lobby” has multiple definitions, ultimately depending on the context. Lobbying was defined as the stimulation and transmission of a communication, by someone other than a citizen acting on his own behalf, directed to a governmental decision-maker with the hope of influencing his decision (Milbrath, 1960). The description of a lobbyist given in a speech by Senate Majority Leader Byrd (1980) is as follows:

“Winding in and out through the long, devious basement passage, crawling through the corridors, trailing its slimy length from gallery to committee room, at last it lies stretched at full length on the floor of Congress—this dazzling reptile, this huge, scaly serpent of the lobby” (U.S. Senate, 2013)

According to Milbrath (1963) there are some boundaries to be defined:

1. Lobbying relates only to governmental decision making;
2. All lobbying is motivated by a desire to influence governmental decisions;
3. Lobbying implies the presence of an intermediary or representative as a communication link between citizens and governmental decision-makers;
4. All lobbying involves communication.

Lobbying is a profession that is not widely understood. Lobby in the description by Senator Byrd is the act of being in an actual place and general location within a hotel, brothel, or other building establishment. Although there is some disagreement, many believe the term “lobbyist” originated at the Willard Hotel in Washington DC, where it was used by then U.S. President Ulysses S. Grant to describe those frequenting the hotel’s lobby in order to gain access to the President often found there, enjoying a cigar and brandy (Public Affairs, 2007).

“Lobbyists and special interests groups are viewed by some persons as a threat to our system of government” (Milbrath, 1960, p. 15). Those views are representative of some public opinion as lobbyists are seen as money hunters seeking to further the interests of those they represent even at the risk of others, which could appear to be public education, especially Urban schools and Urban youth. As the budget cycle closes each year, federal

dollars such as Title I and Title III are diverted to other interests, leaving schools which benefit from the additional funding to rely more on an evaporating local property tax base which has proven to provide an equal education evidenced by the court decision of Texas, *Edgewood v. Kirby*, 1984.

“Almost inevitably, interested citizens want to influence the actions of official decision-makers and organize into groups to focus more effectively their energies and influence”. (Milbrath, 1963, p. 14) Lobbyists represent just about every American institution and interest group - labor unions, corporations, colleges and universities, churches, charities, environmental groups, senior citizens organizations, and even state, local or foreign governments. The lobbying profession began immediately following the drafting of the constitution of the United States, although the term lobby had not been used specifically. In the early years of U.S. government, the first petitions were from a variety of groups which included shipwrights concerned about the effects of the tariff; merchants desiring an end to the tax on molasses; federal clerks requesting an increase in pay; and military officers who sought reimbursement for personal funds expending during the Revolution (U.S. Senate, 2013). William Hull was hired by the Virginia veterans of the Continental Army to lobby for additional compensation for their war services (Public Affairs Link, 2007). Hull is considered by many to be the first lobbyist.

A major role of the lobbyist is to persuade legislators and Senators to make particular legislative, policy, and law decisions in favor of the industry they serve. “A person who represents only himself is merely a citizen exercising his constitutional right; he is not paid, and he is not required to register, although he may try to influence the decisions of

officials in much the same manner as a lobbyist (Milbrath, 1960, p. 280). For instance, in the early 1850s, Samuel Colt provided free pistols to members of Congress including providing one to the 12 year old son a representative. This was believed to be a mild encouragement for passage of a bill (Public Affairs Ling, 2007). He wanted to extend his patent on the gun for another seven years. In acting on his own behalf, he was merely exercising his constitutional right despite influencing the decisions of members of Congress. This is potentially why lobbying appears to be down, but is in full swing. Colt still would not have to officially register as a lobbyist because he is representing himself and not an interest or entity. On the contrary, other aspects which provided the view of lobbyists are the historical portrayal of lobbyists which provided extravagant gifts and parties to Senators who were away from home:

Many Senators left their families at home and took rooms in boardinghouses that surrounded the Capital Building. It was an atmosphere in which the so-called “social lobby” could thrive...Clubs, brothels, and “gambling dens” became natural habitats of the lobbyists, since these institutions were occasionally visited by members of Congress who came seeking good food, drink, and agreeable company. (U.S. Senate, 2013).

At this time, many of those participating in these practices were members of the press. They would lobby members on such matters as what Colt was representing and were able to do so because they had gained access to the floor as members of the press. These “special interest groups” had an interest in adopting policy which would benefit a certain segment of the public but which may not be beneficial for the general public (Milbrath,

1960, p. 29). Interest groups hired them to attain information and to provide information to various members. Members of the press who were lobbyists by definition were also used as letter writers in order to mobilize interests. These letter writers who intern provided a service the busy Congress members and Senators were considered as “the most efficient agents who can be employed by those who have measures to advance” (U.S. Senate, 2013). Letter writing is one of the effective traits described by lobbyists (Milbrath, 1960).

The Role of Lobbying Interests

Lobbyist also work to sway public opinion, some having began at the congressional level. Margaret Thompson defined lobbying and lobbyists as “the process by which the interests of discrete clienteles are represented within the policy-making system...representatives who act concurrently with, and supplement the capabilities of, those who are selected at the polls” (U.S. Senate, 2013). From an educational standpoint, public opinion of education is swayed by the interests of lobbyist. The difficulty we face in public education is the competition for effective and efficient representation of educational interests. “Government in modern times is so deeply involved in the regulation of business, agriculture, labor, and general citizen activities that many groups believe that they must have a lobby representative in Washington to protect their interests” (Milbrath, 1960, p. 33).

Educational interests, however, do not garner the effective and efficient representation as other enterprises and interests because of a lack of resources. “Groups generally send lobbyists to Washington because a policy objective is in jeopardy” (Milbrath, 1960, p.

49). Interest groups form when a group of unorganized people are adversely affected by change...those affected will lobby the government not to take actions that would adversely affect them (Pressure Groups in America, 2013). Educational interests and the formation of educational interests groups is no match for the development of trusts:

Between 1897 and 1904, the number of trusts in the United States grew from 12 to 318 (representing a consolidation of more than five thousand manufacturing plants). They included Standard Oil, American Tobacco, and U.S. Steel. (U.S. Senate, 2013)

Their common aims bonded them together to influence the Federal government and direct it to their concerns. Public education is often not one of them since most opposing groups are economically self-interested and have the monetary resources to conglomerate and support those self-interests.

However, one could make the argument that there has been a national interest in education evidenced by the movement to hold public schools more accountable for student learning and holding administrator and teachers accountable via AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress. During the establishing of the National Defense and Education Act, 1958 there were multiple examples of lobbying interests on the behalf of education. On example is provided by Urban (2010):

Establishing a federal bureaucracy devoted to vocational education and a parallel bureaucracy in each state for the same purpose resulting in institutionalizing a permanent lobby for the subject that was unmatched in effectiveness by any other curricular area of education (Urban, 2010, p 25).

As a result vocational education was seen as an alternative to the other academic subjects.

The problem, however, is that the decisions being directed for the improvement of public education is not for the improvement of student learning for the sake of the children but for the sake of corporate ideologies for global economic competitiveness. For instance, Urban (2010) cites that scientists became more involved in high school curriculum reform, using the launch of Sputnik as a spring board. What resulted was a national reform in educational curriculum policy which promoted for focus on STEM subjects - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Increased funding went to the NSF - National Science Foundation - for scientific research.

These interests are at the forefront not because of a lack of interest from public school teachers and schools systems but from a lack of access. For example Urban (2010) shares that opposition to the federal aid of public education included powerful individuals who did not send their children to public schools and thus had no wish to pay taxes for those schools...taxpayers in relatively wealthy states...had no desire to support the education of citizens of poor states (p. 18). Access is provided by the amount of representation one can garner at the beginning and throughout the legislative process not at the end which is often where those with a lack of political and wealth power end up having to dispute a policy or law that will be detrimental to their interest group. Civil Rights legislation is often an example of such a lack of mobilized interests. Brown (2009) notes that the NAACP will attempt to influence a bill or policy at its implementation stage versus at the drafting and development stage resulting in lack luster results and often

small compromises. Because they lack to resources for greater levels of representation, they are often not on the legislative floor at the beginnings of a bill.

Gaining Lobbyists Representation

One garners this representation through the dispensing of resources, most often in monetary allocations. Monetary allocations are not directed towards the legislature but toward representation – a lobbyist. A group’s chances of being heard are improved by a hiring a lobbyist, which costs money. The issue with educational representation is that the representation is limited due to the lack or resources available to supply to the representative. Public schools are funded by public dollars, therefore, are unable to use the resources to advocate for an educational interests, since the interests have already been determined. A public school educator such as a principal or teacher would have to use personal time to lobby; they could only testify at a hearing, if called. They could not because their salary comes from tax payer dollars, unless they were lobbying on behalf of an issue that the constituency base wants to have lobbied. Thus a part of their job description must be to follow that process – the Superintendent fits that description along with the Superintendent Chief of Staff.

On the contrary, private interests have a greater supply of resource allocation and are able to garner the necessary representatives to mobilize their interest. Money lies at its roots as a result. The more money available, the higher the number and caliber of lobbyists could be hired (U.S. Senate, 2013). To argue to the interests of others, is often to the detriment of another. When an educational interest appears to impact another interest negatively, mobilized interests occur often to the detriment of the educational

interest which lacks the equitable representation for effectively and efficiently support its interests. A lobbying tactic used by smaller interest groups or those with limited power is called “lobbying at the grass roots”, which is to create the appearance of broad public support rather than attempt to influence the legislation directly (Milbrath, 1963).

African American Educational Lobbying

There really is a dearth of history of African American educational lobbying. Presently, which like other aspects of lobbying, educational lobbying is limited to political and economic interests. To lobby for education is often done in association with a larger ideal such as curriculum reform in order to enhance scientific research or to develop scientists and engineers in order to compete on the global market. During the design of the NDEA, 1958 strong consideration was even provided to the teaching of foreign languages in order to ensure that U.S. students could learn the languages of those of competing interests which at the time was Russia. Public education simply is not investible. There is no immediate return save for those in private schools who are expected to be the future leaders. “Can you really buy your way to better education for these children? Do we know enough to be quite sure that we will see an actual return on the investment we make?” (Kozol, 2005)

The primary reason for a lack of history is similar and not-dissimilar for the reason why there are a small percentage of African American principals – 6.9%, and teachers 10% despite 16% of all public school children being African American. What desegregation did for African American teachers and leaders is what occurred with African American legislature after 1901 where there were no Black members of

Congress. Between 1887 and 1901, just five [B]lacks served in Congress (USHR, 2013). Due to rural and agrarian Blacks moving north towards the industrial cities, Black votes and representation virtually disappeared. What furthered the lack of participation was the hostility and outright violence during this era of Jim Crow which forbade and limited the Black vote.

Those in Congress prior to 1901 were relegated to lower committees where their voices were ignored and silenced. The NAACP lobbied Congress on behalf of Black community interests, but without a single Black member of Congress to advocate for those interests, both major political parties refused to enact legislation to improve conditions for African Americans (USHR, 2013). Southern law makers eager to resolve and reverse the post Civil War Reconstruction policies, attacked any form of legislation attempting to support or protect Black interests and rights. As George W. Murray commented, “I beg all true men to forget party and partisanship and write the great wrongs perpetuated upon humble and unoffending American citizens...I declare that no class of people has ever been more misrepresented, slandered, and traduced than the [B]lack people of the South” (USHR, 2013).

Some initial ramifications and implications of desegregation as a result *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954 on the African American school, communities, teachers, and leaders was the decision that “inferior” all Black schools were closed and black teachers and administrators lost their jobs. Rather than integrate, “many [W]hite communities simply circumvented *Brown v. Board of Education* by pulling their children out of the public school system and developing private schools” (Chideya, 1995, p. 72). Earlier

accounts of school closures prior to Brown indicate that when all Black schools were closed, forcing parents to attend other schools – because they were not permitted to attend the all White school nearby, they were forced to pay the local property tax for the all White schools they could not attend (Brown, 2009). Interestingly, early colonists did not want the Land Ordinance of 1775, which set aside taxes to fund compulsory schools, because they felt they should not have to pay taxes for a school their children did not attend.

Integration resulted in the overrepresentation of Black students assigned to low-ability tracks, enrolled in special education programs, and counted as discipline statistics (Horsford, 2010). The over representation of Black students, particularly male, has caused a national stir or at least concern for local school districts who serve a population where Black students are a minute part of the population but they represent the majority of special education students and discipline referrals. Furthermore, we find in most cases, once schools were integrated, the African American teachers and administrators were ultimately fired and replaced by “better qualified” White teachers and administrators.

African Americans did not return to Congress until 1929 when Oscar De Priest entered the House. This sparked a new era of Congressional and Senatorial leadership for African Americans. From the period 1929-1970, 13 African Americans were elected from majority-Black, Urban district (USHR, 2013). As the research literature in this study will share, most lobbyists are former legislatures, some lawyers, and others are political science and public policy majors. With the removal of African Americans from

Congress coupled with the segregation of the times which forbid many qualified African Americans from pursuing hiring degrees or certain jobs in particular sectors, the history of the African American educational lobbyist is virtually non-existent. Despite this virtuosity, there are some who have prevailed over the years through their lobbying efforts in other fields, opening their opportunity to lobby for education via “net playing” – the practice of finding out who is the most influential with an audience, meeting those people and staying touch for future opportunities (Vance, 2012).

With the emergence of the Congressional Black Caucus in 1971, the important “permanent interests” of Black Americans could be addressed in addition to the advancement of a Black member in the institution (Congress) in order to push legislation, with sometimes potent results (USHR, 2013). By the end of the 1960s, with the establishment of multiple black caucuses in law, school boards, and mayoral boards, “[B]lack power” had fostered two remarkable developments in Black politics in the United States (Smith, 1981). It had contributed to the development of a black ethnic tradition and to the development of an emergent independent Black organizational structure.

Despite these emerging opportunities, African American educational lobbyists and African American lobbyists in general are still limited in their role in education more so than other areas. This is primarily because public education remains an area viewed as having a lack of investment return and has been argued will not improve with increased resources - “the necessity of efficiency” (Bierlien, 1993). The African American educational lobbyists’ primary role is to be the “Black Face” and representative of their

firm or interest group with the Congressional Black Caucus and is seldom regarded in the same light and expectation as their White counterparts – “they are invisible” (Ellison, 1980).

Stereotype Threat

Due to the lack of resources and the lack of influence to provide access to other coalitions and interests, school leaders and systems will have to rely on purposive incentives, centered on the greater good. To mobilize this interest, the African American educational lobbyists educated to deconstruct and address the three unique challenges of African American educational lobbyists as they relate to “stereotype threat”:

Pigeonholing, Lack of Credibility, and Deficit Model as a Hegemonic Practice.

Williams (2009) writes that African American enrollment in suburban schools often has a negative effect on overall student performance (p. 7). High achieving African American students are often expected to become leaders in Black organizations, multicultural programs, as well as other organizations and programs...they are constantly thinking about the many people who are depending on their leadership and exceptionality (Milner, 2002). This makes pigeonholing unique to African American educational lobbyists and African American students, who may be considered to some to be the high achieving standard bearers of the race. This is a critical concept for the African American lobbyist to grasp because like their African American student counterparts, this is the expectation for the African American lobbyist on K Street.

The African American lobbyist is the vanguard of the African American population along with professors, politicians, and public figures. Stereotype threat affects the

vanguard of the group, those with the skills and self-confidence to have identified with the domain. So, as the lobbyist gains access where those claim he cannot the fear of failure and alienation from within their own group will emerge as they carry the perceptions of the entire race on their shoulders. In the case of African American school children, they are cast as “at-risk” (Henderson and Milstein, 2003) while African American lobbyists are caste as “inept administrator[s] and ineffectual politician[s] who [hegemonically]...acted like a white person” (Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 883).

In many cases, one could suspect that a lack of support from the African American educational lobbyist is another form of stereotype threat where “the possibility of conforming to the stereotype or being treated and judged in terms of it – becomes self-threatening. It means that one could be limited for diminished in a domain that is self-definitional (Steele, 2004, p. 686). In other words, this threat causes the African American lobbyist to purposely ignore the interests of urban schools which house a large population of African American learners – believing the myth that to support the group, makes one apart of the group and potentially pigeonholed or losing credibility. To choose not to be a part of the mobilization efforts and cheer when permitted to join better funded groups is a hegemonic behavior to which African American educational lobbyists remain unaware.

Even if African Americans are heard in social areas such as educational funding, their voices are often drowned out by a lack of interest in their issue, competing interests, shortage of time for a bill to make it through the legislative process, or a political climate change on “the Hill” that is counter to increased funding (Clift, 2011). The shortage of

time for a bill to make it through is a direct result of [B]lack participation and representation occurring primarily in the legislative consideration and the implementation stages of policy process rather than at the innovative and formative stage where meaningful choices between long-range alternatives care for the most part made (Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 894).

School leaders and African American educational lobbyists must work together on mobilization efforts – grassroots –to dismantle the stereotype threat infused concepts of Pigeonholing, Lack of Credibility, and the Deficit Model as a Hegemonic Practice. African American education lobbyists’ job is to lobby for special interest groups, both public and private. They must be made aware that part of their job is to lobby for those who have no voice to lobby on their own. By bringing to them the concepts of Pigeonholing, Lack of Credibility, and the Deficit Model as a Hegemonic Practice, they will be able to see how their “stereotype threat” shapes their decision and that of those “like minded” individual that choose not to share in the African American interest. The negative discourse towards Blacks for helping Blacks is an example of hegemony and is evident on “K” Street just as it is in the schooling system, where Black administrators are frowned upon for hiring a Black worker or for developing relationships with Black students and parents. To pursuit conceptualized Black interests is a derogatory marker, to pursuit conceptualized African American interests is a grander scheme accept when it comes to the proprietary claim of the dominant culture.

Challenges Unique to African American Educational Lobbyists

Recalling, Blumer's theory of group positioning (1958) the self assured feeling on the part of the dominant group of being naturally superior; the feelings that the subordinate race is...lazy, dishonest, unreliable, and stupid...the feeling on part of the dominant group of being entitled to either exclusive or prior rights in many important areas of life...and the feeling of fear or apprehension that the subordinate racial group is threatening, or will threaten the position of the dominant group has produced three unique challenges to African American educational lobbyist. These challenges are unique to African American educational lobbyists because these challenges are systemically enacted and ensured from the first time this group enters public schools – urban and suburban – and have continued at the state and national capitals: Pigeonholing, Lack of Credibility and Deficit Thinking as Hegemonic Practices.

Pigeonholing Practices

Contrary and relative to the objective reality of Eurocentric world view, many African Americans are as articulate and equally adept in their ability to formulate substantive arguments. They are capable of facilitating action in order to ensure visualizable and solvable outcomes as their European-American counterparts in every facet of American life. This is evident by the representation of African American voices on television, on the radio, and in the media. However, according to (Anderson, 2014) just 10% of the television workforce was African American, which was a 2% decline from 2009 – its peak. There was also a decrease in the number of African American CEOs of major companies between 2007 and 2013 from 6 despite 14 African American CEOs begin

appointed between 1999 and 2000 (Zwiegenhaft, 2014). Additionally, there was a decrease in the number of African Americans on K Street as the overall population of registered federal lobbyists dropped from 40,500 to 12,000 after an increase over the previous decade. According to Source Watch.org (2012) K Street in Washington, DC is where the big lobbying firms have their headquarters and is sometimes referred to as the fourth branch of government.

As previously noted, although the increase in visibility is recognizable, it has not been sustainable. [B]lack lobbyists describe being pigeonholed for years as their firm's entry to the *CBC –Congressional Black Caucus* (Palmer and Murray, 2009). As a result, the role of African American educational lobbyists on the legislative floor remains secluded, often times solitary and most of the time exclusive. The exclusivity to which African American lobbyists are often charged, in general, are in areas of African American interests of the social type. Patrice Webb, a lobbyist for Free Press, non profit media reform organization, has noted with regret that Blacks often are directed into social policy rather than corporate-type lobbying roles (Birnbaum, 2006).

The lack of visibility as a result of this exclusivity results in the interests of African Americans not being heard often enough if at all in areas such as finance and the economy. Even if African Americans are heard in social areas such as educational funding, their voices are often drowned out by a lack of interest in their issue, competing interests, shortage of time for a bill to make it through the legislative process, or a political climate change on “the Hill” that is counter to increased funding (Clift, 2011). “The shortage of time for a bill to make it through is a direct result of [B]lack

participation and representation occurring primarily in the legislative consideration and the implementation stages of policy process rather than at the innovative and formative stage where meaningful choices between long-range alternatives are for the most part made” (Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 894).

For example, in response to Ron Brown being considered the number-one [B]lack leader by Tony Coehlo, the former House majority whip, Vernon Jordan stated, “The fact is that people do not accept the changing roles and fortunes of [B]lack people because they want to pigeonhole us. There’s a need on part of [W]hite people to have one [B]lack spokesman. They do not accept for us the same diversity they accept for themselves. It’s a divisive tactic”. (as cited in Jaffe, 1992, p. 2) The need of which Vernon Jordan speaks is mentioned by Wolman and Thomas (1970) as a way to achieve Black “representation” in the policy process. “Perhaps the most important in the minds of the policy-making elite, which tends to believe that there should be [B]lack representation, is the practice of consulting a few well-know [B]lack leaders or enlisting them in formal and highly visible advisory capacities – the “Whitney Young approach”(p. 888).

According to Palmer and Murray (2009) a small part of African-American partner’s jobs was lobbying black lawmakers when they began working at firms decades ago. A partner is another name for lobbyist. In the case of Ron Brown, although considered an outsider in Black leadership circles because he was not apart of the Civil Rights struggle, he was the Urban League’s spokesman on Capital Hill and at the White House admitting

to being “treated with some suspicion,” Brown admits. “If I wanted to talk about nuclear energy or cable television, I had no credibility” (as cited in Jaffe, 1992, p. 3).

African American educational lobbyist pigeon holing begins in the hiring process. A former World Health Organization consultant, AJ Jones, who joined the Podesta group in 2009, interviewed at numerous firms...At each interview, he recalled that “you could almost see people say, ‘OK, black guy, He’s going to talk to...Maxine Waters and my [B]lack people who have [B]lack problems (as cited in Palmer and Murray, 2009).

Wolman and Thomas (1970) cite a [W]hite participant in the work of a major education advisory committee illustrating the type of liberal white attitude that is so offensive to many [B]lacks:

We have not actively consulted with civil rights groups or with people from the Negro community. We have not had to do so. Our members are intimately aware of the problems connected with ghetto education and with the needs of Negro children. One of them is a Negro. So, we feel that we know what Negro parents want for their children (p. 890)

Ironically, the pigeonholing evident in the quote and during the interviewing process is found among high achieving African American children where they are often asked to be apart of student committees or run for student government. This makes pigeonholing unique to African American educational lobbyists, who may be considered to some to be the high achieving standard bearers of the race. High achieving African American students [lobbyists] are often expected to become leaders in Black organizations, multicultural programs, as well as other organizations and programs...they are constantly

thinking about the many people who are depending on their leadership and exceptionalism (Milner, 2002).

As a result, they cease to be exceptional as with the African American educational lobbyists who are pigeonholed to only work with or speak to Black lawmakers. For to be exceptional means they have unique gifts and abilities. The pluralistic view of America on the contrary is the notion of “out of many one”, which would include utilizing everyone’s gifts toward the greater good of the whole – nation. This pluralistic view contradicts the notion of Democracy where everyone is free to engage in individual pursuits of happiness. When questioning, “Does Democracy Make Room for the Exceptional Man?” the article *Pragmatic denial of the finality of desire of conduct*. (1919) answers with the following:

To a multitude in the present age the term democracy has become a sacred name, a cherished emblem, the synonym of the highest ethical and social good...The natural historically is that democracy lies in line with equality and, if not directly opposed to superiority, at least neglectful of it...Society cannot safely dispense with the strenuous toil of highly endowed individuals...

But just here appear the defects of democracy:

1) an over-socialization in which the individual, however exceptional he may be, is so lost in a whirl of co-operation and gregariousness that his uniqueness cannot function; 2) a social cowardice that makes the individual think before the charge that he is unsocial or eccentric.

The social order of things has a tendency to eradicate individual interests as each individual seeks to align his interest with that of the dominant group. African American students [lobbyists] may begin to feel seditious and irritated because they are not only expected to perform well...but they are also expected to participate in leadership roles and become members in organizations in order to have [a person of color], high achieving voice in them (Milner, 2002, p. 85). “Ron Brown is so perfect in the eyes of his [W]hite admirers that he has become, for them, the new [B]lack standard-bearer (Jaffe, 1992, p. 1). Thus democracy is an incomplete ideal and is never finished.

A Lack of Credibility

African American educational lobbyists lack credibility on Capital Hill and at the state level regardless of accomplishment, the ability to impact the legislative process or to provide sound information to legislatures. This unique challenge of African American educational lobbyists is one of the seven ideal characteristics of effective lobbyists described by Connor McGrath (2006). Credibility requires that the lobbyist establish a reputation for being knowledgeable about relevant policy issues, for being reliable and honest in the provision of both information and opinion to policy makers, and for being consistent over time (p. 76). Unfortunately credibility is difficult to establish for African American lobbyists in general. The number of African American lobbyist is strikingly low as a result of the strikingly low number of African American congressional and legislative leaders, making the number of African American education lobbyists lower.

Lobbyists are often former congressional and legislative leaders. If there are small numbers of African American congressional leaders, which are usually apart of the

Congressional Black Caucus, then one would discern that there would naturally be a small number of African American lobbyists in general, “you couldn’t get a job as a lobbyist unless you had worked on the Hill, but you couldn’t get a job on the Hill because most [W]hite members wouldn’t hire you” Palmer and Murray (2009).

Access is what makes credibility unique to African American educational lobbyists. Holman and White (1970) quote the bureau chief in the U.S. Office of education:

“Negros do not have an adequate opportunity to express their views. Not only are the civil-rights groups not represented in the policy process, but the Negro man on the street is not either” (p. 884).

This lack of access is largely due to the lack of political mobility of the African American constituency. “At the innovative and formative stages of policy process, relatively few [B]lack leaders have sufficient personal prestige or professional status to guarantee their inclusion, formally or informally”. (Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 893) The feelings is that members of subordinate groups, however distinguished and accomplished, are somehow “inferior, alien, and properly restricted in those areas in which the dominant group has established property”, claims (Blumer, 1958, p. 5). Jamie Harrison of the Podesta Group shares “I think the challenges faced by African-American lobbyists are the challenges faced by African Americans in corporate American in general...It is that you have to constantly prove your value, intellect, creativity and worth to clients and the outside world” (Kimble-Ellis, 2010).

The uniqueness of credibility, like pigeonholing and deficit thinking, can be traced back to the classroom setting. Access to the “gateway” courses in Gifted and Talented

and Advanced Placement such as Calculus and Algebra in middle school and high school is often a dream deferred for African American students. Middle-income African American mothers believe their children have to constantly prove themselves to their teachers (Williams, 2009, p. 53). For African American children, the daily toil of having to prove themselves sometimes results in their exit from the gateway courses which will give them an opportunity to enroll in top colleges and universities. Through their exit, accessibility is lost and their ability to have a “say” in their interests are diminished because they are truly the numerical [person of color], and they believe that their point of view may be ignored or negated (Milner, 2002, p. 84). For the African American educational lobbyist and African American interests, this absence of articulated demands signifies consent to the status quo (Wolman and Thomas, 1970).

Deficit Model Thinking as Hegemonic Practice

An African American lobbyist remarked, “I don’t think that there are unique challenges to being an African American male lobbyist, except those you may put on yourself...If you perform and are successful, clients will continue to use your services...If you do not, they will...choose another direction (as cited in Kimble-Ellis, 2010). Hegemonic behavior may be difficult to see...the [African American lobbyists] are led to believe that their participation is important when, in actuality, it is not valued...(Carter and Larke, 2003). Carter G. Woodson (1933) wrote “When you control a man’s thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his ‘proper place’ and will stay in it. You do not have to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is

not back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary”.

This is an early example of how deficit thinking over time produces hegemonic behaviors from those whom are viewed as being deficient. He wrote the words in his work *The Mis-Education of the Negro* where he provided several examples that still permeate 80 years later as to how the Negro having been educated to love his oppressor and at the same time revile himself has long been mis-educated. His mis-education was provided by those who glorify a Euro-centric view of the world and hence provided that view point to the Negro. This was provided by White and Black teachers alike. Some Black teachers, having been educated under the Euro-centric view of the world maintained this status quo as they educated Negro children. It is this mis-education which makes deficit thinking as hegemonic practices unique to African American educational lobbyists.

Deficit thinking is the belief that people can not and will not succeed based upon pathological, familial, economic, or race factors (Valencia, 2010). Deficit thinking blames the victim for their circumstances. “Negro groups make so little effort to learn Washington and to learn how to operate in Congress. The great lack in Negro organizations is for effective lobbyists” (as cited in Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 893)

In addition, deficit thinking uses science to describe, explain, predict and fix the victim and the victim’s situation. People who utilize deficit thinking describe the victim in relation to dominant view point of society, explain the victim’s situation and behaviors according to what counts as the norm and to what has become acceptable behavior, predicts outcomes based upon preconceived notion, and attempts to acculturate the

victim. Singer observed that [B]lacks were not an ethnic group, but rather were a collection of individuals “without community of tradition, sentiment and so forth that has marked and given rise to ethnic groups such as Italian immigrants” (as cited in Smith, 1981). In the event, the victim does not fit the notion of what it means to become a part of the dominant group, such as race or economic property, the victim is caste as pathological. In the case of African American school children, they are cast as “at-risk” (Henderson and Milstein, 2003) while African American lobbyists are caste as “inept administrator[s] and ineffectual politician[s] who [hegemonically]...acted like a [W]hite person” (as cited in Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 883). They became invisible.

In their attempt to explain and predict the outcome of the victim’s situation, the deficit thinker will attempt to justify how the victim achieved their subordinate status. Through scientific means such as the *Bell Curve* (1994), IQ (Intelligence Quotient) testing is linked to success and failures and one’s ability to be a functionally member of society. As a result perceptions permeate regarding the lack of intelligence of African Americans. Therefore, challenging the emphasis that African American lobbyists are capable of lobbying in multiple interests including education. At least four chapters of the book are devoted to proving that Blacks are genetically inferior to Whites because of a 15 point gap in IQ. “Blacks have always trailed [W]hites by the 15-point margin”, ABC’s Dave Marash reported for Nightline (as cited in Nauresckas, 1995). According to Blumer (1958)

We are led to recognize the crucial role of the “big event” in developing a conception of the subordinate racial group...this discussion takes the form of a

denunciation of the subordinate racial group, signifying that that it is unfit and a threat...the major influence in public discussion is exercised by individuals...who have the public ear and who are felt to have standing, prestige, authority and power (p. 6).

A study conducted by Kerry Haynie (2002) found that despite having five mitigating characteristics which otherwise produce positive evaluations, African American legislatures in general received lower negative effectiveness ratings in comparison to their White counter parts. The significance of this finding among legislatures is cause for concern and question if African American legislatures are viewed negatively despite having the five key components that usually elicit positive ratings. How might African American educational lobbyists fair perceptually even if they have all seven of the ideal lobbyist characteristics described by Connor McGrath (2006)?

Fixing the victim involves acculturating the victim and attempting to make the victim a part of the group by teaching the victim specific characteristics which are considered acceptable and normal. When a victim does adapt to the dominant groups acceptable behaviors, they are heralded as the example for the entire group while they may simultaneously face ridicule from his own group, as in Ron Brown and Robert Weaver. Both were considered to be “acting White” by their African American peers (Holman and Thomas; 1970 and Jaffe, 1992). This perception and will produce “stereotype” threat – a fear of failure by marginalized groups such as African American children. They will choose not to take risks or make attempts at higher achievement for fear that failure would deduce them to an inferior status like some of their peers – the appearance

of being incapable. It becomes a “self fulfilling prophecy” where they will seize to achieve in order to be accepted by their peer group.

“Teachers of African American children may operate from and rely on stereotypical beliefs resulting in instruction that...discount the knowledge that students bring into the learning environment and center on these divers students’ perceived weaknesses” (Milner, 2002, p. 87). For African American educational lobbyists this discounting of knowledge may hinder the hiring for lobby groups who do not normally reach out to [B]lacks due to the rarity of [B]lack lobbyists (Birnbbaum, 2006). Interestingly, this rarity in areas deemed to be privileged or claimed as intellectual property (Ladson-Billings, 2006) is found in schools where African American children are not expected to be in the gateway courses due to a lack of credibility forcing them to have to persistently prove themselves in the gifted and talented programs (Williams, 2009). The result is an education debt. For African American educational lobbyists, it is an experience deficit which leads to an employment debt. Few African Americans get the experience they need to become professional lobbyists (Birnbauam 2006).

Significant Studies

Lobbyists Characteristics and Traits

Conor McGrath’s research contribution is found in his study of 60 lobbyists in Washington, London and Brussels. The importance of his research of lobbyists in both the U.S. and the U.K. is that despite the location and affiliations with different continents and government bodies, U.S. – Congress and Senate; U.K. – Parliament, McGrath (2006) was able to examine a range of personality qualities indentified by the lobbyist as told by

the lobbyists to the researchers. These traits include listening, observation, relationship-building, gender/sexuality, courtesy, honesty, integrity, and credibility (p. 67). Through the specific characteristics of “ideal lobbyists” one who wants to gain access must recognize that individual lobbyists’ personal skills will contribute to their effectiveness (p. 69). Their effectiveness is often determined by their influence on policy and with whom they meet or is consulting.

When meeting and/or consulting, a significant trait identified by all the lobbyists is the ability to communicate effectively. Face to face meetings and communication (Milbrath, 1970 and McGrath, 2007) are the preferred methods of communication among lobbyists as identified across multiple studies (McGrath, 2007; Koger and Victory, 2009b; Hall and Deardorff, 2006; Ferrin, 2003; and Milbrath, 1970). Due to this preferred method, many public interest groups deny themselves access to legislatures because they simply do not have the resources to be able to allocate time for face to face dialogue. As a result, the smaller public interest groups are unable to lobby effectively for funding to support their purposive cause (Berry, 1978) because their constituencies although supportive do not donate at the rate that most private interests are able to raise money.

Those who are able to meet in face to face dialogue are most effective when their communication message is accomplished in two ways according to McGrath’s study *Framing Lobbying Messages: Defining and Communicating Political Issues Persuasively* (2007). The study suggests that the use of language by lobbyist is a potentially fruitful field for both academics and practitioners interested in political

communication in the political arena (McGrath, 2007). The identified practices in McGrath's study will be utilized as a communicative training guide for training and developing African American lobbyists.

McGrath (2007) compares the persuasive lobbyist as one who uses marketing skills to mobilize a constituency to address or vote for a particular issue. There are two ways to accomplish this task: frame the issue and define the issue – solution. A well-established principle underpinning much commercial communication (such as marketing and advertising) suggests that effective positioning of a product is a key to success (p. 270). The way McGrath suggests a lobbyist approaches an issue with a legislature, in a committee meeting and/or when they lobby coalitions and other lobbyists (Carpenter, Esterling, and Lazer, 2004 and Esterling, 1997) is through associating the product in the minds of consumers with desirable or favorable attributes or connotations (p. 270). Examples he gives are those used by commercials: “We try harder” – Avis and “Because I'm worth it” – L'Oreal (p. 270). When defining the issue [solution] you must make it understandable.

According to Wolpe and Levine (1996), “Behind every issue is a morass of detail and nuance that must be reduced to a central theme leading to one unyielding conclusion; support for your initiative is the right choice” (as cited in McGrath, 2007, p. 271). When framing and defining are put together in a face to face dialogue and interaction, one finds a marketing pitch which cuts straight to the chase - short and sweet. This form of communication is effective because members do not have a lot of time (and resources are an issue a large proportion of the time). Competing interests forces one to develop a

message that will resonate and move the constituency in your favor through talk when campaign contributions are not readily available as in the case of in-house lobbyists in colleges and universities (Ellis, 2004).

Characteristics of In-House Lobbyists in American Colleges and Universities, Ferrin (2003) provide research findings conducted among in-house lobbyists at American colleges and universities around the nation. There were no particular demographic regions or states, simply selected in-house lobbyists based upon title designations such as “Special Assistant to the President, Assistant to the President for Government Relations...Federal Relations...and Government Affairs. Other designations include Vice President for Government Relations...Government Affairs....Research....University Relations...and.....Public Affairs” (Ferrin, 2003, p. 100).

American colleges and universities have *in-house* lobbyists, but they differ than other traditional lobbyists. Although how they view the effectiveness of their jobs, essential traits, and their backgrounds may be similar, in-house lobbyist tend to want to be heard but seldom seen on college and university campuses (Ferrin, 2003). In-house lobbyists come from a variety of backgrounds and experiences which includes work life and education. In hiring in-house lobbyists, all admitted that are three critical attributes for a new lobbyist to have: 1) no particular background is needed; 2) political experience required; and 3) intimate knowledge of the university. Two of these attributes are not only unique for one individual to have but provides for a balanced professional.

Lobbying Tactics and Strategies

Berry (1978) provides two theories which result in public interest group development and mobility. They are *exchange theory* and *disturbance theory*. A significant question he asks is why do some groups emerge and grow while others disappear. The question supports work in my study because the emergence of groups over others provides insight into how urban education systems may be able to mobilize and remain an influential force on the state and national level.

According to disturbance theory, groups mobilize as result of an equilibrium imbalance such as a policy change in legislation or law. The disturbances result in interest groups emerging. “Some emerge as results of a differentiation in the division of labor...new skills are required and thus new groupings develop in relation to these skills” (Berry, 1978, p. 381). During an academic conversation with a colleague, an example of mobilization due to a disturbance was discussed where Hispanic machine operators develop an interest group because they are graduating with the requisite licenses and certifications. They are unable to attain work in their area because new legislation does not require the same level of education for which the job initially required, resulting in a large percentage of non-Hispanic workers now attaining positions. Utilizing McGrath’s (2007) “framing communication process”, they call themselves the Americans for Licensure Employment Options. They do not say they are Hispanic nor do they say they are machine workers. What appears public, “Americans” is actually private.

This is a viable option for mobilizing since the unorganized may very well be the unrepresented....” (the poor, [people of color], consumers, etc) this may be a chronic

problem” (Berry, 1978, p. 380). Under exchange theory, groups such as these utilize an entrepreneurial approach due to the necessity of low costs, which makes advocacy difficult. For groups for which African American educational lobbyist typically lobby, this is of interest.

There are three incentives – mobilized interests - which cause others to work hard for your interest. They are *material incentives* – money and jobs (tangible), *solidary incentives* - influence and allies (access), and *purposive incentives* – ideological reasons. It is essential that the African American educational lobbyist know how the legislative member or coalition operates in their minds and their motivations so that they can rely on their niche to influence mobilization. Utilizing a an entrepreneurial approach, where articulation of problems and solutions – frame and define (McGrath, 2007) – along with ensuring receptivity among “like minded” individuals, the African American educational lobbyist will meet with success. In the event access is not available, lobbying other industry lobbyists to lobby their allies to gain access through indirect lobbying is often a cost efficient measure resulting in low cost and low resources with high gain and attainability.

Two studies were conducted on lobbyists that are significant to the current study regarding how and why lobbyists meet with certain groups versus others and who they align with regarding certain issues versus others. In the study, *Lobbying as a Legislative Subsidy*, Hall and Deardorff (2006). They conducted a quantitative study over behavior patterns of lobbyists. They discuss when lobbyists apply *persuasive lobbying*, *preference-centered lobbying*, and *subsidy lobbying*. In addition, like other literature for

the current study, Hall and Deardorff (2006) share about how lobbyists tend to lobby the same people over time and often lobby “like minded” people or people and organizations that have access to other like minded people.

According to Hall and Deardorff (2006) there are two distinctly prominent approaches to lobbying: as a *form of exchange* and as a *form of persuasion* (p. 69). The significance for the current study is that in identifying characteristics for African American educational lobbyists, one will discover whether or not African American educational lobbyists utilize these same forms of lobbying or do they differ. This is essential in discovering how African American educational lobbyists are able and unable to gain access in certain areas of legislation such as economics and finance versus social policy. Furthermore, in the development of an African American educational lobbyist, these are forms of lobbying that may be essential to the success of the program, those who of been developed in the program, and to the success of those lobbying for education. Hall and Deardorff’s simpler theory – as a *form of legislative subsidy* - may be the best alternative. A form of legislative lobbying as a subsidy is a matching grant of costly policy information, political intelligence, and labor to the enterprises of strategically selected legislators (p. 69).

A comparison and contrast of the three forms of lobbying reveals a system of strategic planning and alliances in order to ensure interests are being met. With *exchange theory*, as the name implies, there is an exchange of mutually beneficial trades such as campaign contributions for votes (Hall and Deardorff, 2006, p. 70). The issue with these mutual trades is in the renegeing of promised goods. Berry (1978) divides these exchanges into

material incentives, solidary incentives and purposive incentives. Material incentives are tangibles such as money and jobs. Solidary incentives are influences such as access to coalitions and like minded allies – found also under lobbying as a form of persuasion. Purposive incentives are those centered on the greater good, ideological with out the necessary material and solidary gains. When once reneges, two of the ideal characteristics described by McGrath (2007), trust and credibility, are lost, resulting in a loss of access. According to lobbyists in McGrath’s study, trust, honesty, and credibility were most important. Once a legislator discovers any false or misleading information, all access is lost, resulting in a lobbyist being of no more use to the lobbying firm in that area of interest or any other.

Lobbying as persuasion is the result of lobbyists tending to lobbying like minded interests including other lobbyists (Wolman and Thomas, 1970; Hall and Deardorff, 2006). The question that remains in this study is if and how often African American educational lobbyists lobbied those on the fence. Hall and Deardorff (2006) indicate that they would not; however, they would lobby another who had access to the fence dwellers to set up a meeting or to bring the fence dwellers into the “fold” – an example of “brokering” (Carpenter et. al, 2004)). On the contrary, lobbying as a subsidy is more like a “service bureau” (Hall and Deardorff, 1960, p. 72).

There are assumptions about legislators and how a lobbyist addresses those assumptions as a subsidy. The goal in form of subsidy is mobilizing with low cost because the legislator is already on board. The goal is to get them to work hard at achieving the interest through subsidation, providing services in forms of labor and

information. When a lobbyist conducts an effective “info drop” and the legislature likes what they hear, they may tell the assistant to drop what she’s doing and work with the lobbyist in developing details, writing a speech, and building support among colleagues (p. 75). The result is the legislator’s allocation shift from one interest to another. In sum, lobbyists freely but selectively provide labor, policy information, and political intelligence to likeminded but resource-constrained legislators.

Similar to *Lobbying as a Legislative Subsidy* (Hall and Deardorff, 2006) is *Buying Time: Moneyed Interests and the Mobilization of Bias in Congressional Committees* (Hall and Wayman, 1990). What makes the two studies similar is they both are addressing issues of access to legislative arguing; however, Hall and Wayman admit that money buys access. Like the Hall and Deardorff (2006) study, the significance to the current study is in identifying the behaviors which permit access to occur and identify how and or why (not) African American educational lobbyists gain access through these measures. One early critique in the study is the idea of *mobilization bias* where national policy is made in favor of private and upper class interest groups and against unorganized and lower class interest groups, hence against the interests of U.S. democracy (Hall and Wayman, 1990, p. 797).

So, what does money buy access to? It was discovered that PACs (Political Action Committees) will contribute to their strongest supporters and their strongest opponents. The reason for this is that interest group resources are intended to accomplish something different from, and more than, influencing elections or buying votes (p. 800). What we are seeing here is the ideal of effecting policy at the committee stage, where resource

allocation is more efficient - something noted that African American interest groups such as NAACP seem to not do. They are always at the implementation stage (Wolman and Thomas, 1970), which is often too late in the legislative process.

Furthermore, groups will strategically allocate their resources with the knowledge that investments in the politics of the appropriate committee or subcommittee are likely to pay higher dividends than investments made elsewhere (Walman and Thomas, 1970). This is an example of a solidary incentive to contribute (Berry, 1978). The strategy employed moves allocations from other areas of interest to the chosen one and causes the legislature to work order on the current initiative. When others do not have the resources for this access, there is a mobilization bias which occurs impacting the lower class interests in favor of the upper class interests, something African American educational lobbyists and others who lobby for education must be able to identify in order to use effective communications processes to deflect mobilization efforts that are largely the result of disturbances in the equilibrium of access.

Lester W. Milbrath is frequently cited by lobbying studies. In fact, he is sighted in every study mentioned as significant to the current study. The significance of *Lobbying as a Communication Process*, Milbrath (1960) and *The Political Party Activity of Washington Lobbyists*, Milbrath (1958) to the current study is it further confirms how lobbyists and legislators prefer to communicate through face to face contacts. However, Milbrath points out that communication can be accomplished through intermediaries and open communication. The question these two studies attempt to address is how do

legislatures and lobbyist prefer to communicate with one another and do lobbyists tend to provide partisan contributions to political parties (Carpenter, Esterling, and Lazer, 2004).

In narrative terms, communication is enhanced among all parties when the government becomes indirectly or directly involved. In Washington...the decision to communicate is not dependent entirely on strategic considerations driven by the attributes of two actors. The decision of one actor to inform another depends heavily upon the presence of others (Milbrath, 1963). It is for this reason, the authors of the study determined that lobbyists most often confer with one another and lobby one another when policy decisions are being made.

One thing lobbyists must recognize is that they cannot change the personality of the legislator nor can they change theirs. They must find a way to be receptive to the legislative member by being passionate about their argument and product facts, including those who are of another party. McGrath (2007) cites Milbrath's work when describing lobbyist communication tactics akin to marketing strategies: frame the problem and define the problem [solution] – cut to the chase. Noted in Milbrath's (1958) study *The Political Party Activity of Washington Lobbyists*, lobbyists do not actively participate in political activity, for partisanship is considered dangerous.

Being receptive to a legislative member is akin to converging similar interests either through subsidy, exchange, or persuasion. Any inability to gain access moves the lobbyist to seek access through contributions of the party to which he affiliates. However, active partisanship campaigning will surely erase access to the opposite party

due to mistrust. Legislatures have no issue with lobbying other parties but will resent active political activity on the part of African American educational lobbyists.

To know this, is significant when lobbying for small groups vs. large groups. Large groups can afford to help with campaign contributions while small ones usually cannot. Simply put, access is granted to those who can mobilize through contributions to their party for a particular interest or through effective communication tactics. Due to the time constraints of the legislative members as mentioned through multiple studies for this work, it is imperative to lobby “like minded” individuals and allies who may be able to gain access to the opposing party member.

Lobbyists’ Ability to Impact and Influence

Gaining access and influence becomes increasingly difficult if the “equilibrium of access” is off balance due to clandestine approaches to ensure biases. As in the case of the “K” street project, lobbying firms were being asked, forced and required, to hire GOP minded lobbyists when the GOP controlled the House and Senate beginning in 1994. Usually, when equilibrium of balance is off, it causes a disturbance which results in a proliferated mobilization of interest groups in order to provide opposition and regain balance (Berry, 1978). However, this may prove difficult depending upon the level of disturbance, in the case being an entire party cornering the market on like minded interests. It is for this reason, possibly, that the numbers of African American educational and African American lobbyists in general remain low because lobbying firms usually hire those with previous political experience such as being a staffer or a former legislator. During the “K” street project, former GOP legislators were rumored to

have been hired as lobbyists in lieu of Democratic Party individuals. This presented a unique challenge to all African American lobbyists who by happenstance mostly identify with the Democratic Party.

The two studies provide significant research on how lobbyist become polarized agents as a result of campaign contributions and how lobbyists and legislatures build relationships based on bonds and familiarity. The studies support the current study because they provide evidence of unique challenges to African American educational lobbyists in addition to being pigeonholed into social issues, lacking credibility, and deficit and hegemonic practices in addition to perceptions. The result is a lack of access. With the relationships and familiarity in addition to the resources needed to contribute to the campaign, there will be no access.

Other scholars, which support the current study, detail how to gain access through communication process (McGrath, 2007; Hall and Deardorff, 2006; and Milbrath, 1960), through campaign contributions (Milbrath, 1958 and Hall and Wayman, 1990), and through the lobbying of like minded individuals, encompassing all effective traits and strategies of Washington lobbyists, including Brussels and London (McGrath, 2006). Through their study, Koger and Victor (2009a) details how “pragmatic” claiming lobbyists are actually loyal partisans. An example provided is how a team of Republican leaders (including Tom Delay) and lobbyists formed the “K Street Project” to track the party loyalty of individual lobbyists and promote the hiring of Republican lobbyists (p. 486). A tactic like this ensures that certain groups remain excluded from policy decisions

which may impact particular interests. It is through this approach that those who usually are voiceless – low socioeconomic and groups of color – remain voiceless.

Thoughtfully, some lobbying firms hire both Republican and Democrat identified lobbyists. What this does is provide access for the firm's clients to both parties and keeps the firm bipartisan (Koger and Victor, 2009a). Through the bipartisanship of the firm, lobbyists can remain trusted by the legislators who still may see the familiar lobbyist as trustworthy. In addition, the fact that a lobbyist who identifies with an opposite party is a part of the same firm allows for some bi-partisanship alliances through intermediaries (Berry, 1963). The A,B, C dyad hypothesis (H1, H2, and H3) by Carpenter, Esterling, and Lazer (2004) support this ascertain, showing that lobbyist A will meet with lobbyist C, who is also an ally to lobbyist B and in doing so will gain access to A for B and to B for A.

Koger and Victor (2009b) support the dyad relationship and the current study by positing that mutual interests result in beneficial bonds between lobbyists and legislators (p. 1). One of the current study's goals is to identify how African American educational lobbyist can gain access and influence which will result in access and influence over policy and funding decisions for education. Koger and Victor (2009b) found that legislators are more likely to receive donations from the same lobbyists if they are from the same party (in the Senate), state, or committee; if they are both vulnerable in the next election; and if the number of common donors increases, the more agreement there is in the voting record of a pair of legislators (p. 1).

It is imperative that in training and developing African American educational lobbyists, this information be known. This way, as African American lobbyists grow academically, develop socially and internalize new alternative experiences, they can not only utilize tactics and strategies that have been identified as effective, but they can know when to use certain tactics and in which situation – due to the “dual conscious” of the African American (Dubose, 1903). Furthermore, through this knowledge of effective practices, the African American educational lobbyist can identify which unique traits, talents, skills and expertise they have for particular areas of interest and specialization. This knowledge proves to be “an incentive to specialize by finding a market niche that matches their backgrounds and talents, and developing relationships [and bonds] with members of congress to fit that niche” (Koger and Victor, 2009b, p. 6).

Within these findings, *Tasks and Strategies of In-House Lobbyists in American Universities and Colleges* (Ferrin, 2004) was a comparative analysis of how in-house lobbyists, public interest lobbyists, and private interest lobbyists view the importance of their ability to gain access and influence on the legislative floor. Number one among all were communication with legislators. However they differed as to how. For in-house lobbyists, they viewed *denunciating* an opponent as a very low tactic in addition to private interest lobbyists. Public interest lobbyists viewed this very high. Public interest lobbyists regularly employ this tactic against legislatures unsympathetic to their cause and even against their “friends” from time to time (Ferrin, 2004). In-house lobbyists at colleges and universities benefit from long term relationships and associations with politicians and policy makers (p. 182).

Of note in the comparison and what is significant to the work the current study is who the in-house lobbyist represents. The in-house lobbyist represents the college and/or university. As a result they have some input into some goals and visions of the university. This individual represents the college or university when addressing a legislative body or in a committee meeting; therefore, this individual is provided a *charter* – the lobbyist speaks on behalf of the university president (Ferrin, 2003, p. 92). This is a powerful position because this person has the ear of the president. For the work in the current study, this opens another venue for developing an African American educational lobbyist.

In order to gain this type of trust, not only must integrity and credibility be established, but a working knowledge of the university and the legislative process must be sought after and learned. Knowledge of the university and the legislative process as a learned characteristic of African American educational lobbyists will be accomplished through a mentoring project similar to the Minority Mentor Project (Larke, Wiseman and Bradley, 1987). A framework provided by Nastas and Swanson (1984) is another model which could be used to develop a program for African American lobbyists. Together such models can ensure that those in the program will gain working legislative knowledge of both the state and federal government in addition to a working knowledge of colleges and universities. The impacts of this program and those involved will be discussed in the planning and implementation section of this study.

Wolman and Thomas (1970) discussed the direct relation to access or the lack of access to Black interests, Black groups, and Black influence in federal policy. The study

was to identify problems with and possible prohibitions to Black access to policy decision making. The authors found an absence of [B]lack access and effective [B]lack participation at crucial stages in the process (p. 877). The crucial stages in the policy process are innovation and formulation, legislation consideration, appropriation, and implementation (p. 32).

Gaining access at the right point in the policy making process is critical in this situation for if you are not attempting to influence policy at the right stage, often a lobbyist's efforts will not result in making any significant impacts. An example of this is that for Black groups and interests are often driven by Civil Rights at the federal level. "The principle thrust of groups like the NAACP has been towards achieving integration - particularly in the area of education." (Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 879) But the NAACP had not made organized efforts to influence policy at the innovative and formative stages where the initial design development and drafting of decisions are made. Their involvement in the policy process does not occur soon enough to influence substantially the shape of the final product (p. 881).

Since race was the topic of discussion in the Wolman and Thomas study, the findings of the study lent itself to a look through CRT – Critical Race Theory. One aspect of CRT was evident immediately in the study, "interest convergence" which is where the interests of Whites and people of color intersect (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 12). According to Wolman and Thomas (1970) when housing decision makers were questioned about their agreement with policy positions of the four major black organizations, 34 of the 42 who responded generally agreed or agreed very strongly with

the NAACP or Urban League (p. 887). These responses were provided after the authors found that [B]lack groups as a whole do not possess effective access to the major centers of decision in the domestic policy making process (p. 886).

“Friends, brokers, and transitivity: Who informs whom in Washington politics, Carpenter et al. (2004) and *“They must be discontented’: racial threat, black mobilization and the passage of school closing policies,* Brown(2009) both identify and develop corollary relationships which drive policy decisions. Significantly, the purpose of the current study is to determine and discover how African American educational lobbyist impact education and economic policy decisions and provide Urban schools with access to those lobbyists who impact policy decisions that drive curriculum reform and funding for education, it is imperative according to both studies that one not only knows who is talking to whom, but also why who is talking to whom. That is my personal synopsis of the synthesis for both studies. For example, Carpenter, Esterling, and Lazer develop a framework which shows two different relationships among lobbyists, legislative decisions makers and policy makers.

Interest groups success in establishing good contacts affects, among other things, its stature and influence in policy making (Carpenter at al., 2004, p. 224). They discuss signaling theory and mobilization of bias theory of communication. Through their discussion they determine relationships between groups and individuals. They demonstrate that social network drive communication choices in politics over and above preference similarity and other individual-level determinants (Carpenter et al., 2004). Similarly, Brown (2009) discusses a corollary pattern between policy and Black

mobilization. She utilizes Blumer's (1958) theory that race prejudice is a group-based rather than individual phenomenon (p. 1392). Together, both studies prove that national policy is a group effort rather than an individual effort as there is less loss. "Mobilization theory" argues that providing information subsidizes the receiver's activities, enabling her to become active in an issue at lower cost; groups strategically provide information to those with similar interests" (as cited in Carpenter et al., 2004, p. 226).

The significance of both the studies is the establishment of mobilization correlations will policy decision and design. The back drop for Brown is the Brown vs. Board of education decision. Through the use of comparative analysis (using both quantitative data and qualitative methods) she was able to determine that the development of "[W]hite flight" academies and the closing of schools were not necessarily the result of racial growth in areas but of racial mobility. Threat theories assume that exclusionary policies and practices arise when dominant groups experience a sense of threat or a challenge to their positions (as cited in Brown, 2006, p. 1393).

This is significant to the current study in determining being able to identify policies enacted to prohibit racial mobility. The importance of gaining access to those who impact policy regarding urban schools is proven in this study. In four counties in Virginia where the Black population was low and the income level was low, school closings did not occur. However in counties where Black population was relatively the same as the other four counties but the income level among Blacks was high, school closings were enacted.

To show the correlation of group relationships, Carpenter et al (2004) used Dyads – A, B, and C. Three hypotheses were developed (H1, H2, and H3):

H1: (Facilitator Model) The probability of A to B transmission is positively related to the number of third parties they both receive information from (triads 6, 8, 14, and 16 predict A to B tie).

H2: (Transitivity Model) The probability of A to B transmission is positively related to the number of third parties to whom A sends information and from whom B receives information (triads 7, 8, 15, and 16).

H3: (Informational Efficiency) The probability of A to B transmission is negatively related to the number of third parties to whom A sends information and from whom B receives information (triads 7, 8, 15, and 16) as well as to the number of third parties both receive information from (triads 6, 8, 14, and 16).

The meanings derived from these hypothesis is that C is in position to build an alliance between A and B by providing a common frame of reference – A and B are likely to talk only because of C's coalition efforts (p. 228). In addition, A communicates to B, which is satisfied with the information it gets from A, and reports it to C, which subsequently seeks information from A (p. 230). Finally, B will not seek information from A because it is already getting information from A indirectly through the group (p. 230). In narrative terms, communication is enhanced among all parties when the government becomes indirectly or directly involved. In Washington...the decision to communicate is not dependent entirely on strategic considerations driven by the attributes of two actors. The decision of one actor to inform another depends heavily upon the presence of others (p.

242). It is for this reason, the authors of the study determined that lobbyists most often confer with one another and lobby one another when policy decisions are being made.

Primary Source

In his seminal work, *The Washington Lobbyist*, Milbrath (1963) introduced readers to the world or worlds of the lobbyist. Through this work, we are provided the first insight of the lobbying process and how one is effective in the act of lobbying. Milbrath (1963) pointed out that there is no one road to becoming a lobbyist even though the majority had some form of training or background in law, government relations and/or politics. Nevertheless, the impetus he places on the definition of a lobby showcases that the right to petition is a constitutional guarantee, meaning that everyone essentially lobbies when one is attempting the influence a decision for a special interest.

Coupled with providing insights into the lobbying process and the backgrounds of lobbyists, Milbrath brings forward distinct traits, characteristics and tactics lobbyist employ to be effective. 38 individuals were interviewed and surveyed. The results shared specific practices and personal dynamics perceived to make one an effective lobbyist. The significance of this primary source to the current study is that it was sighted most often by Conner McGrath. It was McGrath's work (2007) on *The Ideal Lobbyist*, which led me to Milbrath (1963). As one will as the result of this study, the participants allude to most of these traits and they share how they are successful as African American education lobbyists.

Summary

In closing, the studies discussed made significant contributions to the current study on African American educational lobbyists and how to gain access to them. Urban educators and school systems will be able to utilize the research provided to better understand the policy decision process and recognize correlations between federal and state policy and mobility. It is imperative that the effective traits of lobbyists and the process of policy decisions be studied as correlates as well as a determinant for which stage to best attempt to impact policy change for particular issues. It is evident, that policies such as funding policy for urban schools may be the result of “mobilization threat” coupled with a lack of access by Blacks in the initial stages of policy development. This according to Carpenter et al (2004) may in part be due to the belief that “groups often seek out others whose opinion they trust on complex issues in order to develop a coherent interpretation of a policy” (p. 225). A coherent interpretation of policy which excludes others due to race or because they do not possess the ideal character traits, perceptually, ensures that the pluralistic ideology in the United States is false, as evidenced by the remarks of a White participant in the work of an education advisory committee illustrates in regards to consulting Blacks on education:

We have not actively consulted with civil rights groups or with people from the Negro community. We have not had to do so. Our own members are intimately aware of the problems connected with ghetto education and with the needs of Negro children. One of them is a Negro. So, we feel that we know what Negro parents want for their children (as cited in Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 890).

The statement shows a continuation of exclusivity for the voices of those policy decisions are impacting by have one person be the minute voice of an entire population of interests.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

John Creswell (1994) suggests that one should choose a single paradigm – either qualitative or quantitative for a research study. This is a qualitative study (grounded in constructivism – narrative inquiry) using an emerging design where I will report the experiences of African American educational lobbyist.

“The process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed and all the phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data. The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information”

(Cresswell, 2009, p. 175).

Through reporting the experiences of African American educational lobbyists we are able to hear their voices as they relate to their impact on education. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world (Mertens, 2010). It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible to others, providing visibility to the otherwise invisible. Qualitative research informs the invisible that they are invisible and thus provides them a voice, a new sense of reasoning – it allows them to become alive. “I myself...did not become alive until I discovered my invisibility”

(Ellison, 1980, p. 7).

My intent was to explore the complex set of factors surrounding the world of the African American educational lobbyists by presenting their varied perspectives and meanings of how they interpret their ability to impact education, what characteristics they identify as being an effective lobbyist, and how they interpret their role in education. “Qualitative research is conducted not to confirm or disconfirm earlier findings, but rather to contribute to a process of continuous revision and enrichment of understanding of the experience or form of action under study” (Lincoln, 1995, p. 278). Like Lincoln and Guba (2005), I accept the ontological assumption that reality is not absolute, but is socially constructed and that multiple realities exist that are time and context dependent.

No one steps into the same river twice for the river is different with each passing moment in time and context, introducing other elements to the reality changes the reality and new assumptions must then be considered about the ever changing reality (Gaarnder, 1994). Therefore it is not my intent to contradict or disconfirm what the research literature states about African American education lobbyists or African American educational lobbyists in general. Rather, my intent is to provide for potential revision and for the probability of understanding about their experiences.

Background

As shared in the research literature of Chapter II for this study, the African American is an individual comprised of a “dual conscience” (Dubois, 1903) one in which the African American sees himself through his own eyes and, dually, sees himself through the eyes of others. As a result, the African American is in a perpetually persistent

predicated battle with himself and conformity. Which ever one wins is dependent upon the circumstance, the situation, the experiences, and the desires of multiple moments in time, space, and reason. Conformity is not the nature of the African American, yet conformity is the expectation of those who have relegated the African American and other “minority population” groups to a status of marginalization. To ignore race when discussing African Americans or any other racial group would render the group invisible conceptually for it is through four types of conceptual feelings of race that “White”, “Black”, “African American”, “Native American”, and “Negro” became a way to substantiate and divide groups into positions of superiority and inferiority:

- 1) a feeling of superiority; 2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien; 3) a feeling of propriety claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and 4) a fear of suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominant race (Blumer, 1958, p. 4).

Recalling, Blumer’s theory of group positioning (1958) from the review of literature, the self assured feeling on the part of the dominant group of being naturally superior; the feelings that the subordinate race is...lazy, dishonest, unreliable, and stupid...the feeling on part of the dominant group of being entitled to either exclusive or prior rights in many important areas of life...and the feeling of fear or apprehension that the subordinate racial group is threatening, or will threaten the position of the dominant group has produced three unique challenges to African American educational lobbyist. These challenges are unique to African American educational lobbyists because these challenges are systemically enacted and ensured from the first time this group enters

public schools – urban and suburban – and have continued on at the federal and state level of government: Pigeonholing, Lack of Credibility, and the Deficit Model Thinking as Hegemonic Practices. These practices result in a form of “stereotype threat”.

According to Source Watch.org (2012) K Street in Washington, DC is where the big lobbying firms have their headquarters and is sometimes referred to as the fourth branch of government. This fourth branch of government exists in all state capitals as well as lobbying firms and consulting groups have stationed themselves around state capital buildings, often within walking distance. The environment in which African American educational lobbyists thrive is one where survival is dependent upon ones ability to move from being heard to one being agreed with (Vance, 2012). The environment is in itself a community but this community is not stationary.

I am not implying the community moves, however, it changes with each act of legislation, each policy, and in particular with each election. As elected federal and state officials come and go so does the lobbyists ability to impact and influence decision making. The formation of “a circle of contacts” is critical in that regard so that an educational lobbyist is able to keep in the loop, receive “insider information” and be able to provide information and a service to clients, legislators and senators. The African American educational lobbyist is at a distinct disadvantage in this environment because of the limited mobilized interests behind education and the limits of African American representation in the legislative process either through lobbying or as elected officials.

Systems and Communities

The African American educational lobbyists work within systems. They however do serve their various communities in which they conduct their act of lobbying in various capacities that will be discussed in Chapter IV. There are three total systems in which the participants work due to two working in the same system.

System 1 has an overall population of 26,966,958 with a land area of 261,237.71 square miles. The ethnic breakdown is White – 70.4%; Hispanic – 37.6%; African American – 11.8%; and Asian – 3.8%. The percentage of African American owned businesses is 7.1%. Located near the center of System 1 is Community A. **Community A** has an overall population of 912,791 with a land area of 297.90 square miles. The demographic breakdown is White – 68.3%; Hispanic – 35.1%; African American – 8.1%; and Asian 6.8%. The percentage of African American owned businesses is 3.9.

System 2 has an overall population of 10,097,343 with a land area of 57,513.49 square miles. The demographic break down is White – 59.7%; Hispanic – 8.8%; African American – 30.5%; and Asian – 3.2%. The number of African American owned businesses is 20.4%. Located near the north central area of System 2 is Community B. **Community B** has an overall population of 456,000 with a land area of 133.15 square miles. The demographic breakdown is White – 38.4%; Hispanic – 5.2%; African American – 54.0%; and Asian – 3.1%. The percentage of African American owned businesses is 30.9%.

System 3 has an overall population of 318,857,056 with a land area of 3,531,905.43 square miles. The demographic breakdown is White – 77%; Hispanic – 17.1%; African

American – 13.1%; and Asian – 1.2%. The percentage of African American owned businesses is 7.1%. Community 3 is nestled in between Maryland and Virginia.

Community C has an overall population of 658,813 with a land area of 61.05 square miles. The demographic breakdown is White – 43.3%; Hispanic – 10.1%; African American – 49.5%; and Asian – 3.9%. The percentage of African American owned businesses is 28.2%.

Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling and emergent design are impossible to achieve without interaction. The participants for this study were four African American educational lobbyists in the United States that lobby for education with a minimum of 5 years lobbying experience. Part of the initial criteria was that these lobbyists be at the federal level. Initially, the rationale for seeking African American educational lobbyists at the federal level was because of an identified network of African American federal lobbyists at the federal level called the Washington Government Relations Group (WGRG). The WGRG was contacted via email in order to identify potential research participants. Although there was some correspondence, ultimately none of the four lobbyists in this study belong to that group. The group had no role in this study.

Participants

For the purpose of identifying African American educational lobbyists, I initially intended to seek education bills that were passed in order to identify African American lobbyists who had lobbying interests attached to an educational bill. I eventually began a Google search typing in “African American lobbyist”, “African American lobbying”,

“African American and lobbying”, “African American educational lobbyists”, and “African American and education lobbying”. I utilized names of African American lobbyists identified in news articles that were retrieved in my Google searches in hopes of establishing a connection with African American educational lobbyists.

I utilized social media, Facebook and LinkedIn, to find potential participants. I typed in the same labels used for Google. LinkedIn proved to be a most viable search tool. As names began to emerge, I applied the criteria: African American, minimum of 5 years experience, federal level. I discovered that most lobbyists do not go by the name of lobbyist. They go by such names as “Partner”, “Director, Government Relations”, “Director, Government Affairs”, “Director, Policy”, “Director”, “Policy Analyst”, “Principal”, and “Principal Consultant”. Once I discovered the name differences, I began to view the LinkedIn pages of potential participants. Combined with Google, Facebook, and LinkedIn, I identified 26 potential participants (13 male and 13 female). I expanded my criteria to include state lobbyists because of the immediate receptivity about being a participant in the study. One state educational lobbyist contacted me and agreed to participate within 10 minutes of sending the LinkedIn message.

Criteria

Participants who met the criteria of African American educational lobbyist with a minimum of 5 years of lobbying experience were contacted via email, letter, and LinkedIn message. For those whose contact information I could not find, I utilized the access of gatekeepers, those who provide access to the site or to the individuals. For the lobbyists, these were secretaries on two occasions and supervisors on three occasions. On four

separate occasions, contacts were initiated through website “contact us” emails. I received two correspondences from those, none resulting in a confirmation of participation or an initial contact.

In total, I received 14 responses to my requests for participation and 7 confirmations for participation. One of the participants was discovered through “snowballing” – where one research participant identifies another potential research participant of the study. Of the seven confirmations, five signed consent forms to participate and four were actually interviewed. One signed the consent form to participate but did not agree to be audio taped or recorded and therefore could not participate in the study. During correspondence, a sample of the questions that would be asked were provided at the request of this individual.

Another initial participant did not feel comfortable signing the consent form due mainly to the time parameters needed for the study – 60 to 90 minutes. The participant asked that the interview be conducted in 30 minutes. This would have meant that I would have had to change or shift my process after entering the field to collect the data, emergent design. Finally, one of my initial confirmations could not participate due to time constraints and indicated that I forward a questionnaire. Since I did not use a questionnaire in this study, he was not able to participate but indicated that he and his group would participate in future studies.

Of the four who participated, two were female and two were male. Three of the four are currently state educational lobbyists and the fourth is a federal educational lobbyist. Their educational interests include, but are not limited to Common Core, NCLB, P16 and

P20 initiatives, HB5 – Texas, HB 875 – Georgia, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Race to the Top, and Title I.

Procedures

An informed consent form was provided to each participant. The form included the purpose of the study, their rights as research participants, asked for their willingness to be recorded, and ensured their confidentiality. The potential risks for this study were in keeping the confidentiality of the research participants due to their position in government relations – although two of the four participants were not concerned stating “what I am saying is common knowledge”. Pseudonyms are utilized in place of names: “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet, and “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet.

In addition, to be sure to take care of the participants identities and maintain confidentially, I have chosen to provide pseudonyms for the States and Cities where the participants reside. Therefore, I have substituted the System and Community monikers for situations when the participants mention where they lobby. Also, I have provided pseudonyms for names of colleges and universities they attended or for which they lobby. The purpose is to maintain the highest possible confidentiality for this study. The data, the coding, and study results are kept in a locked safe and in a password protected file at my residence in addition to being kept by Dr. Norvella Carter, Texas A&M University. They will not be released for a minimum of three years.

Data Collection

This study used a semi-structured interview format that was informal. Participants were permitted to choose a date, time and place for their interviews to take place. The questions were mostly open-ended questions with follow up questions asked based upon participant responses. I, being the instrument for the study, conducted face to face interviews along with follow up interviews by telephone. Although there was correspondence through email and text messaging prior to the actual study, there was no data collection from those correspondences.

Participants were interviewed using a Sony IC digital recorder. The recorder has a rechargeable battery and retractable USB drive for easy charge and safe confidential storage of recorded data. Interviews are one of three main methods qualitative researchers use for collecting data – the others include participant observation and document and records review. According to Bogdan and Bilken (2003) interviews may be used in two ways:

“They may be the dominant strategy for data collection, or they may be employed in conjunction with participant observation, document analysis, or other techniques” (p. 95).

Observation notes were made of the environment in which the interviews took place and about the surroundings. I did not observe the participants engaged in the act of lobbying, however. During the interview, I documented facial expressions, smiles, body language, clothing, environment, and dialogue prior to and after the interview, including foods and small talk conversation. Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, E. G. (1985) assert

“Meaningful human research is impossible without the full understanding and cooperation of the respondents.

- In the weak sense of this assertion, we mean simply that unless respondents willingly cooperate with an investigator in uncovering truths about themselves, the inquirer has no hope of coming to a full understanding of the situation” (p. 105).

The goal was to gain an understanding of the mood of the participant prior to beginning the interview and after the interview. Without seeking out cooperative and interacting relationships, the inquirer literally cannot hope to do human research at all...human relationships are distinguished from the kinds of relationships one observes in natural events by their reciprocity (p. 105). I recognized that the mood could skew or sway the responses to the questions. Therefore, it was imperative that I knew the background, the community and the environment of the participants in order to establish a foundation.

Coding and Emerging Themes

As I collected the data, I immediately began identifying potential codes and themes. “Qualitative inquiry demands meticulous attention to language and deep reflection on the emergent patterns and meanings of the human experience.” (Saldana, 2013, p. 10) During the transcription process, I listened to the interviews again attempting to catch any nuances that potentially would not show up on the transcription. A human transcriber did the transcriptions. I was provided a total of four transcripts (1 from each participant) totaling 210 pages of collected interview data. I left all transcriptions as is without making any edits or revisions to the manuscript so as to not taint the meaning of the data.

“Some historians and linguists regret the practice of editing our speaker’s hesitations, repetitions, and unfinished thoughts, and encourage transcribing practices that will “convey the cadences of speech as well as its content.” (Ritchie, 2003, p. 68)

While reading each transcript, I began coding responses and comparing codes to each other within each transcript. I then began comparing codes across transcripts until categories began to emerge. Once I highlighted specific areas of the transcripts that fit the research questions, I then began to develop the themes. I then categorized the themes and data into a matrix where I then highlighted the concise data again to match against the research questions. Lastly, I studied the highlighted sections and began to identify components of Critical Race Theory (CRT). Symbolic Convergence was not found overly present and is therefore negated in the outcomes of this study.

Research Design

This is a qualitative research study using an emergent design where I report the experiences of African American educational lobbyists while utilizing Critical Race Theory (CRT) – counter narratives and interest convergence and Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT). “The process for qualitative research is emergent...the key idea...is to learn about the problem or issue from the participants” (Creswell, 2009, p. 175). In addition as Bogdan and Biklen (2003) suggest, “designs of all qualitative studies involve the combination of data collection with analysis”, I used the Constant Comparative Method (CCM), Narrative Analysis, and Interpretive Analysis. The goal was to identify counter narratives through the interviewing process and to identify interest convergences between groups and educational policy and practice fiscally. This study reviewed

positions of power in relation to meritocracy, desegregation and integration noting that although the U.S. is a diverse nation of immigrants those in power to encourage legislatures to fund difference making policies are of the mainstream group. There is minimal representation of the diverse interests of the U.S. diverse population.

Interviewing Elites

There is a perceived and potential power dynamic on display when interviewing elites, particularly when interviewing elites who are positioned to influence state and national policy both through direct and indirect communication tactics. It is common to find expressed in the literature the idea that interviewing elites is different from interviewing ordinary people (McGrath, 2009). Interviewing elites who are deemed elite based upon self and social inoculation develops a power infused culture where the powerful gain access and those less powerful and therefore ordinary must mitigate the arena from the sidelines.

Interviewing African American Elites

“Power is configured across society so that particular individuals and organizations ‘posses’ power, which they can use to achieve certain outcomes, whilst others are ‘powerless’ or, at least, far less –powerful” (Smith, 2006, p. 645). For the purpose of this study, the four African American educational lobbyists interviewed are considered elites but not necessarily powerful. To be powerful means to have voice; to have voice means to be seen. They have no voice and are therefore, unseen.

The African American educational lobbyists’ voices have yet to be heard in the 21st century; therefore they have been rendered invisible, caught in a world where only their

surroundings are seen according to the figments of others imagination (Ellison, 1980). They thrive and in an environment where everyday is a survival game and their livelihood hinges upon their ability to sell ideas. “It’s all sales, but the difference is that the benefits and downsides of ideas are much more difficult to predict and explain” (Vance, 2012, p. ix).

The African American educational lobbyists are elite, however, not because of status, influence, or positioning per se but rather the fact that they were interviewed because of their position, how they interpret their effectiveness in their position, and how they interpret the acts and influence of their position. Because of their position, how they interpret their effectiveness in their position and how they interpret the acts of their position, they are distinguished as those ‘possessing power’ (not powerful) as opposed to those who we view as ‘disempowered’ – powerless (Smith, 2006, p. 643).

The importance of their consideration as elites during the interviewing process is due to the “potential for serious methodological issues in elite interviewing that involve both validity – how appropriate is the measuring instrument to the task at hand – and reliability – how consistent are the results of repeated tests with the chosen measuring instrument”. (Berry, 2002, p. 679) McGrath (2009) writes that “researchers do need to have thought prior to the interview about the manner in which questions ought to be formulated even if (as in any case) the exact wording of the questions was not determined beforehand (p. 51). The goal will be to elicit responses rather than solicit answers – to keep the questions open-ended rather than close-ended (p. 51). By eliciting

responses enough data will be gathered in order to conduct an analysis of the produced narrative.

Moser (2008) shares encounters with researchers who were emotionally unable to connect with the research subjects in appropriate ways...they were engaging in fieldwork that was incompatible with their personalities (p. 386). They had not considered how one's personality may influence one's positionality (p. 388). How I generated my questions and how I asked the questions in the interview were as critical as how I navigated any social interactions with the African American educational lobbyists. I kept in mind that it is not the obligation of my subjects to be objective and to tell me the truth. I had a purpose in requesting an interview...in reality the subjects [had] a purpose in the interview too: they had something to say (Berry, 2002).

Validity and Reliability Issues with Interviewing Elites

Berry (2002) provided a framework, which supports the work for the current study, for elite interviewing. The issues, to which he shared, provide ways to ensure *validity* and *reliability* when interviewing African American educational lobbyist, who are considered elites by definition. There are five approaches to elite interviewing: 1) ask open-ended questions; 2) interview multiple people; 3) check your sources to ensure you are not being misled; 4) know your information before you sit down to ask questions; 5) transcribe your interviews for later research and reliability. In essence, Berry shares similar practices as (McGrath, 2009), particularly in the importance of asking open ended questions so as to ensure a semi-structured interview. According to (McGrath, 2009) elite interviewees prefer these because they feel like they have something to say.

Through the interviewing of multiple people, one is able to check the information provided against multiple sources to ensure the validity of the informational claims and to establish patterns for coding purposes.

This approach may result in *Symbolic Convergence* of African American lobbyists in the “K” street pluralistic market place. The goal of Oral History interviewing is to fill in gaps. Although this study may not necessarily lead to an oral history study, it is imperative that essential research has been done regarding the experiences and some of the enterprises that take place for instance on “K” street, among lobbyists, and among African American lobbyists. Through conducting essential research, the counter narratives – *CRT* – provided, may in fact provide hidden information otherwise not mentioned. Alan Nevins, the father of oral history and William Labov, the father of sociolinguistics, were the first in their relative fields to interview non-elites, offering opposing testimonial accounts to previously recorded histories and socially constructed beliefs and acceptances.

As a result, transcription will be essential in addition to finding a location to store the transcripts for future reference and research. Emerging scholars want their work to be cited and validated. Transcription is the key along with storing the documents in a place for public access. Both McGrath and Berry indicate the necessity to remember to correspond with the interviewees, “shared authority”, to ensure that their accounts were captured correctly and that they are comfortable with what they have said. Editing for punctuation, withstanding, all efforts should be made to keep the transcribed interview as closely matched to the recorded words as possible. Editing, by some oral historians, is

considered as altering the primary document and therefore creating a new text. (Maze, 2007)

Both studies (Berry, 2002 and McGrath, 2009) were the result of the interviews with the 60 lobbyists. As with any research project, one must be weary and aware of any identifiable validity and reliability issues in addition to any biases. There will be moments when these issues will not appear until the findings and discussion portions of one's study; however, caution must always be in place as identified in *Oral History and Political Elites": Interviewing [and transcribing lobbyists]* (McGrath, 2009). The methodological findings for his study are significant to the current study because I will be interviewing four African American educational lobbyists. There are three ethical dilemmas I must consider according to McGrath (2009):

- 1) a sense of some issues which do need to be considered and resolved before interviewing people professionally involved in politics, 2) the questions associated with producing and interview transcript, and 3) the importance of finding some means by which to create an accessible record of those transcripts in order that they can be followed by future researchers (p. 48)

When reading the title of this methodological study, and that of Berry (2002), I could not help but think, "Why am I considering African American lobbyists elite?" Was I exhibiting bias because I myself am African American? The literature regarding perceptions of African American legislators and African American interest group access (Haynie, 2002) including studies regarding pigeonholing and credibility perceptions (Wolman and Thomas, 1970; Smith, 1981; Blumer, 1958) would indicate that when

scholars mention elite interviewing, they are not thinking about or considering African American lobbyists. However, McGrath (2009) asks “So, what constitutes an ‘elite’ interviewee?” (p. 49).

According to Seldon, elite interviews are “those conducted with individuals selected because of who they are or what they did” (as cited in McGrath, 2009, p. 49). Dexter regards any interview as elite if the interviewee was accorded what he termed “special, non-standard treatment” (as cited in McGrath, 2009, p. 49). This means that everyone is not being asked the same questions necessarily as in a questionnaire, but the interview is “semi-structured”. In a semi-structured interview, there may be predetermined questions, but only as a guide. They will be divided into categories according to what the interviewer is attempting to discover during the interview.

Wilmsen (2001) states, “... interviews are substantially more than an exchange of information in a conversation... They are carefully staged communicative events, which follow specific protocols for the purpose of eventually communicating... to a wider, undetermined audience” (p. 67). The interviewee will ultimately guide the interview based on their responses. The interviewer will deviate from the questions to ask follow up questions, allowing the interviewee to guide the interview so long as the information one is seeking is being provided. This way of questioning is open-ended and often provides additional information that otherwise would have been missed.

In addition to asking open-ended questions, McGrath talks about the ethical responsibility and methodological importance of transcribing and sharing the transcription with the interviewees (correspondence) – otherwise known as “member

checks” in qualitative research. Although this is time consuming and sometimes an individual may not want to have their interview used after reading what they said, this approach nevertheless must be followed. The interview is a primary source which belongs to the interviewee. They have rights to editing and ultimately denying or providing access to the transcriptions and recordings. Once correspondence has been complete, in order for replication, reliability and validity, McGrath (2009) suggests storing the research in a repository or in a library so that other researchers may have access. Identifying a repository and/or library will be of great interest, for my study will need to be accessed by those participants in the training program for developing an African American educational lobbyist. The interviews and transcripts will be used for training purposes and to conduct additional studies in narrative analysis, linguistic analysis, and to apply critical race theoretical frameworks.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

In order to establish trustworthiness and credibility for my study, I established positionality, ensured transferability, encouraged member checks among participants, and triangulated the emerging information and themes from the collected data. I first established my positionality as the interviewer and researcher in relation to the research environment and participants. I then ensured reliability of collected data by checking transcripts to make sure they did not contain obvious mistakes during transcription (Cresswell, 2009). After the interviews were transcribed, I began my analysis and conducted follow up interviews, including having participants respond to data or concepts mentioned in the other participant interviews.

Positionality

Positionality must be studied and identified from multiple vantage points: the researcher, the African American educational lobbyists individually, the African American educational lobbyists in comparison to one another, and the African American educational lobbyists in comparison to the researcher. Milner (2007) calls for a framework of positionality where the researcher is first knowledgeable about himself, secondly, knowledgeable about himself in relations to others, and thirdly, knowledgeable about himself in relation to the system. Therefore, I must be culturally competent.

The purpose of this framework is to ensure that the researcher recognizes potential seen, unseen and unforeseen dangers in research. “In the process of conducting research, dangers can emerge when and if the researchers do not engage in processes that can circumvent misinterpretations, misinformation, and misrepresentations of individuals, communities, institutions, and systems” (p. 388). One of these dangers I have found is the lack of acknowledging how personality can drive or stall a study.

Discussions about researchers’ positionality tend to lack insight about personality and how it may help or hinder the research, and particular challenges that certain positionality traits might pose in particular research methodologies and fieldwork contexts (Moser, 2008). The purpose of this constant comparative method in the study will be to identify reflective and retrospective factors as well as personality traits which may impact the study, the participants in the study, the findings in the study, and the outcomes. All time and space factors will be documented and considered as the new theories and conceptual frameworks potentially emerge.

Currently, I am an African American high school principal. At the time of the study, I was an African American assistant principal in a suburban school district which functions similar to or like an urban district – a “financially distressed suburb” (Anyon, 2005, p. 24). My role as a an assistant principal during the study provided me no insider status nor did the fact that I am African American like the participants in this study provide me any insider status. Insider scholars have been characterized as total insiders, where researchers share multiple identities (e.g. race, ethnicity, and class) or profound experiences (wars, family membership; and partial insiders, who share a single identity (or a few identities) with a degree of distance or detachment form the community (Chavez, 2008, p. 475.)

I would be considered a partial insider due to my sharing of a single identity with group I studied. Although we share race we do not necessarily share class or culture. An assumption I make is that those I interview most likely were born to African American middle class families while I was born to a Low SES family. One African American lobbyist commented about his interviewing experiences where the assumption was that he would be the ‘Black face’ who would speak with such Democrats as Maxine Waters and the Black people who had problems. There was just one hitch according to Palmer and Murray (2009), “That’s just not my background. I went to school in Iowa. My experiences are asymmetrical”.

My position as an African American in the United States positions me in contrast to a multitude of assumptions and dynamics. Depending upon the context, I am an African American male who at the same time is a male who is African American. In addition, I

am an African American principal who is at the same time a principal who is African American. Ironically, this duality ceases once I identify and recognize that I am an African American who is not an American who is African. This is where my distinct positionality in the context of this study along with the participants in this study ceases to lose its duality.

We are all African Americans, but definitely not Americans who are Africans or Africans who are Americans. This positionality utilizing nonlinear framework introduced by Milner (2007) will provide an unbiased objectivity to this study: researching the self, researching the self in relation to others, engaged reflection and representation, and shifting from the self to system. According to Cousin (2010) “The self is not some kind of virus which contaminates the research...the self is a research tool, and thus intimately connected to the methods we deploy (p. 10).

Scientific knowledge consists of facts that could be subsumed under general laws...we gain scientific knowledge through sensory or observational experience combined with logic...this [positivist] world is the notion of a single, objective reality – the world out there – that we can observe, know and measure (Merriam, 2002, p. 44). Therefore, this study’s objectivity will be found in the positivist reality and single truth that I and my study participants are African Americans, which makes my interpretations and analysis as an African American valid and trustworthy. My position as a partial insider provides a degree of distance or detachment from the community (Chavez, 2008) which in this study is African American education lobbyists at the federal and state levels. We being African Americans is an objectified conceptualized single truth. My

objectivity is defined by the positivist tradition that the outsider perspective [is] considered optimal for its “objective” and “accurate” account of the field, while insiders, who possessed deeper insights about the people, place, and events, [are] believed to hold a biases position that complicates their ability to observe and interpret (Chavez, 2008, p. 474). My being an assistant principal at the time of the study and currently a high school principal with no political affiliations or any connections to the lobbying field or politics makes me an outsider in this study.

Transferability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1995) “all that is necessary to ensure transferability is to know something with high internal validity about Sample A, and to know that A is representative of the population to which the generalization is to apply. In this case the population is a purposeful sampling of African American educational lobbyists with a minimal of 5 years lobbying at the state and/or federal level. I have included detailed descriptions of the participants’ background, environment and method of collection in order to provide the opportunity for transferability.

Dependability and Confirmability

Dependability is demonstrated by taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To establish dependability, it is necessary to examine records for accuracy and to authenticate documents. Dependability is the naturalists substitute for reliability and confirmability is achieved as one collects data to verify and construct findings (Smothers, 2012). As I collected and analyzed data I began to find information that was not otherwise known. I

kept both hard and electronic copies of the transcriptions, the audio recordings, the procedural process, the field notes, and notes, highlights and coding from the interviews.

Member Checks

“The member check, whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusion are tested with members of those stake holding groups from whom the data were originally collected, is the most crucial technique for establishing credibility” (Lincoln and Guba, 1995, p. 314). After the interviews were completed, the recordings were transcribed. The data was analyzed. As themes began to emerge along with categories, information that appeared contradictory or not mentioned by all participants was collected. The analyzed data and information was then shared with the participants for reaction, response and clarification.

Triangulation

Multiple or many sources are better in a study than a single source because it leads to greater understanding of the phenomena we are studying (Bogdan and Biklen, 2003, p. 107). I established triangulation by collecting data from multiple sources – four African American educational lobbyists – on the same topics. Furthermore, I conducted multiple analysis on the transcribed interviews including the constant comparative method, resulting in a comparison of themes with one interview and then a comparison of themes with two interviews and then with three and the fourth interview. In a study conducted by Putten and Nolen (2010), triangulation was accomplished through sequential data analysis, comparing findings and validating emerging themes, making corrections, and identifying areas of further analysis.

Plan for Analysis

Since this is a narrative qualitative study, data analysis for this study included multiple analyses: constant comparative method, narrative analysis and interpretive analysis. Through the interviews, specific themes emerged. I identified counter narrative and interest convergences between group and educational policy and practice used in Critical Race Theory. Furthermore, a “reverse” interest convergence emerged through the self interpreted acts of lobbying by the African American educational lobbyists.

The structure of the narrative was studied through the constant comparative method. “The process of constant comparison stimulates thought that leads to both descriptive and explanatory categories.” (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 340) During the reading and re-reading of the four manuscripts and then comparing the manuscripts to themselves then with one another, the constant comparison method provides opportunity to identify emerging themes and then compare them to another. “By comparing, the researcher is able to do what is necessary to develop a theory more or less inductively, namely categorizing, coding, delineating categories and connecting them” (Boeije, 2002, p. 393).

The goal is not to write a theory however, despite CCM being utilized by Glasser and Strouse as a process in grounded theory (Lincoln and Guba, 1995). While coding, the themes were compared to previous themes in the same manuscript and in the other manuscripts to define categories. Additionally, in doing so, a comparison of themes across analysis allows for multi-data sources, resulting in recurrent events.

As a result of the narrative analysis and interpretive analysis, I identified the “Dialogic Performance” among all four participants. Dialogic Performance interrogates how talk among speakers in interactively (dialogically) produced and performed as narrative (Reissman, 2008). “Stories are social artifacts, telling us as much about society and culture as they do about a person or group” (Reissman, 2008, p. 101) The Dialogic Performance features in this study are Direct Speech and Repetition. Together they create a performance that is unique to African American educational lobbyists post in their position and status as the story teller in relation to their position as informers regarding their act of lobbying.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

This data analysis represents the voices of four African American educational lobbyists and their role in lobbying for education. The analysis begins with a description of each participant – their story. Each was provided a pseudonym to protect their identity. The pseudonyms they are given represent their personality traits, their voices, and their background as shared with me during the interviews and discovered in the search of their roles prior to the start of the study. The interviews consisted of 95 total questions *Appendix A* delineated into five specific categories derived from Chapter II – Literature Review: Personal Characteristics Success and Effectiveness, Interpreting the Act of Lobbying, Ability to Impact and Influence Education, Perceptions of African American Lobbyists, and Training and Development of African American Education Lobbyists.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured in order to allow the participants the opportunity to be heard. There were 95 semi-structured interview questions. The goal of such a semi-structured interview was to elicit responses that would promote a story rather than solicit responses that would support notion and potential biases. Therefore, in each interview, it was not necessary to ask every question. As the stories were told, other questions were answered. During the interview process, I documented body language, the tone and mood of the participant before, during and after the interview, the location

the participant chose and the facial expressions. Although the interview was informal in nature, there was an instinctive formalness to the interview process due to the level of scrutiny both the participant and the researcher were under to maintain confidentiality and to accurately record and share their voices.

A review of responses is discussed regarding each participant with categories and themes disseminated among the three research questions that are driving this study:

- 1) How do African American education lobbyists describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position?
- 2) How do African American education lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying?
- 3) How do these African American education lobbyists describe their influence of impact on education?

As a result of utilizing the Constant Comparative Method in conjunction with Narrative and Interpretive Analysis, several themes began to emerge immediately as I read the first manuscript and began to compare each response. Once the first interview was read, I read each interview individually, following the same method of comparing responses within each interview and simultaneously comparing responses to each previous interview. In essence I read interview 1 and compared each response to another. I then read interview 2 and compared each response to another while comparing those responses to interview 1 responses. While reading interview 3, I compared each response within the interview and then compared those responses to Interviews 1 and 2 responses. The same method was applied with interview 4 where it was compared to

itself while be compared to Interviews 1, 2, and 3. This resulted in multiple notations in the margins and in a journal where like codes were documented and questions generated if one participant did not respond to a question or responded differently. Also, questions were generated about responses each individual participant provided that the others did not such as the terms “sausage making”, “half truths”, “hidden equity”, and “grass tops”.

Some Themes That Emerged

Themes that emerged during the interviews, during the re-listening of the recordings, and the rereading of the manuscripts were access, process, policy, skills and tactics, strategies, communication, community, education, learning, occupations, influences, brokering, bi-partisanship, relationships, funding, credibility and trust, information, power, data. These sub-themes are divided into 3 major themes: Being Effective, Having the Ability to Influence and Impact and Focusing on African American Achievement.

Rather than develop a category for the background themes that emerged, I chose to share their background in each individual story for the delineating of specific training, skill, and influences that went into their becoming an educational lobbyist. Doing so allows each participant’s personal story to unfold as they gain their voice.

Major Themes

The overarching framework for the analysis was the emergence of *Navigating the System*, which is found within each major theme. Under each major theme, the sub-themes were categorized as follows:

Being Effective – skills and tactics, strategies, communication, relationships, credibility and trust, information, occupation;

Having the Ability to Influence and Impact –access, process and policy, brokering, bi-partisanship, information, and data;

Focusing on African American Achievement – access, community, education, learning, funding, and power.

Additionally, *Navigating the System* surfaced across each research question. This resulted in the emergence of what appeared to be Symbolic Convergence. Therefore, *Navigating the System* and *The System* is used interchangeably and metaphorically from this point forward in this study to represent the legislative process, politics, the legal system, the educational system, the state structure, the federal structure, and how American society functions in relation to and in contrast of African American educational lobbyists.

It is during the mentioning of *The System* or in *Navigating the System* that the participants from this point forward are known as Prophets and Prophetesses engaged in Prophecy. There was repetition of events mentioned and direct speech, in which the Prophets and Prophetesses would engage in a dialogue with someone from the past, with themselves, with a significant other, or with me as if I was present when the events occurred.

The performance occurred in each interview and resulted in a question of insider or outsider status. In Chapter III, I mentioned that I had no insider status because the only commonality we shared was being an African American. However, as you will discover, the conscious or subconscious desire to develop a common bond with the interviewer resulted in multiple instances of “code switching” among the participants, using an

“Urban” dialogue. The term “you know” appears to be used at times to solicit a response of agreement, understanding, sympathy, acknowledgment or approval to the point they were making and is seen as a “dialogic shift”. The Prophets and Prophetesses responses to the interview questions will be discussed and summarized.

The Book of Prophecy

Here begins the Book of Prophecy - 2015 AD. It was during the early stages of reading transcribed voices that I began to lay witness to visions of grander desires for an educational system of equity and social reconstruction. From the outset, the prophetic voices screamed from the pages like banshees bantering hidden absolutions of dimensional foretelling of a present predicated upon a predated future. Change is coming. It is in the changes that the Prophets and Prophetesses enact their ebb and flow within a system designed to keep the status quo. It has been written that to fail in the current system is to actually succeed for the system is designed for some to fail and in failing they have therefore done what the system designed for them to do.

Confusion is the charge of the system; however, it is the Prophet and Prophetesses who bring to light the resolutions, enlightening the darkness and demystifying the fog which has blinded us for too long. I journeyed to see them. I journeyed to meet them. I needed to hear from them. I wanted to know them – to know their stories. Their stories tell of a journey. Their journeys tell of a story. Hearing their voice is the optimal goal. The Prophets and Prophetesses no longer need to remain quiet. I am their platform. I am their microphone. I now know them well. Read carefully and hear their voices. Below are their stories I tell.

The Office of the Prophet and Prophetess

Ever been to “chuuch”? Better yet, have you ever read or heard the story about the “struggling prophet”. It is written and it has been retold that a prophet is not a prophet in his own home. The same holds true for the prophetess. Nevertheless, to be called to the Office of the Prophet and Prophetess provides some strict guidelines and parameters one must partake. First it calls for the acknowledgement of the Gift of the Prophet/Prophetess upon an individual. Secondly, it calls for the individual to sacrifice position and often times be ridiculed and relegated to a tertiary status because for the most part people will not, cannot, and ultimately choose not to understand the message the Prophet and Prophetess provides.

It is under these circumstances which makes the two Prophets and two Prophetesses in this story significant. The stories are divided into four books from here forward known as the Books of Prophecy: The Book of “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess; The Book of “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess; “The Book of “Truth” the Absolute Prophet; and The Book of “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet. Each has its own story to tell and its own voice to be heard. The role of the Prophet and Prophetess is not for the weak minded or the faint hearted. To be called is a gift in itself. To maintain and articulate the Gift of the Prophet and Prophetess is a price few can pay. The Office of the Prophet and Prophetess is now in session.

The Book of “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess. Here begins the book of “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess, 2014 AD. I set out on my destination to meet “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess at 6:00 a.m. in eager anticipation for what was going to unfold. As I

navigated the highways and frontage roads heading to Community A where the Prophetess has made her home, I could not help but feel an equally eager strangeness in the air. The drive was quiet, and I drove in banter-filled silence visualizing the interview and anticipating the nervousness I would feel while interviewing elites about their roles which are often taboo. As I alluded to in Chapter III, there are those who chose not to partake due to being recorded and others for the sake of their valuable time. However, I was fortunate enough to have gained four interviews that I anticipate will change the landscape of how schools and school districts find and provide access to their customers, the community they serve.

I enter, Community A – located near the center of System 1, the first destination of my research focus and begin to see the quickened paces of individuals on a mission. I park and cross a not too busy street for 8:45 a.m. in the System 1 capital. I missed my turn – “Thank God for GPS”. I spoke to the few faces and they all spoke back, for I did not look out of place with my dress. I was dressed in black slacks, black shoes, a blue shirt, red tie, and a black sweater. There was no specific dress code revealed in the research literature accept to be professional. I wore a silver watch and bracelet to accentuate, with a splash of cologne. The dress of those with whom I wanted to mix was a diverse affair of sport coats, two piece suits, and simple everyday attire. I entered the building; the doorman could tell I was someone new. He called everyone else by name as he stated, “Good morning” to each before he smiled gingerly towards me and stated “What floor?”

The eager strangeness I felt during my drive has returned and taken over the momentary excitement I had. I enter the building and discover the source of the eerie feelings and the quietness of the streets. “There are some happy people today and sad people today...from the election” stated the doorman to the facility where I am to conduct my first interview. There had been an election last night and based on the thickened quietness of the air in the elevator I rode, some did not achieve the result they anticipated. “A thick skin and a never give up attitude” is one of the most important qualities, values and behaviors for being a lobbyist according to “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess:

It does require you to have thick skin, because you are going to get told no a lot...last session we were working on some issues....I had been tallying up my votes and doing my calls...I’m mad because I didn’t have a hundred percent...there is no reason for the other twenty-five people not to have voted! That is just completely politics!

I called “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess to indicate my arrival, sitting in the reception area of the office. The rug on the floor was a stark representation indicative of the state’s fading frontier days while the furniture held dear to the past by holding claim to the state etched in every table and chair. If I was blind folded and brought to this office I would know I was among many Lone Star’s immediately. However, I did not feel out of place as I lamented privately “Why in the world am I doing this interview?” Suddenly, doors open. Out steps “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess.

We exchanged our pleasantries as I am greeted with a smile. I am introduced to a team of individuals in an adjacent office and am ushered into a quietly quantified office with a sprawling view of the downtown. The immediacy of noises outside the office resulted in the interview having to be placed on hold as emergency sirens race by. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess drinks a cup of coffee and apologizes for the casualness of her demeanor. This causes the thickness in the air to thin. We engage in conversation about my trip from Houston and how long I have been in education. These five minutes allows a comfort level to emerge. She is very witty and expresses an exuberant joy about being at work, being interviewed and about life in general, talking about her work during the week, what she has been doing as a result of last night’s election and about the time she has to go pick up her kids. Nothing but joy flows effortlessly with each distinction she shares– hence, her pseudonym, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess. My first question, “Tell me about yourself” is met with banterful joy:

Oh, gosh. The nice big broad question. Um, so, basically, um, I was the kid who always knew wanted to, uh, practice law, then la- later learned that I wanted to do it in education. Had no idea what that meant at the time. Um, but I grew up around a lot of educators. Even though, at the time my own parents had not, you know, earned their um, uh, bachelor’s degree or, you know, their advanced degree at all.

Adhering to the practices of narrative interviewing, I remain silent.

So, um, where to start? Um, professionally, um, I have been a practicing, um, lawyer, um, and in the -- specifically, in the area of education and legislative policy for twenty something years now. Oh my gosh, I'm a veteran.

We both laugh. "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess continues,

Um, and -- um, and it's been pretty diverse. Um, starting off cut my teeth. Um, actually one before that, my experience in law school help me to set up an externship so that I could return, um, to Texas and, um, and work with, um, a speaker's office, um, for my last semester of law school and get credit, uh, for it.

Um, so yeah, I -- I paid to have that experience, but it was great um, because, um, they were rewriting the education code at the time.

Law is one of the main areas one goes into prior to becoming a lobbyist. As indicated by "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess's response, prior to becoming an educational lobbyist, she was a lawyer and also had experiences working in the speaker's office. She is referring to the Speaker of the House of Representatives. "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess attended a PWI – Predominantly White Institution, where she attained her law degree. "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess was very strategic about where she went to law school – strategic or strategy being words she will use throughout the interview as an emerging them. She chose a PWI in [West Coast State] where they had a high rate of students who passed the bar the first time. "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess indicated that it would serve not purpose to go to a law school where they had a marginal success rate of students passing the bar. It was in her last year of her undergraduate studies; however, where she gained the experience she would need to become an educational lobbyist:

Oh, gosh! So, um, there's a funny story here. So, when I was an undergrad, one of my, um, professors, who I had a lot of respect for. African American professor at the University, and, um, he knew my interest in government and politics and stuff like that. Um, but, my class that I was taking from him had nothing to do with that. I mean, it was like a, uh, African American focused class. Um, this one wasn't on entrepreneurship, it was something else, I can't remember. But, anyway, one day, in class, he called me out! You don't like to get called out in class by professors!

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess began to share how the tone her professor took startled her as if there was an issue that needed to be addressed:

So, you know, um, so he, um, so he called me out and he says, hey, um, I have a friend who works for the governor and she's looking to take on some interns.

And, I'm sitting there blank faced, because, number one, I'm still getting over the shock of being called out and then number two, I'm going like, is he really sayin' what he's sayin'? And, he took it as disinterest on my part, because I wasn't responding fast enough. And, he goes, but if you're not interested. I go like, no, no, no, no! I'm interested, I'm interested!

This was first of many opportunities at the beginning and throughout “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess's career which for this study I coded as “Opportunity Meets Preparation” when using the constant comparison method. To be called to the Office of the Prophetess provides some strict guidelines and parameters one must partake...it calls for the acknowledgement of the Gift of the Prophet upon an individual:

My professor -- I had a professor who recognized and remembered what my interests were. He had a friend who was serving, at the time, as the senate liaison for the governor. And, she had just told him to keep an eye out for, you know, young African American students who might interested in the -- in learning about this process.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess responded further,

And, that is how I got started. Um, I went, when I first started, I went over there, I don't know, eight, ten hours a week, while I was an undergrad, uh, during session and just shadowed her --just shadowed her. And, uh, to this day, I still count her as my first -- well, I guess I have to count her as my second. My -- My first mentor was my second mom!

Her experiences would carry her through law school and into a role she had no intention or desire to fulfill. No one in Joy the Bantering Prophetess's family was a lawyer, mentioning earlier that at the time her parents had not completed Bachelor's degrees. Furthermore, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess had also become a mother and was working through trying to be a “working mom”. Some of her additional roles include serving on the PTO and volunteering. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess is very involved in the local community and as one of few educational lobbyists who is African American, a female, and a lawyer has to maintain balance – she is a “Triple Asset”. Often as a Prophetess her struggle is a battle of the flesh and the spirit. “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak” – Matthew 26:14:

You know, in this world of, you know, K sixteen and beyond and all of that. But, um, I -- it really wasn't about that, it was about my love for the education, pro-educational process, and affecting it from a policy perspective and combining it with legislative issues and, um, and just, you know, really just following that and being blessed with some opportunities that were just timely.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess remembers,

...there were a few times when I get presented with an opportunity that I had, I wouldn't even tell my husband that I'd been presented with it, because I would've, of course the previous year, just told him that I was gonna stay put for a minute. And, then, boom! This opportunity would come! So, there was one or two opportunities that I did not mention to him until after (Laughing) it was pretty solidified that, okay, no this was the real deal and then I had to tell him.

I then asked, “Would you share about one of those opportunities?”

Yeah, so, uh, one of the really funny ones was when I was at the agency and, um, it's really hilarious because I was like, you know, seven months pregnant, um, pretty -- dealing with some really heavy issues and things like that. So, I mean, the things I was dealing with have been going on that were pretty intense and, um, as I described it, when I was approached, I was quite comfortable in my current chaos. And, um, and -- and then, also, I was like, and by the way too, I'm seven months pregnant.

As “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess shares these opportunities and the conflicts they carry, she laughs and takes them in stride. Filled with joy that feels the room during the

interview, she clearly has accepted that the Office of the Prophetess calls for individuals to sacrifice position – sometimes personal and other times professional - as is the case when opportunity meets preparation:

And, uh, they were like, no, no, no! You've got the background we need and want. So -- so that was one of the ones I was, like, well, you don't tell a sitting chancellor of a university system, no so I -- that was one I did not tell my husband about, because I just went to lunch to be polite, to go meet and chit chat and then I got sucked in.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess laments,

And, I like what I heard, the opportunity that was gonna be -- that was gonna be there. And, then that's when I had to go over and tell my husband, um, I got approached about something that I think I might need to pursue. Um, and so it was not -- it was one of those, you know, not timed. I wasn't actively looking to go anywhere, um, and -- and then after that, it really happened really quickly.

Um, and, you know, I was kinda sad to leave where I was at the time

Currently, Joy” the Bantering Prophetess serves not only as a private lobbyist and lawyer but also as a part of a firm. This is where the mention of *The System* first appears in “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess’s interview. When asked, “What went into your decision to start your own firm”, she responded:

...a changing of the times and changing of the guard. So, um, my last formal gig, uh, there was -- there was truly, there was a changing of the guard. Um, the boss who hired me retired, so, um, you know it's -- then it comes time to move on.

...when you get to that point -- and, so, my point was, I've just had, I mean, I had a -- I had a job that, quite frankly -- and that was one of the things, I think played into it, is my contemporaries in the same job in other **systems**, they were easily ten to fifteen years my senior, if not more. Twenty years my senior, easily. And, had been in those positions, some of them, a very long time. Um, so, that was -- that was new for me, personally, of getting to this point and like, oh my God, now what'll I do next?

The System in “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess’s shared experiences permeate throughout her interpretation of lobbying and how she influences or impacts education. She recognizes that she is a part of *The System*, both voluntarily and involuntarily, often serving the interests of others as what I termed her to be – “A triple threat”. Joy” the Bantering Prophetess has no interest in having another occupation, except for legislative consulting. As she laughingly states when asked, “Is there anything or anyone that could prompt you to change careers”: “I don’t have to change careers! I have a law degree! I can do whatever I want!” As mentioned previously, she is African American, a female, and a lawyer. As a result, she is called upon for her expertise, for her gender and/or for her ethnicity, depending on the issue or interest at hand. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess expresses joy in being able to be the person behind the scenes who makes things happen both at her firm and for her clients. She sees herself becoming the head of some non-profit for children.

The Book of “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess. Here begins the book of “Irony”, 2014 AD. I called “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess around 1:00 p.m., the same day I

concluded my interview with “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess. Like “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess, “Irony” advocates in System 1 – Community 1. I called to ensure that we had our interview time correct. “Irony” informed me that we could meet somewhere near the highway as she was headed that way to drop of papers to a client. I searched nervously for a private and quiet place, to no avail. I assumed I would meet “Irony” at her home or office, however, an election occurred the night before and *The System* was in motion. I finally settled on a location that I thought would suffice, in the lobby of a hotel I had stayed in before during my visit for an educational conference. Being hungry; however, we agreed to meet at a restaurant across from the hotel.

Upon first glance, she entered the restaurant discretely with minimum as possible flair or fuss. She entered, looked around, we saw one another and she came to the table. We settled in a corner near an entrance where we would be as far away from the chatter of the other patrons. We reviewed the menu as we engaged in a dialogue about my studies, what I hoped to accomplish and the purpose of the study. We both ordered small appetizers and continued our dialogue. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess offered a snowballing opportunity for me upon discovering that I was a graduate of an HBCU a little over 2 hours away. “Irony” knows the educational lobbyist for the university. He is an African American male with more the 20 years of experience. She calls him and inquires if he would be interested in being a part of the study. The gentleman indicates he would, we exchange numbers and close our conversation.

After we have eaten, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess and I began to survey the restaurant. More patrons have come; any attempt to conduct an interview would be

pointless. Therefore, we walk across the street to the hotel and secure a quiet spot in the lobby area nearest the courtyard and sports bar. Unfortunately, it is cleaning time. Each time I begin the interview either a vacuum cleaner moves by or there are maintenance men literally moving tables and chairs. After 10 minutes, we begin our interview with the first question, “Tell me about yourself”:

I’ve worked in uh, higher education for the state for the last seven years. And, uh, I’m a small business owner and I describe myself as an education advocate. Um, lobbyist to us means something that may or may not have a legal interpretations or ramifications, but in essence what I do and others like me is lobbying. Uh, but, we often refer to ourselves as government relations if you work for the state or for a university. And, in my case as a small business owner, the title that I use to reflect my work is education -- minority education advocate.

Immediately, I am taking aback by the statement “I describe myself has an education advocate”. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess stated it plainly, directly, and squarely as she peered through my eyes into my thoughts. Her posture was slightly leaning on the couch, while one leg crossed the other. She stated it confidently and waited for me to challenge. I knew not to, remembering that this was her voice being heard in the interview. It is not my place as the observer and interviewer or my position to disagree with any statements or claims because I am an objective observer who is collecting data. As the instrument in the study, I have no biases or claims to the study accept to the materials before, during and after. The information provided is to be kept in its naturalistic form as stated, un-tampered.

Needless to say, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess earned her pseudonym immediately due to the fact that it was ironic that she preferred not to be categorized as a lobbyist and stated that her work was advocacy, all while being interviewed about her role as an educational lobbyist at a place where the term “lobby” was first generated - in a hotel lobby – hence the irony. I moved on in the interview being careful to modify the questions. For instance, instead of asking “How many years have you been an education lobbyist”, I asked “How many years have you been an advocate”.

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess answered that she had been an advocate for twenty seven years. Her education background includes attending PWIs (Predominantly White Institutions) for undergraduate and graduate schools. However, “Irony” has strong ties to HBCUs:

I’m from a state where we felt like we have an HBCU on every corner.

And, then coming to [System 1] where there’s five in the state as large as this.

Um, when I worked for the state, one of my roles was, I was the grand administrator for the educator prep programs for the five HBCU’s and so I -- I got immersed in that work there. Uh, but my particular background... uh, educated undergrad PWI and also my master’s at a PWI. Uh, had the advantage of living in Europe for ten years and actually received my master’s overseas.

She is very passionate about the state of education for children of color, having two children of color of her own. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess states that it is because of her children and the lack of quality education they were receiving that resulted in her becoming an advocate. Prior to becoming an advocate, she was trained in the following:

Well, my training is communications. So, but the beauty about communications is it's really process driven. And so if you understand **systems**, if you have the ability to understand process and how process works within **systems**, then you really can work in any field and that's what happened to me. I was not trained in education, uh, but because I became immersed in the **system** of education and started to realize that there were some -- some gaps that needed to be filled within that system as it related to minority education, in particular. I found a niche and I fell into that niche and have worked in that niche ever since.

Like "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess, "Irony" the Hidden Prophetess professes a keen awareness of *The System* at play of which she is apart. It is the system and its multiple functions that result in "Irony's" drive. In her case, being called to the Office of the Prophetess provides an actual foundation for what she does. "Irony" the Hidden Prophetess is called to sacrifice position that has resulted in her ridicule and relegation to a tertiary status because for the most part people will not, cannot, and ultimately choose not to understand the message she provides when referring to the passion she has for the advocacy of children of color. The focus of her work is children of color for it is something she says "I can't ignore". "Irony" the Hidden Prophetess refers to children of color as "minority population children":

You -- you -- you cannot -- you know, if your desire is to make money, this is the wrong work for you. I believe. Now, I'm sure there's somebody out there that will easily prove me wrong. Uh, who's making money hand over fist and being effective, but, I'll say it like this, if you're in the camp of doing it on behalf of

students, you think that you're really serving -- especially, minority students, uh, there are -- there are lobbyists out there who happen to be Black. I'm very proud of being a Black lobbyist. Not the same thing in my book. Uh, I am community focused and student driven. And so for that reason, when you see me coming you know I'm crying foul if there's something that a policy being advocated or a rule being debated, uh, that I see having an adverse impact, intentionally or not intentionally on students of color. I call them minority population students. I don't call them minority students. You put that -- you put that adjective where it belongs. Not on people, on numbers.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess has no family that was in lobbying; however, she comes from a line of advocates, having family members in social work. When I asked if she had any other advocacy interests before becoming an educational advocate, she begin to talk about the importance of equity and equality, specifically for under represented marginalized groups. As a Prophetess, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess has accepted her Gift of Prophecy and recognizes her role within the *system*:

Yeah, I think actually my -- my passions lie in quality of life issues. Um, I'm very much focused on underrepresented groups. I'm really big in equity. Um, which I feel is -- is different from equality. Uh, and I have an innate distrust for **systems**. Um, you know, so I operate from the premise that **systems** are not created to elevate, they're created to maintain the status quo.

I'm always looking for creative ways to help underrepresented groups to navigate a **system** that's not designed to support them.

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess like “Joy” Bantering Prophetess and the other two Prophets has her own firm. However, she is completely privatized, working independent of partners. She makes her connections through the building of relationships and networks; however, her advocacy efforts are purposely independent of any firms. When I asked “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess what went into her decision to start her own firm, she responded with the following:

I basically privatized my work. Uh, when I worked for the state, I started off as the communications director and then over time migrated into creating a position for myself. Um, the diversity inclusion and community engagement director, and, uh, at some point decided that I could be more effective outside of the state **system** than inside and so I resigned and privatized my work. So that’s all I do. The work I used to do on behalf of the state, which I felt happened through a political filter, I was able to eliminate the filter.

The Diversity Inclusion and Community Engagement Director acknowledged “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess’s Gift of the Prophetess and recommended she make a change. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess did, finding more positive aspects to independent advocacy. This allowed her to provide a voice without the filters, pushing her into a realm of Prophetess readily acknowledged by both peers and supporters:

For me the most appealing aspect is that, uh, people who have traditionally not have much of a voice, I’m able to give them a voice, uh, through my work and uh, you know, that keeps me -- they call me -- my supporters, my friends, the people I turn to when I need to be filled up, uh -- they call me J_____, the

_____ prophet...I go in and I fight for those things that I think are important or critical to leveling the playing field for students who are marginalized or otherwise underrepresented in the pipeline.

Therefore, “Irony” has positioned herself to advocacy work for the long term, seeing no end to what she was called to do. She purposefully remains hidden – hence the second part of her pseudonym, referring to herself as a Ninja who waits silently and attacks quietly before moving out of sight again before you knew she was there. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess is patient and meticulous about her “Office”. She points out, “When they see me coming, they now I am here because a Black or Brown child is being mistreated”. It is her niche she has carved out. It is often a solitary niche that only she can navigate, silently in stealth as the Hidden Prophetess.

The Book of “Truth” the Absolute Prophet. Here begins the Book of “Truth” the Absolute Prophet, 2014 AD. I awoke at 4:30 a.m. to catch a 6:00 a.m. flight – bad mistake, for Hobby Airport is more than 45 minutes from where I live. I still “booked it”. Defying all speed limit laws in addition to turning signal ordinances and stopping expectations at stop signs and red lights, I made it to the terminal with 30 minutes left to get on the pla – “WHY ARE THERE SO MANY PEOPLE CATCHING SOUTHWEST AT 5:30 a.m.”, my thoughts screamed as the terminal voice began to ring out “Southwest Flight _____” for System 2 is now boarding for departure”. I was still at the ticket counter waiting to check in. I learned that morning, at that moment to check in online and carry the least amount of baggage as possible. Yet, I had hope. I scurried to the line for belongings to be checked only to see the line even more crowded than the check in line.

The immense worry spoke episodes of frustration, remorse and utter disgust with the moment. “I was going to miss this flight”. Still, I had hope. The line moved at a tootsie pop pace, teasingly remarking, “How many whimpers does it take to get to the front of the line?” Someone heard the whimpers and asked “Is that your flight they keep calling”. “Yes”, I replied. “Here cut in front of us”. To the front I went; ready to go through the metal detectors. “Southwest Flight _____ for System 2 has boarded. The doors will close in 5 minutes”. My nerves crashed, my eyes went white, my heart pounded, my lips stiffened, my tongue could not muster the energy to express the expression I expressed in exponential bewilderment. I lost hope. More than that, I lost my flight. I lost my plan. I lost time. Apparently, I never had it to begin with.

The ticket agent on the phone confirms that I can catch the next flight later that morning. “What is the charge?” More dollars spent, more time spent, more hope spent, I am completely spent. I have lost hope. I call, “Truth”, the Absolute Prophet to apologize that I will not make our appointment. Time is money and money is his time. He needed to reschedule due to a double booked meeting. Hope awakens. We reschedule. My bags are checked. A pocket knife I left in my book bag is taken. Thank you Homeland Security! I head to the terminal. I review my notes, lamenting about the multiple mishaps and mistakes I painstakingly displayed. I board the plane. I turn on my music “I’m the man I’m the man I’m the Maaan”. I am on my way.

Arriving at my destination and embarking to the hotel, I cannot help by recognize the apparent difference between Houston and Community 2. Although both in the South, the demographics are in direct contrast - ethnicity for ethnicity. Like a scene from the

“Twilight Zone”, I am in a city where African Americans are in the majority and are the majority of business owners. Whereas I might see one or two of me in a crowd where I live, I am seeing one or two White men and women on the whole block. Every location I visit and every encounter is an African American face. Clearly, they can tell, I am experiencing a culture shock. “This your first time here, huh...where you from”. I explain that I am from Houston – Laughter....”You ain’t nevuh scene so many Black folks in charge...no suh...not in Texas...he he he”.

I have about an hour to “kill” due to “Truth” the Absolute Prophet being held up in a meeting. I make my way to a local restaurant around the corner from “Truth” the Absolute Prophet’s office. I sit, have a bite and wait. Peering nervously at the waitresses as they pass by, I make every attempt to keep my eyes forward or facing away from the “scenery”. Amazingly, the conversations are professional, their focuses are all business “Can I help you sir” instead of “Can I help you honey, darling or babe”. Back in Houston, same restaurant, different atmosphere and vibe. No flirting, no teasing, no sitting on laps. Just “place your order”, “what else can I get for you”, and “thank you for coming in”. Most were in college and only working part time. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet explained later that the atmosphere in here is all professional and business despite the tight white shirts and the short red shorts with an owl positioned purposefully on the shirt to attract undisciplined eyes.

My cell phone rang. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet is on the way. I peer out the window to see a clean shaven African American man strutting on the pavement towards the front entrance of the restaurant with a striding flare crossed between “George

Jefferson” and “Huggy Bear”. Everyone on the street knew him. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet gave handshakes, high fives, dabs, and big smiles. He pulled open the door as if the door owed him a favor and attempted to renege. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet waves at me while pulling over a waitress. “What bravado must one have to walk into a place an immediately command the attention of the wait staff?” We choose a corner with a high table to sit. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet asks, “What we drinking?”

An hour has passed, our drinks are consumed, our food has been eaten and interview time is here. We move to the courtyard in an adjacent building where I pose the first question of the interview. “Tell me about yourself”:

You want my name? You want my name -- You don't want my name. Well, I started out -- I started out as a football player. And, tried to make it in Canada, couldn't make it. Started a business in [Southwest State]. And, had a business there years very successful. Started with, uh, two hundred fifty thousand dollars became a quarter million dollar company. Built it up and I sold it. And, one of the city manager asked me won't you be a lobby for the city of [Southern, Southwest]. I said, I don't -- I never did it before. So I start doing that and that was one of the things that helped me get where I'm at and one of things that helped me get where I'm at. Hey ___! Good! Good seeing you ____. And, that's how I got started. I start doing that and then after doing that it just starts building and building from me. I -- I -- I spend six -- five years -- four years, five years in [System 2] and in [Southwest State] a predominantly Republican state. And, I

came here, been here fourteen years. So I been doing this approximately about twenty something years.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet earned his pseudonym because he preferred that everyone know about what we were attempting to do as a result of the interview. He explained that what we were talking about is common knowledge; therefore, he had not fears about his name being used or anyone knowing about his interview. In fact, as a person passed by prior to the start of the interview, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet excitedly announced to a passer by colleague, “Hey, I am getting interviewed over here”. In keeping with the Office of the Prophet’s proclamation that to be called to the Office of the Prophet means one will “...often times be ridiculed ...because for the most part people will not, cannot, and ultimately choose not to understand the message the Prophet provides”. He earned the last part of his description “the Absolute Prophet” because he made a point to exclaim over and over about his willingness to be candid regardless of the situation or with whomever he comes in contact, especially when asked about how he builds relationships and develops points of contact:

Oh, I think it’s very important. Even some of the, uh, Mr. Griffen, let me share with you, everybody don’t like “*Truth*”. Okay?

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet continues,

I mean, everybody don’t like “*Truth*” *the Absolute Prophet*. But, the most important thing a real lobbyist will tell you, they know everybody don’t like them...

Coming from a background has filled as his, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet has learned that the secret to being successful is the ability to navigate and make oneself flexible. Having began his business in [Southwest State] after a short stint as a professional football player, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet experiences have provided him with promising opportunities and successes during his 27 years in lobbying, which includes “between 10 and 13 years” as an education lobbyist at the state level, with public colleges and higher education in general - most specifically for HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities):

I used to represent [South Eastern HBCU #1]. Helped find funding for example. Some of the historical African American schools. Helped try to find -- find funding for [Southeastern HBCU #2]. Uh, helped [Southeastern HBCU # 3] on a matter. Uh, that part of education. Mostly, was dealing with funding. I don't know -- we have a system here, those were private institutions. And, [the System 2] legislative bodies are different. We have something call ways and means. And, ways and means can make a way. And, most states have it, a thing used to call executive orders -- get funding for colleges and certain things. Put some money into the budget and make it pass. And, I was very successful at [Southeastern HBCU #1] doing that for them.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet began his undergraduate degree in Speech Communications from [Southwestern University] but ended up graduating from [Southeastern HBCU #3] with a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Management. He

his currently a first year law student at a [President Law School] in [West Coast State], restarting class in April of 2014.

Prior to becoming a lobbyist, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet had other interests, which included a small business he started and sold. He fell in love with the lobbying process – also metaphorically referred to as *The System* for this study in all four Books of Prophecy. When asked about any other prior interests and occupations prior to becoming a lobbyist, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet remarked

I -- I -- I love the process. You know, I love the three branches of government.

For example, the executive, judicial and legislative. I kinda like the executive and legislative process. And, it’s a great process. I, uh -- some of the things that helped me be successful -- things I did -- and I always share with other young lobbyists...

Note, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet is the first Prophet in the Books of Prophecy to proclaim a “love” for *The System*. Both “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess and “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess both proclaimed distrust and some dislike for the system. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet is enamored with attempting to help young lobbyists who are trying to navigate the system, serving as a mentor and a confidant. He feels that his time is short in his current setting, recognizing that one day he will be working else where for a larger corporation, so long as “the dollars are right”. He became a lobbyist to make a difference. Any lobbyist worth their salt wants to make a difference. Education lobbying in particular is of interest because of the political view of education, where some

communities get funding while others do not based upon the [pizza] they receive. That is how the system is set up in [System 2].

“Truth” has been in talks with some entities. Currently, his other interests include producing in the entertainment industry, working in other areas to remain solid and flexible. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet is honest about his work and how his focus is to move legislation and secure the necessary funding for HBCUs and schools in communities of color as a result of his upbringing in [Deep South State] where his father and mother both had only elementary educations. He has been a campaigner in the presidential process supporting President Obama during his first election. “Truth” “Truth” the Absolute Prophet promises to leave a legacy where he knows he made a difference and that people he has mentored are able to navigate that system.

The Book of “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet. Here begins the Book of Justice the Dimensional Prophet – 2014 A.D. Unlike with what happened in The Book of “Truth” the Absolute Prophet, I did not miss this plane. My journey began at 3:30 a.m. in Houston, a full three hours before my flight. My flight however had a stop over in the mid-West – tickets were starting to get pricey. I arrived in Community 3 to a similar feel of System 2; however, the land area is distinctly different by a wholesome amount. To get to the place to rest my head, I had to take the Metro or catch a cab. The Metro required less money and would take less time. I therefore, crossed the bridge and stood on the ramp. Panic!!! Metro meant train. In Houston, Metro means bus. “Note to self, dialect and vocabulary words change meaning in different parts of the country”.

I remembered the last time I took a train in a city to which I had never been. We got lost!!! We missed stop after stop. Determined not to have this happen, for I could not miss this interview, I studied the maps of the area. I found where I was to go and positioned myself on the platform ready for departure. Upon entering the train, I took an inventory of the passengers, noticing that some were on their way to lunch, while others appeared to be heading home for the evening – when the train stopped in residential areas, passengers un-boarded. I could not help but recognize the majesty of the moment, riding along a historic river and seeing historic monuments. What assisted my travel to the hotel was the African American architect of the city had set up the roads in blocks in such a way that getting lost was near impossible. All one had to do was walk in a direction and know the outlay of streets. The block pattern was like a grid where somehow somehow the streets were all interconnected and numbered or alphabetized. No wonder an Honors school bears his name at an HBCU in Texas.

Embarking on my journey to the office of “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet, I opted to upgrade my attire. I felt a keen sense that it was essential I wear a tie in this occasion along with slacks, dress shoes and a sport coat. Upon exiting the hotel and walking two blocks to Alphabet Street, I could see that my intuition was precise. The pedestrians walked with a sense of urgency and focus unlike in my previous two destinations. The people downtown all wore two piece suits. The clatter clatter of hard heeled shoes stamping their souls of approval as they negotiated the human traffic of the hour reminded me of the rhythmic tic toc of clocks synchronized to tic and tock in unison creating one harmonious sound.

I kept beat as best I could, having to lean forward about 20 degrees to not give the notice that I was in fact an outsider. I too had to walk with purpose, stamping the concrete with my soul of approval before I entered the tower of “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet. As I entered the tower, my posture remained leaning forward although my pace had lessened. The hollow halls of “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet produced a symphony of sound as each clacking wave bounded from one wall to another and then from surface to surface and back to wall as if with each step, the sounds retraced the steps to ensure they were heard. The sounds wasted no moments to be heard. I approached the office door to find a “strategy session” in progress in an adjacent office – there were a number of people around a table all speaking into a phone using terminology and candor I would rather not attempt to repeat because I was too far away to make out the dialogue. To focus too intently would alert them to my presence. Finally, someone stands and shuts the door peering towards me as I pretended not to notice.

The strategy session is becoming heated as their voices pound against the door eager to get through so I can hear. There is a strange bond those voices and I share, for as I compose this Book of “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet, I am figuratively trying to recall the words I could not hear. An assistant comes through the door and calls me toward her. I follow her eagerly as my ears awaken to the quietness in the corridor. The quiet is so still I can hear the air conditioning turn on and off. The quiet is deafening as my ear drums pound to hear something besides the burning built up wax in the canal.

There it is the noise for which I was waiting, “Welcome, Aaron” says, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet.

“Are we the same age”, I wonder, “Kinda young to be a lobbyist. However, I immediately sense an awareness of comfort between us. He smiles and thanks me for reaching out to him for nothing like this as been done before. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet expresses an interest to read the final product and asks how he can support further. He further begins recommending sources I can use to further the study.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet is just that – Dimensional. Yes, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet is an African American educational lobbyist; however, he also serves other industries. When seeking out participants, I had to find those who my lobby for education as a result of other interests. In most cases, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet fits that description having lobbied for Health and Energy, specifically Mental Health Care, and HMOs. However, somehow, he seems to find a connection to education and has a discrete passionate position for powerless poverty stricken youth of color. To his dismay, he recants that Common Core and Race to the Top were put in place to provide additional expectations and support. At the outset people agreed and now people have shifted sides. Policy makers, he feel, are not doing a good job when asked “What groups he feel are opponents to mobilized educational interests”:

Uh, you know, uh, in the -- in the [Community 3] area, um, Aaron, you could imagine that each group has a vested interest to protect their -- their members’ interest and advocate for their own policies. Um, both teachers unions, have been o- opposed to uh, you know, they agree with the premise of having high standards

for students, but to the extent that it actually affects how teachers are being evaluated on, how their being -- how these standards are being implemented in the classroom, that's where they kinda draw the line and -- and voice their opposition.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet further expresses the following:

They are impeding the progress, they're impeding the process of what -- of policymakers are trying to improve the education system, um, at the state level. However, at the same time, as I mentioned before, um, or mentioned earlier, the policymakers are not really doing a good job of -- of keeping the uh, or -- or -- or bringing in and getting the teacher profession, the unions involved in the **policy making process**.

Note the mention of process, which *The System* is metaphorically labeled. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet feels that not having teacher involved has long term ramifications that are difficult to overcome due to a lack of educator engagement. “Who better to testify before Congress about the impact of a bill on education than the folks who are on the front lines and can provide anecdotal evidence?” This point is a personal spot for “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet having a close family member being in education and coming from a family of educators.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet was raised in Northern State and attended a Northern State University. However, his family is from Northeast State. It was during his sophomore year of college that he was provided an opportunity to intern in the Mayor's office. This according to “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet provided an insight

into politics and the lobbying world one could not have received otherwise. He describes his mentor while he describes how he developed his passion for lobbying:

He was active in the African American community. He, uh, did a lotta things, so, you know, from that basis kind of got my -- my interest peaked in political science and working in government, working with community work, doing community things. Uh, and then -- and then from there, uh, you know, my studies and my work has been geared towards, uh, you know political science getting into government affairs work, lobbying on issues that I'm passionate about.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet unlike his Prophet and Prophetess counterparts had no other occupation prior to becoming a lobbyist, which exemplifies his Dimensional status. He was called early to the Office of the Prophet took up his “Passion” and has carried it for 19 years – 10 years as an educational lobbyist. However, one does not simply wake up and become a lobbyist. There are influences, signs and promptings. “Besides the Mayor”, I asked, “What were some other major influences to you becoming a lobbyist”:

Uh, couple of my professors in college. Uh, but it wasn't until actually -- I actually landed here in -- in D.C. after my -- after finishing my undergrad that I really got immersed in, uh, lobbying, per say, as a profession, and then getting into education.

Um, at -- the other major influence was a senator from [the Northern State] that I worked for. He was actually on the senate education policy committee at the time.

Um, he had great -- a great relationship actually with Dr. -- Dr. Martin Luther King. Uh, he did a lotta things in the freedom movement. Um, and uh, you know,

from there, uh, you know, I really just kinda honed in my interest on really what I wanted to do and where I think my -- my interest and my skills could, you know, better lend to my -- to my passions in -- in -- in lobbying.

Personal impacts of lobbying on his life include having children and having family in education:

It actually has made it really real for the kids that I have right now and understanding, you know, especially the things that they are learning in school. Uh, how to pick a school. Uh, what are the things uh, to look for uh, in a school that make them of high quality. Uh, the things that teachers go through in their -- in their professional development, as well as, how they are teaching the kids. Uh, it really made a -- uh, a huge impact. It actually helped me learn about how the policy actually translates into the practice and into the -- the pedagogy um, of teaching. Um, and so, it -- it -- it's actually helpful and particularly with my wife and the -- a lot of the college and friends that I have in the education community, mostly which are teachers, you know, really in talking to 'em about the policy side.

Unfortunately, there are not enough teachers being involved in the process per “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet resulting in missed opportunities to truly impact decisions that are begin made. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet lamented on numerous occasions during the interview how often he testifies at a hearing and does not seed any educators – teachers, principals, parents, or superintendents. This includes African Americans. He takes issue with this because decisions are being made in the community

and in the profession without any stakeholders being present. As a result, he finds it difficult to hold policy makers accountable because they are making uninformed decisions. His lasting legacy as an African American education lobbyist is to provide access to high quality education:

To be to - to drive policy that would be able to positively affect the African American student community. Again, making sure that our -- our students are -- not only have access to a high quality education which means, you know, effective teachers, funding support, student supports, but being able to know that they are going to learn what they need to know to be successful, uh, when they leave high school, academically as well as professionally.

The Revelation of the Book of Prophecy

Here ends the Book of Prophecy, 2015 A.D. The Book of Prophecy closes with a painted picture of Prophets and Prophetesses describing their backgrounds which led to them becoming educational lobbyists. One may note the distinct differences in traits and characteristics of each Prophet and Prophetess; however, one cannot miss the stark similarities super imposed through the crafting of these stories. Each story beckons to be heard for it is in the story that our reality informs others' realities. It is through others' uniformed realities that the United States became "A Nation at Risk" targeting school teachers for perceived but unproven societal failures. Those unproven failures through perpetuated policies have now become societal norms. The way to fight against something is to provide for the needs of the other against which the something stands. To continually fight directly against the item or issue gives credence to the issue thus

making it important, an entity and thusly and crafted norm - the law of attraction. The very thing we try to get rid of becomes stronger.

We find a typological premise associated with the changing times that force Prophets and Prophetesses to become rather than simply exist for the sole purpose of Prophecy. Unfortunately, these Prophets and Prophetesses are often misunderstood and mistaken as fanatical circumventors of *The System*. They are struggling prophets and prophetesses. As the analysis of their voices reveals, the African American educational lobbyist cannot exist within a system, for it is the system that seeks to maintain the status quo. They exist in contrast to the system while at the same time navigating the system, which is set up to ensure the failure of marginalized groups, which include children of color – “minority population students”.

Analysis of Findings

Throughout each reading and rereading, the voices of the African-American educational lobbyists became louder. Multiple themes would began to emerge become deleted and then re-emerge. By following the constant comparison method, some themes became categories as the comparisons between stories began to produce a voice, although similar, different in message. As earlier indicated, *the System* came up across all four interviews as something they were each trying to navigate and/or influence. All four have found a way out of the system but are still immersed in its ebbs and flows. It is through those ebbs and flows that three major themes emerged from 25 sub themes, with *Navigating the System* being the overarching category serving as a frame in which the

African American educational lobbyists function. The three major categories and their themes are divided into the research questions that they answered during this study:

- 1) How do African American educational lobbyists describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position?
- 2) How do African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying?
- 3) How do these African American educational lobbyists describe their influence or impact on education?

The three major categories that emerged in this study are 1) Being Effective 2) Having the Ability to Influence or Impact 3) Focusing on African American Academic Achievement.

Navigating the System

There is a system at play in which we are all engulfed. However, within the system are sub systems that each has a role in the motors and cogs of the larger system. When referring to the system, depending on the circle, one could be referring to jail, foster care, the stock exchange, blue collar jobs, or even a hospital or schooling system. However, in the case of the four African American educational lobbyists, their system is entirely comprised of the legislative process and policy development.

The overarching theme of *Navigating the System* appeared in every research question. When describing their personal characteristics, the African American educational lobbyists in this study learned to navigate the system. While exercising and interpreting their acts of lobbying, the African American educational lobbyists in this study used the

system they learned in order to exercise those acts of lobbying. Lastly, Navigating the System became a factor in how they influenced policy as they described their ability to impact or influence education.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet makes mention of the legislative process early during his interview when asked about his background, “What were your lobbying interests prior to becoming an education lobbyist”. He proclaimed, “I love the process, You know, I love the three branches of government...I kinda like the executive and legislative process. And, it’s a great process. In stark contrast, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess, stated,

I have an innate distrust for systems...so, I operate from the premise that systems are not created to elevate, they’re created to maintain the status quo. And, I am always looking for creative ways to help underrepresented groups to navigate a system that’s not designed to support them.

The system is designed to be a due process for bills to be passed into law. A piece of legislation is drafted and sent to the house floor for consideration. The wheels begin to turn and speed up as the process begins to unfold. It is the role of the African American lobbyist to influence the process positively for their clients and special interests. How the African American educational lobbyist goes about navigating this system somewhat determines the level of effectiveness the lobbyist is perceived to have for navigating the system. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess remarked,

What it boils down to is, you understand the process. You understand the legislative process. And, that’s what people pay you for. Because -- and in order

to understand the process, it's not just the process, but it's who you know in that process; how they relate to each other, or, how they work together. Knowing that you cannot bring these two people into the room at the same time, because those egos are not gonna add- match up.

Similarly, "Justice" the Dimensional Prophet stated,

My specific roles is to ensure that our grass tops advocates are um, are fully staffed, are prepped, uh, have the knowledge that they know -- that they know -- that going into these meetings, be able to uh, be conversing on these issues, and be able to actually advance uh, policy that's our ultimate goal is to actually advance policy.

When referring to grass tops advocates, "Justice" the Dimensional Prophet is talking about his network that is working in the business sector. Grass tops advocacy focuses on the business community whereas grass roots advocacy focuses on the community, parents and students. This difference is unique only to "Justice" the Dimensional Prophet. "Joy", "Truth" and "Irony" only mentioned grass roots advocacy during their interviews.

Research Question #1 – How do African American Educational Lobbyists Describe Their Personal Characteristics Related to Success in Their Position?

All four lobbyists for this study consider themselves to be very effective at their craft, lobbying. All four discussed traits for success including most prominently the ability to strategize. Each talked about having a strategy prior to going into their act of lobbying, however, considered strategy as a part of lobbying. In addition, they each shared about

the ability to listen and observe, develop a circle of contacts, and communicate via direct and indirect communication. Direct and Indirect Communication is hand written letters, emails, phone calls, or conversation. The tactics they used varied and brought laughter during the interviews as each shared insider secrets to communicating by any effective lobbying means necessary.

Being Effective. Critical to the role of the African American educational lobbyist is the ability to be effective in practice, habit and in perception. It is incumbent upon the African American educational lobbyist to know the legislative process and know the main characters in the process, navigating the *System*. The means being able to communicate effectively depending on the necessity of the moment, being able to utilize the correct or most effective tactic, and the ability to strategize. How the African American educational lobbyists describe effective lobbying is dependent upon what they are trying to get accomplished, for some tactics or strategies do not work in every situation, nor do they necessarily agree upon the tactics or strategy being used.

The personal characteristics each describe relating to the success in their position is further incumbent upon the ability to be flexible and strategic in their plans. However, there are times where the tactics and/or strategies they want to employ are not supported by their group, which would appear to “sideline” the African American educational lobbyist. Nevertheless, none admitted to ever being sidelined for each has the freedom to show their effectiveness due to gaining the credibility and trust of both their partners and with those they are attempting to influence. They describe their success in achieving these ends in various ways. When asked, “What do you feel are some of the important

personal qualities, values, and behaviors necessary for being a lobbyist”, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess answered,

I’m not a southern girl by nature, but I know how to say, thank you at the right times; and, say thank you with a -- with niceties -- a good nice -- it’s amazing what a nice thank you note and a um, bouquet of flowers will do for someone.

And, um, she handed me her Rolodex.

As a form of communication, this is an example direct communication. Direct communication is where one writes a letter or verbally speaks to a person. “Joy” indicated that this was the best way to not only be effective but to gain access and influence as indicated by her remarks. She further proclaims,

The flowers and the thank you notes, do you still use that today?

“I am the queen of thank yous” Hand written! Forget email-

Hand written notes, because they’re so rare. People don’t do it anymore.

Similarly “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess comments following:

Uh, I get my best information outside of a -- a meeting room. Might be over drinks. Over dinner. It might be at a party, might be on the golf course. It could be on a sidewalk, you know. An encounter. Little things slip and you gotta be -- you gotta be smart enough to catch those little tidbits of information when you get ‘em and then capitalize on them. It’s very strategic work. It’s chess.

According to “Truth” the Absolute Prophet, the best way to be effective is in the ability to be timely when approaching the decision maker:

I would just go and talk to ‘em, if I knew ‘em. I’d just go speak to ‘em about it.

What’s your recommendation on this? How do you feel about this

Representative? How you feel about -- you know, what -- what’s your take on it?

Becoming available at all times is another way to show effectiveness according to

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet:

Um, I avail myself to my network, so then my network knows for example, if they need anything, as far as, education issues, any data, any political intelligence or anything, they know they can come to me and I will give them that information.

The Benefits of a Reaper. A reaper is one who clears a path. Only a veteran of the process can teach the process. Like Ruth, the favored heroin in the *Book of Ruth* (Bible Gateway, 2015), each African American educational lobbyist in this study mentioned someone who made a way and cleared the path for them. Having a reaper is a critical component for being effective because this is how they learn to navigate *the System*, how they learned to use the system in the acts of lobbying and how navigating the system became an impact factor in their ability to influence policy. They found favor.

When asked about early occupations and early influences to becoming an educational lobbyist, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess indicated,

I had a professor who recognized and remembered what my interests were. He had a friend who was serving, at the time, as the senate liaison for the governor. And, she had just told him to keep an eye out for, you know, young African American students who might interested in the -- in learning about this process.

And, that is how I got started.

She shares her experiences once she accepted the opportunity:

Um, I went, when I first started, I went over there, I don't know, eight, ten hours a week, while I was an undergrad, uh, during session and just shadowed her --just shadowed her. And, uh, to this day, I still count her as my first -- well, I guess I have to count her as my second. My -- My first mentor was my second mom!

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess shared how her first mentor, who was an educational lobbyist, helped to find her first job out of law school. Due to the circle of contacts and network her mentor had, she was able to find employment. Upon becoming a lobbyist, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess was able to utilize her mentor's contacts to her benefit.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet found his favor via a city manager in the city and state where he started his first business:

...one of the city manager asked me won't you be a lobby for the city of [Southwestern]. I said, I don't -- I never did it before. So I start doing that and that was one of the things that helped me get where I'm at and one of things that helped me get where I'm at... And, that's how I got started. I start doing that and then after doing that it just start building and building from me. I -- I -- I spend six -- five years -- four years, five years in [Southern State] and in [Southwest State], predominantly Republican state.

When asked about his decision to start his own firm, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet discussed how he found immediate success despite not knowing much about owning his own firm:

A gentleman by the name of [Deputy] ... said, uh, man you had a lobbying business in [Southwest State]. Do you know how many Black lobbyists we have in [Southern State]? I think we had two or three. Maybe two or three. He said, if you go start one today, I'll help you get clients.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet was able to start his own private firm and have access to the circle of contacts and network of [Deputy], making him find immediate success.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet as I stated earlier began his career in lobbying from the outset of his professional career. There was no other occupation prior to becoming a lobbyist. However, there was still a reaper:

I got into politics, uh, early on in my undergraduate career. Went to uh, [Northeast University]. Um, I -- my sophomore year I interned with the mayor of the town that the college is -- is located in. Uh, doing a lot of community work, working with him ... you know working with him -- how he was so well received, uh, in the community -- working on a variety of issues -- he was active in the African American community. He, uh, did a lotta things, so, you know, from that basis kind of got my -- my interest peaked in political science and working in government, working with community work, doing community things.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet further shares how important connecting with the mayor was in addition to an opportunity he received upon moving to System 3:

...the mayor was key, um, uh, you know, just being able to work with an important uh, person like that, and a -- a-- a well received person like that...Uh,

but it wasn't until actually -- I actually landed here in -- in [System 3]. After my -
- after finishing my undergrad that I really got immersed in, uh, lobbying, per say,
as a profession, and then getting into education. Um, at -- the other major
influence was a senator from [Northeast State] that I worked for. He was actually
on the senate education policy committee at the time.

Having the early political influence of the mayor in addition to a Senator on the
education policy committee geared "Justice" the Dimensional Prophet specifically to his
areas of expertise early in his career.

Along with "Joy" the Bantering Prophet and "Truth" the Absolute Prophet, "Justice"
the Dimensional Prophet enjoyed moments of when "opportunity meets preparation".
Some may call it luck, while others will call it favor. Either way, the benefit of a reaper
to guide, provide access to networks and clear the path is a critical component of being
effective as an educational lobbyist.

Being Effective Offsite. The act of lobbying contrary to belief occurs mostly off site.
The picture we have of lobbyists is them waiting around the halls of Congress or waiting
on the steps of the state capitals, meeting in dark places. On the contrary, these African
American educational lobbyists are very upfront about the awareness they want to bring
to clients as they display their effectiveness when describing success in their position.
This awareness includes providing timely information and/or stepping in to provide
support on a piece of legislation. Their effectiveness in their position is measured not
only by what they do, but how they do it. Being a good writer is greatly
underemphasized in the literature. "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess states,

Um, um, so, I've been called the translator, because I am good at taking someone's technical language or mumbo jumbo and making it plain English, um, for someone to understand, but without simplifying it to the point of being, you know, insulting.

"Joy" further shared,

I am still the translator. I'm still the -- my -- my bud down the hall right now will come in and will be like, hey, can you write this up for me? Or, we need this and um, yeah, it's still a translator after all these years.

"Irony" the Hidden Prophetess responded that *breadth over death* was the key citing the important of information being direct and to the point to consider both the staffer's time and the information one wants the staffer to convey on their behalf:

Tidy little packages. Package things well, so that's it's easy to digest.

Um, you don't write a policy paper that's seven pages and expect for that staffer to actually read it. I don't do more than a page. If I -- if it's a really complex issue two pages but then I break it up into blocks. Nice little chunks.

Which would you - if you're a staffer and you have twenty visitors a day and they're each bringing you, you know, information in, do you wanna see twenty people with seven pages? Who you gonna read first? The person that comes in with a seven pager or the person that comes in with one pager?

In addition to the educational lobbyist's ability to write as a personal characteristic related to success in their position, "Truth" the Absolute Prophet indicates, to show effectiveness, he encourages his clients to write - an example of *grassroots advocacy*:

I think a good lobbyist would encourage them to do the letters and not for me to speak on their behalf. A good lobbyist would tell them, you need to do letters.

You need to do a phone campaign. You know, you gotta do a campaign. I never try to -- representing someone as a lobbyist, I don't try to say, my way or the highway. I want some input from you. I want you to write a letter. Let's write a letter. Let's sit down, I'll help you with the letter.

A similar approach would be tried with the business community in what was referred to earlier as *grass tops advocacy*. "Justice" the Dimensional prophet argues for the business community to be more involved in process because students are the product schools produce for the customer. The customer is business. Therefore, "Justice" the Dimensional Lobbyist expresses the following about effective lobbying in the business community:

...one of the other things that we have been effective in is actually um, having our business leaders publish or submit and publish earned media, whether it's op eds or letters to the editor. Uh, we draft a whole host of them here, we give it to our business leaders for them to review and submit.

He shares further,

I draft a variety of testimony, talking points, um, uh, you know, I actually also accompany our -- our business leaders to their policymaker meetings to answer any technical questions, which usually is the case. Uh, and to make sure those are answered. But, just really making sure that they -- that our business leaders have a great experience in engaging with their uh, policymakers, but ultimately that uh,

you know, the -- the bottom line is met which is advancing policy and making sure that the business leader, uh, you know, convinces the policymaker that this is important, this what needs to be done.

Therefore to be effective, there are tactics and strategies African American education lobbyists employ in addition to some personal qualities such as the ability to write and communicate in a timely manner. Some personality traits were provided such as “having a thick skin”, “not being afraid to fail”, “having knowledge of your area – being the expert”, and “strong communication skills”. Being flexible and understanding the process, *the System*, were mentioned as well as the African American educational lobbyists began to share what was ineffective.

Avoidance Factors in Lobbying #1 – Pigeonholing.

There are challenges unique to being an African American educational lobbyist. One of which is “pigeonholing”. Pigeonholing are tactics being used to keep the marginalized in a marginalized position. In order to be effective, the African American educational lobbyists must take care and ensure that they avoid three factors of pigeonholing: Being underutilized, being perceived as partisan and working with dishonest individuals. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess expressed a concern about getting too good at her position and being underutilized:

“there are some things you just don’t want to know everything to know about because you will get **pigeon holed**...I wanna be able to explore and have a, uh, wider breadth...but my skill set is about the process...my talents become underutilized”

She explains that often she has to remind people of her capabilities, “I tell people...you are underutilizing my skill set. And they are like I did not know you could do that”.

She claims that it is not necessarily a bad thing that you become known for something; however, “they put you in this little pigeonhole”.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet shared that by being an African American educational lobbyist it is assumed that he is Democrat and can only work with Democrats. This results in being perceived as partisan:

I can see it being a problem if, you know wanting to advance in my career or looking for another position, um, and the perceptions are there, as far as, you know, me being a African American education lobbyist assuming that I’m a democrat, assuming that I am gonna be some sort of a ravel rouser, or -- or, uh, you know, not being able to be effective, quite frankly be effective in influencing republican party...

In fact, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet posits himself as an Independent with the capacity to work with Republicans and Democrats. He lamented, “I can see that being a hindrance there”. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet further explains how perceptions and assumptions about him are the result of his body of work being ignored or not taken seriously. He however believes that once is passes this avoidance factor, he can meet success:

but that’s a question of not knowing my body of work or not know who I am in those situations where you know, I would be uh, you know, be an applicant for a

position like any other person, so I can see that being an initial hindrance there, but you know, if I'm able to get into the door, and be able to explain my work-

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess indicates that partisanship is definitely a perception an African American educational lobbyists does not want to have. “It makes it harder to work across the aisle. It makes it harder to be received”. She delves deeper into this avoidance factor by pointing out the impacts or aligning with one side versus all sides:

But then at the same time, um, it has been my experience that when you are too closely aligned with anything or anyone and it's partisan then you become very effective on one side potentially, but you don't -- you're neutralized on the other side. I don't think that's what it's about. I think that education is should be one of those industries that is non-partisan.

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess offers a solution:

You have to help coddle together solutions that allows people from different spectrums -- ends of the spectrum to feel like they've gained something. And, um, when you can do that you're the most effective.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet shares a similar lament as he finds that his being African American often surprises others in his ability to communicate with non-African Americans, thus having to work to avoid being limited to civil rights and social services. Civil Rights and social services are areas perceived as being primary areas of interest for African American educational lobbyists:

And, some of the Whites. ... He's democrat, how is he able to do it? ... And, uh, you know, they look at you and they -- and sometimes they don't wanna speak to

you... Okay, or I don't see color. Uh -- uh -- some will say they don't see color. And, some of the Whites. The Whites get jealous they know you got the experience, you got the power, and they get jealous too. How -- how is he able to do this? He's democrat, how is he able to do it?

As "Truth" explained his point, he shared how he is working towards lobbying in industry and has offers on the table which are not related to Civil Rights or social services. He is essentially competing for the same interests as his non-African American peers by choice not by pigeonholed circumstances.

The significance of this finding in how African Americans describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position is that they are subject to receive the same marginalization as African American school children. Simply being African American is enough to pigeonhole African Americans into roles inferred to be areas of Black interest such as social services, child care and civil rights. On the contrary, as indicated by the participants in the study, none advocate for Civil Rights.

Of the four, on "Justice" the Dimensional Prophet lobbies for Health Care for which he specifically targets mental health care. "Truth" the Absolute Prophet lobbied for Health Care but only as a part of a larger concern with African American females with an HBCU for whom he was lobbying and the community he serves. Both "Irony" the Hidden Prophetess and "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess are quick to point out that their interest is entirely education both having had experience with the education code and legislative bills in *the System* they both serve.

This study puts a spotlight on practices being used to limit access to the decision making process. Recognizing that the marginalization actually exists is the first step. The next step is putting measures in place to either halt the practices or disrupt them. Measures to be put in place are educating African American lobbyists on the tactics described in this study such as inferring partisanship and using one's skill set as an overarching generalization to one's ability to be effective.

Research Question #2 - How do African American Educational Lobbyists Exercise and Interpret Their Acts of lobbying?

When exercising and interpreting their acts of lobbying, African American educational lobbyists in this study mention multiple factors: working behind the scenes – brokering, testifying before Congress, building a network, seeking like-minded individuals and pooling resources with other lobbyists, access, policy, and the process – the system. From those emerging themes came the major theme, “Having the Ability to Influence or Impact”.

This is significant to this study because in the literature regarding African American interests, African Americans in general are limited in their access and influence. There are multiple reasons including being involved in the process too late or failing to mobilize the interests needed to counteract the oppositional interests. As a result of the underrepresentation or the failure to mobilize interests, finding like-minded individuals and securing champions for bills is essential in exercising their act of lobbying. How they exercise their act is quite often left open to their interpretation.

Having the Ability to Influence or Impact. With credibility and trust intact through self-described effective lobbying characteristics, tactics and strategies that exemplify success, comes the willingness to do what it takes to advance policy. After all, that is the African American educational lobbyist's primary role – to advance education policy. Prior to the advancement of education policy comes the drafting of legislation. The problem educators face is the lack of access to the process and the lack of know how. One finds that as bills are passed that affect educators, they are seldom called to testify or present any data. Furthermore, those who are making the policy decisions are not reaching out to educators for information.

The African American educational lobbyists in this study recognize this as an issue and seeks to remedy it through series of accurately involved steps in an attempt to influence and impact policy. “Irony” the Hidden Prophet fashions herself as a Ninja during the legislative process working “behind the scenes” moving things forward, hidden from site until it is time to strike:

I have an analogy, you can be ninja or you can be samurai. Samurai you come in the front door swinging your sword and you take out as many people as you possibly can. They know you're coming and they have a chance to form their attack. And, you take out as many of them before they get to you. Ninjas when you drop in through the ceiling and you slice and you dice and nobody knows they're bleeding until you're gone. I work better as a ninja. So the only way that I know that I can do that work is kinda quietly, kinda behind the scenes.

She further explains when asked about her experience testifying before congress:

Most of my work is behind the scenes. So, a lotta times what I do is I prepare legislators to ask certain questions-the state policymakers. I'll, prep them. Or, I'll coach those who are testifying – the subject matter experts – I'll get called in to prep them. Or, you know, so that's really how my work goes.

Staying behind the scenes has its advantages and disadvantages. Credit for work done may remain with those who are out front. This notion has no impact on “Irony” the Hidden Prophet, preferring that others receive credit. The advantages to remaining behind the scenes to influence policy are evident in what is called “brokering”. Brokering is between two or more parties, one needing access to another through an intermediary, such as the African American educational lobbyist. “Joy” the Bantering Prophet shares her thoughts on brokering as she interprets her act of lobbying:

Let's say you have two parties not necessarily from a D & R, but you can have two R's you can have two D's. It doesn't matter. But, they can just have personality conflicts or they just don't agree about how they approach something. So, you recognize that and you're like, look, the end goal is X. You both want to get to X. You wanna do it Y way, he wants to do it Z way. But, if the end goal is X, what can we do to make sure you both get to X? And, recognizing that somebody may have to give up something to get there. That's what a lot of lobbyist – I mean you're doing that all the time.

As with any plan of action, there is a strategy. The brokering takes place behind the scenes; however, sound strategy is employed where there is often a meeting of the minds to develop a plan prior to the brokering activity.

In order to gain access and influence championing bills for education, African American educational lobbyist according to “Joy” the Bantering Prophet, “identify who is interested in the issue” when exercising her act of lobbying. Unfortunately, when it comes to African American interests there is minimal representation. This is because of two easily identifiable situations, there are not many African American legislators and there are not very many African American educational lobbyists – see Chapter II. Therefore identifying champions for bills may prove insurmountable.

Another strategy for influencing and impacting policy is building a circle of contacts – a network, a key ingredient according to three of the four participants when exercising their act of lobbying. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess exclaims that she does not attach herself to groups. We can recall that she does not like systems and being attached to a group in her perception creates the feeling of being a part of a system in her interpretation of lobbying. However, she does share that “it’s appropriate to pool your resources in order to address a common issue”. This usually occurs when there is an opportunity to band together even if we have been in opposition in the past for the greater good, called *purposive lobbying*.

According to “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet, however, developing a circle of contacts even with like minded individuals who share a common interest takes time after being asked “How do you develop a circle of contacts and how can they be both a benefit and a detriment to your success”:

-- it’s a – it’s a slow process. Um, and it’s, you know, about meeting people and then – and then trying – and then again I mentioned before about connecting the

dots. So, you know, if I meet someone, a specific individual, we have a common interest, I would ask him or her are there other associates or colleagues that you know that have the similar interests that I can connect to, that I can avail myself to that um, and – and you just never know who you’re gonna meet, who has a relationship with person X, uh, you know, it’s just weird how life works. Right? So, um, so what I try to do you know, when meeting someone is I make that connection early...

When asked “How would you advise them [young education lobbyists] on establishing a strong circle of contacts, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet stated

I would say, come down to the capitol – here in [Southern State], for example – in the – in the [VOLC] building, the third floor is for the senate. Go by every one of those offices, make sure they got – you got one of their cards, they got one of your cards. The house four, five and six. Go by, walk through, make sure you know everyone of their secretaries. Uh, make sure they know you. Get the email address, send emails to ‘em. Introduce yourself, do a little bio on yourself, send it out to ‘em. That’s how I built my relationships.

Being a staunch believer in the legislative process “Truth” the Absolute Prophet explains the importance of attaining the seven signatures from the [multiple] step process they have in his state. When asked, “What if an education lobbyist does not have a relationship with any of the [key members]”, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet added the following:

I would say come down to the capitol – here in [Southeast State], for example – in the – in the [ABCD] building, the [main] floor is for the senate. Go by every one of those offices, make sure they got – you got one of their cards, they got one of your cards. The house four, five and six. Go by, walk through, make sure you know everyone of their secretaries. Uh, make sure they know you. Get the email address, send emails to ‘em. Introduce yourself, do a little bio on yourself, send it out to ‘em. That’s how I built my relationships.

Returning to how one would gain access to someone who would champion an education bill, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess responded with “Identify who’s responsible in an issue”. She began to share that if you have someone who is interested in your cause but they are not on the committee, it is a lost cause. You need someone on the committee with whom you have built a relationship. Her solution is as follows:

I can work well with X on the committee or even if they – not even that they can work well, you – me, the lobbyist, saying, Let me broker this for you. Let me get this person to carry this bill for you or to bring it up for you and you – and facilitate. That’s why the relationships are so important.

However, your relationship with the person may not bode well with the other person. That is where brokering returns. As indicated earlier by “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet, brokering does not just happen, it must be planned and strategic so that like minded or non-like minded individuals can come to the table willing to put a plan in place for education:

I mean, and sometimes you'd have some issue with two people that you're like, someone – if you looked at, they're like, that is the oddest couple. How in the world did that happen? Well, either there's something about the issue that they actually agree on, this narrow little piece, someone figured it out and was like, make the connection, let's make this happen. Boom! And, then it's done! And, then they go back to fighting

Lastly, the ability to communicate in a timely manner and provide timely communication can stifle the African American educational lobbyist's ability to influence and impact legislation and policy just as it will result in being described as an ineffective lobbyist. There is already limited access due to a multitude of mitigating factors of which will be discussed in Chapter V. Factors that can be discussed in the current chapter are the African American education lobbyist's ability to provide the correct communication type – direct or indirect. In this case the purpose on the direct or indirect communication is to influence as a result of effective education lobbying:

So, if you want to influence what's going on, into what's now a truly closed door room or meeting, you may have to go through a couple of other people to say, hey, you guys wanna make sure you bring this up when y'all talk and meet in appropriations sub group meetings that's only gonna be the members you know, and the staff. Staff is important. Um, having been a staffer I can say staff is important sometimes good or bad, they can – they can – they can do damage to you too. Because sometimes they serve as the, they're – they're the broker to their member. They – they – they are the little gatekeeper uh, sometimes. Um, now

there are some offices, because of my relationships that I developed while I was there – and, I haven't been a staffer in years. I wasn't a staffer for a very long time. But, I did good work, and I maintained strong relationships with people.

The staffers are essential to the African American educational lobbyist's ability to influence or impact the legislative process which was not indicated in the literature for African American interests. What was found in the literature, however, is that staffers often serve as the gatekeepers for lobbyists in general. Gatekeeper is a term used to describe or define the role filled by the assistants to the legislators. They are the buffer between the lobbyist and the policy decision maker. This is a significant finding among the African American educational lobbyists. Their voices share the importance of building solid relationships early and often prior to, throughout and after the process to secure access to gatekeepers.

Therefore, as agreed upon by the four African American educational lobbyists in this study, it is essential to build a relationship with the staffer to gain access to the decision maker. African American educational lobbyists should also refer to "Irony" the Hidden Prophet and "Truth" the Absolute Prophet for their method. They both find ways to go directly to the decision maker, hence the providing rides and hosting golf games. "Irony" the Hidden Prophet joked about a time when she actually drove a legislator to a meeting with another lobbyist. Influence and impact by any "advancement means" necessary to drive educational policy.

Avoidance Factors in Lobbying #2 – Lacking Credibility

According to “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet, “If you’re perceived as not being credible, not being trusting -- word spreads, and in the Community 3 area within the education community, you know, it can -- it can just -- it can kill your livelihood” So, what should African American educational lobbyists avoid in order to be able to exercise their act of lobbying? Rather than focus on the past transgressions of lobbyists we see on television and read about “accepting suitcases of money and shaking hands with money in their palm”, lamented “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet. “Irony” the Hidden Prophet describes what she believes hinders one’s ability to exercise their act of lobbying:

My opinion, you should be committed to your work. Uh, nothing rubs me the wrong more than someone who’s lobbying for education and “they don’t care about what they’re lobbying for”. It’s just a paycheck for them...I don’t respect that. I don’t need to respect it from their perspective, I mean but, I will fight you harder than, uh, you could ever imagine if I understand that you -- you’re not even concerned about -- I mean, I think if you’re not truly interested in improving outcomes for students, you have no place in education lobbying.

The African American educational lobbyists interviewed all made mention of wrong interests that result in credibility and trust issues that can also hamper an educational lobbyist. It is my feeling that due to the limited amount of African American lobbyists, wrong interests can create a negative stigma for African American educational lobbyists. “Irony” the Hidden Prophet further states, “You -- you -- you cannot -- you know, if your

desire is to make money, this is the wrong work for you.” “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet shared a mentoring message he has for young education lobbyists:

I give a lot of presentations to um, uh, college classes, to young professionals, to interns, to college students on how to be an effective lobbyist, how to be effective, uh, advocate. One of the surest signs is you can lose your credibility and your trust is, uh, is to lie or to um, assume or um, you know, provide a uh, a opinion on an issue or a question and you happen to be wrong on that. Um, and so, you know, if that scenario occurs that policymaker or that staff person is not gonna come to you again, because they gonna know that you were wrong in the first place, so why would they go back to you again.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet further informs potential educational lobbyists:

The other thing is that, you know, I uh, you know, I tell folks that you can’t -- you can’t threaten your policymaker to -- to do what you want him or her to do. Uh, you know, whether that is you know, taking away a vote or not giving money, you just can’t do that, you can’t put that policymaker or that staff person in an un- compromising position, uh, because it’s just, I mean they’re just not gonna be willing to engage you anymore in any other issues, so, I mean, that’s another sure fire way to lose your influence and credibility.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess claims the following about providing incorrect information when asked “What would happen if instead giving all the information, you only give bits and pieces of the information to create a picture”:

You do that -- if you do that enough times and you ma- and it results in a legislature, in the course of making a decision, making a bad decision or making him look bad in -- in, uh, within, that'll come back to haunt you. It'll burn you. It will -- it will burn your credibility. Your career might not be done. I mean, there are people -- there are bad people just like there are in any profession. And, who don't deal honestly. Um, and so they may get away with it for a time or two, but at some point in time, you'll get shut out of the process. Because you -- you'll burn the wrong person.

Lastly, three of the four educational lobbyists indicated *partisanship* as a negative characteristic, strategy or tactic for exercising their act of lobbying in addition to being effective. The result is a loss of credibility and trust also mentioned in the literature. All four educational lobbyists admit that bi-partisanship is the way to go in order to prove you are credible. Only one of the four claimed an affiliation to a party. "Truth" the Absolute Prophet indicates that his affiliation with one party has not dampened his credibility because he purposefully gets to know all the lobbyists, even those outside of education to continue to build the relationship. "One can lose credibility once it is perceived that you are positioning with one side over the other". According to "Justice" the Dimensional Prophet,

"...if stakeholder groups or policy makers think that you are aligned, with uh, one side or the other that can just damage who your being able to even [get] into the door".

The significance of this finding is that the literature mentions that African American educational lobbyists in general are assumed to be Democrats and only lobbying on behalf of African American interests. This creates an issue in their ability to influence and impact as they exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying.

Research Question #3 - How do These African American Educational Lobbyists Describe Their Influence or Impact on Education?

Some may infer that African American educational lobbying interests are entirely that of African American interests. This is often the case with any person of color who is in the position to impact or affect change. Societal structures tend to influence this assumption seeming that whenever there is an issue impacting African Americans negatively, there is a Black face present to speak against thus perpetuating a sense of militancy and opposition to American values. Whenever there is a solution, the Black face is not present, and if so, only a silenced background figure. This once again proves the purposive tactic that is essential to advance African American interests.

However, the findings show that three of the four participants in this study are clear that their interests are more than African American educational interests despite an apparent passion each voiced during their responses to educational questions. Only “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess expressed that her entire lobbying interest is Black and Brown children, “minority population children”. From their responses in describing their influence or impact on education came eight sub themes: Community, Education, Learning, Occupation, Influences, Funding, Power, and Access. The continual reemergence of these themes all appeared to be tied to African American achievement

through advocacy, lumping achievement, navigating biases, packaging deals, and mobilizing interests.

Focusing on African American Achievement. Beginning with the launch of Sputnik, the Russian satellite in 1957, the typological landscape of the United States education system has become an ever revolving chasm of claimed necessity. There are distinct precedents that took place after Sputnik: A Nation at Risk, No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and now Common Core. With each new initiative and reform measure African American achievement suffers. The ineffectually labeled ‘achievement gap’ according to some reports is widening while others claim it is stagnant.

Proponents of equity in education argue that there can be no equity so long as schools continue to be funded equally instead equitably. Still, Urban students are not provided the same free and appropriate public education as their non-Urban community peers. As a result, children of color who are represented mostly in Urban centers are considerably segregated to communities and schools that sometimes lack the basic essentials of a neighborhood library, replaced instead by a multitude of liquor stores and check cashing centers. The communities are bleeding and the scab has grown to such a proportion that no air is able to enter while the disease has now flowed into the life line of the schools – the students. No one has the remedy. Maybe we have been looking in the wrong medicine cabinet or at the wrong pharmacy.

Being the only federal African American educational lobbyist in the group of four, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet made mention of the necessity for advocacy among the African American community when describing his influence or impact on education.

He lamented the following when asked “How he felt being an African American impacted whether or not his view was solicited on policy matters, specifically education”:

...the other thing that’s con- that’s uh, concerning to me Aaron that you need to know is that um, and that’s -- you’re well aware of -- that there is not a whole lot of African American lobbyists out there. I mean, I can count them on my hand. And, to consistently, consistently be -- be one of the very few African American lobbyists in a room and even more so, African American male in a room very *disconcerting. And, it -- it doesn’t matter where I’m at -- whether it’s a committee hearing, whether it’s um, a uh, uh, a education group that’s sponsoring a briefing, I can look out in the audience and only can see a small handful of us. Very *disconcerting. And, they’re talking about policies like closing the achievement gap, like -- like providing effective teachers, like, you know, working in the inner city areas, and making sure that effective teachers are in high needs schools that uh, directly affect us and that there is only but White people talking about these things. And, that there are not Black people on these panels that are not testifying, that are not um, you know, getting the coverage in the media on policies that directly affect our communities.

He goes on to discuss the disproportionate amount of African Americans running for office, stating again “We are just not there”. The significance in this admission, rather than finding, is that the literature refers to the underrepresentation of African American interests. When Milbrath (1963) wrote his seminal work, *The Washington Lobbyists*, he

admitted that a limitation to his study was that there was person of color interviewed nor than any person of color participate. His study included interviews and a survey. There were none available to add to the study. Hence, the significance of these findings in sharing how the African American lobbyists describe their influence or ability to impact education.

The African American educational lobbyist's ability to influence and impact education hinges on the ability to impact the entire process, *the System*. One recognizes that the sole purpose of the African American educational lobbyist should not be to advocate for the needs of African American students alone. However, if everyone is advocating for everyone; how can we achieve equity? "Irony" the Hidden Prophet claims the following:

Uh, most lobbyists I know, who are in education, do not lobby for African American students. Just money. And, the resistance is perceived to be stronger when lobbying for African American, Black serving institutions than for anybody -- for somebody else.

"Truth" the Absolute Prophet shares this testimony:

There's some African Americans, like okay, yeah, I don't want to be known for Black lobbyist, I'm a lobbyist. Okay, or I don't see color. Uh -- uh -- some will say they don't see color.

To claim not to see color is a denial of the existence of the uniqueness that the person of color has. Again, I pose the question, if everyone is advocating for everyone; how can we achieve equity? I pose the question again because advocacy should be based on

needs. It has been revealed in this study and in the literature that one cannot approach a White decision maker with the need to ask for funds or allocations specifically for African America children, see Powell Amendment in Chapter II. According to “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet,

...in order to be effective, in order to get an audience, in order to get time before a legislator, you really got -- you really have to package your issue as an issue that will affect all kids.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet attempts to explain,

It’s kinda difficult to explain, I -- I mean, a lot of it has to do with, I mean, racism is still there, you know, bias is -- racial bias is still there, I not -- you know, I’m not ignorant and I’m not uh, I know, you know, that it’s still out there, but, it -- policymakers -- most of the policy makers are White. Most of the policymakers that are White are in leadership positions, whether it’s chamber leadership or commun- or committee leadership. You can’t go to them with a issue that just affects the African American community, because it’s -- they’re just going to not consider it a priority, not gonna have it -- they’re not gonna make it a priority. If you can package the issue that affects the African American community as an issue that affects all kids or at least kids that are disadvantaged, it will increase the chances that the policymaker will view this as a priority.

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess adds that the superintendent, whom she deems is essentially the lobbyist for the school district has to package his proposal using the

purposive lobbying strategy to the legislature in order to secure funding to impact achievement:

A superintendent cannot go to a legislator and say I need more money for my Black student programs. Because we're hemorrhaging Black male students. And, I need more money targeted for them so that my board can approve programs for us and our schools to do specialized training for our African Americans. In the modern climate, political climate, that's a non starter.

Her solution:

...you can hire me to go have that conversation. And, then I can lump you in with several other schools. And -- and get a pot of money.

Using Reverse Interest Convergence to Mobilize Interests for Education. Interest Convergence is one of the three tenets of Critical Race Theory, the theoretical framework for this study. Interest Convergence is when the main stream group accepts a proposition supporting the efforts of the marginalized group which provides an economic benefit to the main stream group. An example of interest convergence is when the state of Arizona recognized Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday as a national holiday after threats that the Super Bowl would be removed by the NFL.

In order to mobilize interests which focus on African American achievement, the opposite emerged, "*reverse interest convergence*". If interest convergence is when the mainstream group accepts the marginalized group proposition only to benefit the mainstream group, then reverse interest convergence is when the marginalized group accepts the mainstream group proposition to the greater benefit of the marginalized group

versus doing so to assimilate or accommodate. Under reverse interest convergence is three tenets: 1) Purposely advocating only for African American and Latino school children; 2) Purposely negotiating pre-designed outcomes for the marginalized group; and 3) Knowingly accepting assumptions in order to gain an advantage.

“Irony” the Hidden Prophet admits her primary purpose of advocacy is for the benefit of African American educational interests, purposely advocating only for African American or Latino school children:

I carved out a little niche...when you see me coming a Black or Brown child has been hurt... I'll say it like this, if you're in the camp of doing it on behalf of students, you think that you're really serving -- especially, minority students, uh, there are -- there are lobbyists out there who happen to be Black. I'm very proud of being a Black lobbyist. Not the same thing in my book. Uh, I am community focused and student driven. And so for that reason, when you see me coming you know I'm crying foul if there's something that a policy being advocated or a rule being debated, uh, that I see having an adverse impact, intentionally or not intentionally on students of color.

“Justice” the Absolute Prophet shares that strategically packaging deals as a deal to impact all student achievement is an effective way of ensuring African American achievement is impacted positively, purposefully negotiating pre-designed outcomes:

In order to be effective to get an audience, you really have to package your issue as an issue that will affect all kids.... If you can package the issue that affects the African American community as an issue that affects all kids or at least kids that

are disadvantaged, it will increase the chances that the policymaker will view this as a priority.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess uses perceptions about her to her advantage. As earlier noted, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess is a “Triple Asset”. She is female, African American and a lawyer. However, similarly to “Justice” and “Truth”, the assumption is that she will only lobby for certain interests. By knowingly accepting assumptions to gain an advantage, “Joy” is able to use this tenet of “reverse interest convergence” to the benefit of African American achievement:

“...if you want me for my expertise, I can talk to anybody. And, that’s not related to, you know, what color they are, what race they are. Um, now sometimes that may be a benefit, and that’s gonna be a little bit of extra because I may have some insight that you don’t know”... you pick up the phone and the staff doesn’t even ask questions, they just put the member on the phone. That is not -- you know, and I’m not talkin’ bout with another, you know, African American legislator or something like that, I’m just talking about in general.

“Reverse interest convergence” in another context may be viewed as hegemonic, self fulfilling prophecy which allows for failure to occur, a fear of freedom pointed out by Freire (1993). However, when the tactics are purposeful, they cease to be hegemonic and become advantages.

Avoidance Factors in Lobbying #3 - Deficit Model Thinking as a Hegemonic Practice

Deficit Model Thinking is the belief that one is incapable of being successful in certain environments resulting in practices that relegate marginalized groups to a status quo marginalized position. This provides a false sense of safety, security and standing that is non-existent for the marginalized group to the benefit of the mainstream group. Hegemonic Practices are those that the marginalized perpetuate to the benefit of the main stream group, ensuring their marginalized status. The findings from this study indicate that deficit model thinking is perpetuated by both the mainstream group and by the marginalized group themselves, African American educational lobbyists.

As a result, their deficit model thinking results in hegemonic practices. In order to avoid these factors, African American educational lobbyists must avoid separating from other Black lobbyists, avoid discounting one's Black identity as a lobbyist, avoid misrepresenting their true interests, and avoid exclusively advocating for non-Black interests as a lobbyist.

When asked about the least exciting aspects of being an educational lobbyist, "Truth" the Absolute Prophet shared how to avoid separating from other Black lobbyists:

"you need to get to know all the Black females in the legislative body, you need to get all the Black males and you need to ...all the African Americans know who I am, all the African American females know who I am"

"Truth" the Absolute Prophet proclaimed his ability to know all White and Black lobbyists in System 2, ensuring that he is capable of building an enormous network:

...you need to go out and get the White female vote and you need to try to get all the White males you can get. You know, that's how you need to target. You need to target -- all the White females know who I am and most of the White males know who I am...

Having this approach allows "Truth" the ability to remain neutral while navigating the System in order to mobilize interests for African American academic achievement.

When asked about how perceptions hinder or limit her ability to influence or impact educational policy, "Joy" the Bantering Prophetess claimed the importance of "getting out of one's own head" in order to advance policy. Accepting that perceptions and assumptions exist regardless of one's self identity is a solution for discounting one's Black identity as a lobbyist:

you gotta get outside of your head -- you gotta get out your head, because people are gonna still be- believe it or not, there are still labels and titles and assumptions about people of color and what they can or cannot do...in the lobbying world it's mainly that, oh, they're good for communicating with other people of color".

In essence, discounting one's Black identity does nothing to improve one's credibility, and purposely misrepresenting their true interests results in a distrust among lobbyists as well. When asked about values and interests influence the way she conducts herself "Irony" the Hidden Prophetess discussed the following:

Do things for the right reason. Uh, constantly checking myself, making sure that it's personal, without being personal... you should be committed to your work.

"Irony" the Hidden Prophetess further shares behaviors that are detrimental:

... “they don’t care about what they’re lobbying for”. It’s just a paycheck for them. I don’t respect that. I don’t need to respect it from their perspective, I mean but, I will fight you harder than, uh, you could ever imagine if I understand that you -- you’re not even concerned about -- I mean, I think if you’re not truly interested in improving outcomes for students, you have no place in education lobbying.

While discussing how African American educational lobbyists exclusively advocate for non-Black interests harms African American academic achievement interests, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess exclaims, “

“I work to change the culture surrounding African American achievement. And, that’s inside of the African American community and external too... And, so I go in and I fight for those things that I think are important or critical to leveling the playing field for students who are marginalized or otherwise underrepresented in the pipeline”.

The educational pipeline, another form of *the System*, is to what “Irony” the Bantering Prophetess refers. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet shares a similar solution by purposely advocating for African American community interests which he mobilizes to impact African American achievement.

Summary

This study examined and interpreted the life experiences and lobbying practices of four African American educational lobbyists in the United States. The following four questions guided this study:

- 1) How do African American educational lobbyists describe their personal characteristic related to success in their positioning?
- 2) How do African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying?
- 3) How do the African American education lobbyists describe their influence or impact on education?

The four African American educational lobbyists for this study all have the general belief that they are making an influential impact in education. They do see barriers to impacting the African American achievement; however, through their passion for affecting change, they recognize the importance of solidifying a network of like minded decision makers who are willing to make the changes.

Education is the key to impacting any change. Providing the education to decision makers and the business community is an essential trait each lobbyist possesses in addition to the ability to draft legislation through writing and developing an intricate circle of contacts. Race is an issue for all four participants although they readily share it has had no impact. However, they are quick to recognize that racism is still present, be it covertly or overtly. They are assured it has had an impact in some form during the fulfillment of their role as educational lobbyists. This assurance and partly assumed due to the daily thought that some of their counterparts – not a part of this study – are simply in “the game” for the wrong reasons. That is why they are struggling Prophets and Prophetesses. They see what others choose not to see or are unable to see. Through the

experiences shared in this study they are voicing what others chose not to voice or are incapable of voicing.

Their backgrounds differ as to how they became a professional educational lobbyist; however, they each represent one of the top four industries from which lobbyists come: “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess - Law, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet - Government Relation, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess - Public Relations and “Truth” the Absolute Prophet - Communications. It is not that one is required to come from one these fields to be an effective lobbyist. The skills that are provided as a result of training in these fields make the role of the education lobbyist easier to transfer into. The ability to speak and write, the ability to network, and the ability draft legislation and have a working expertise of the legislative process are the key essentials to becoming an African American education lobbyist. Having a passion for change, believing in what you are doing, and carving out a niche for African American achievement will keep you there.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This was a qualitative study using Narrative Analysis, the Constant Comparison Method (CCM) and Interpretive Analysis. The purpose of this study was to hear the voices, life experiences and lobbying practices of four African American education lobbyists and their role in lobbying for education. I used narrative analysis and constant comparative analysis to determine the constructed meanings of their personal and professional acts of lobbying as it related to their role in education. The significance of this study is its ability to provide insights about African American educational lobbyists, how they view their influence and impact for mobilizing interests for education, providing equity and access to education, and how they view the importance of educational interests.

This study also provides knowledge of lobbying experiences at the federal and state levels. One will identify effective lobbying practices, characteristics effective lobbyists possess and how they influence educational policy and fiscal allocation. Finally, this study of African American educational lobbyist experiences and perspectives provide a National snapshot of how legislators view the importance of education for marginalized groups.

At the outset of this study, it was thought that African American educational lobbyists lacked the access or ability to impact education as a result of being Pigeonholed, a Lack

of Credibility and Deficit Model Thinking as Hegemonic Practice. The questions this study addressed were as follows:

- 1) How do African American education lobbyists describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position?
- 2) How do African American education lobbyists exercise and interpret their actions of lobbying?
- 3) How do these African American education lobbyists describe their influence or impact on education?

The results of the study reveal that African American educational lobbyists perceive they are able to impact and influence education. A new discovery was made regarding how African American educational lobbyists respond during interviews using an “Urban Dialect”. However, there are some beliefs about Symbolic Convergence were negated. The voices of the African American educational lobbyists have now been heard. Recommendations and Implications for future study follow.

Discussion

An examination of literature on African American special interests revealed some similarities to the marginalization of African American students in schools – hegemonic practices and deficit model thinking. The studies I found on African American influence and lobbying indicated that the number of African American lobbyists were minimum and their ability to make an impact or influence was virtually nil because of a lack of access.

This lack of access is largely due to the lack of political mobility of the African American constituency. At the innovative and formative stages of policy process, relatively few [B]lack leaders have sufficient personal prestige or professional status to guarantee their inclusion, formally or informally (Wolman and Thomas, 1970, p. 893). Further research literature revealed that African American lobbyists in general also lacked credibility, which intern would hinder their ability to engage in the process in a timely manner.

Research Question #1 - How do African American Educational Lobbyists Describe Their Personal Characteristics Related to Success in Their Position?

Lobbyist characteristics and traits are essential for being an effective lobbyist. The significance of the findings in this study is that they confirm what the literature had defined and described as characteristics of effective lobbyists. “These traits include listening, observation, relationship-building, gender/sexuality, courtesy, honesty, integrity, and credibility.” (McGrath, 2006, p. 67)

Being Effective and Being Effective Offsite. How African American educational lobbyists describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position is having keen observation skills in addition to the ability to build relationships. They develop those relations through developing a circle of contacts (Valencia, 2010), the ability to communicate both directly and in-directly, and the ability to draft legislation through writing or having the clients write for themselves (Koger and Victory, 2009; Hall and Deardorff, 2006; Ferrin, 2003; McGrath, 1970; and Milbrath, 1970). They accomplish the writing through grassroots or grass tops advocacy.

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess believes that lobbying is personality driven. I found this to be quite true in that it is important for the African American educational lobbyists to find like-minded people with whom to connect. Sometimes this means putting like-minded people together in order to broker an exchange.

Through the specific characteristics of “ideal lobbyists”, one who wants to gain access must recognize that individual lobbyists’ personal skills will contribute to their effectiveness (McGrath, p. 69). They includes the ability to network and the ability to choose a strategy which best suits the networking opportunity, including driving a legislator to meet up with another lobbyist or treating staffers to dinner when out of session. The legislative process is a long process and there are special interests vying to be the “one” special interest. Critical to success as an educational lobbyist is recognition of characteristics and traits that successful lobbyists have in common.

New Finding: The Benefits of a Reaper. Each participant benefited from someone who came before them. They had a *Reaper*. A reaper is someone who has cleared the path for others to glean (pick up the edible and tangible resources needed for survival). The reaper provides favor to the gleaners, sometimes leaving more behind for those that follow. In the case of Ruth, *The Book of Ruth*, she was a gleaner who was able to pick up grains after the reapers have come through and cut away the bad grass and weeds (Bible Gateway, 2015). Ruth found favor with Boaz who would leave extra grains behind intentionally. For the 3 of the 4 participants in the study, they found favor. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess found favor with her college professor and a Senator; “Truth” the Absolute Prophet found favor with a city manager who recommended that he go into

lobbying; and “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet found favor from his college professors, a town mayor, and a Senator serving on an educational policy committee. These “Boaz” cleared the path providing African American educational lobbyists access to their networks and circle of contacts (Valencia, 2012). Thusly, the participants who found favor knew who to get behind and discovered who the key players are in the system. Knowing who to get behind and knowing who the key players are in the system are both factors young African American lobbyists need in order to be effective both onsite and offsite.

The Benefits of a Reaper is a new finding that was not found in the literature. I find this significant in that each participant in the study laments the issue with young African American lobbyists coming in and not knowing the process. The process is to be experienced not learned. Only a veteran of the process can teach the process. Young African American educational lobbyists must get behind the reapers and learn from those who have been through the process. The reapers have reaped a strong circle of contacts who are critical in their ability to impact and influence.

Studies, which support this study, detail how to gain access through communication process (McGrath, 2007; Hall and Deardorff, 2006; and Milbrath, 1960), through campaign contributions (Milbrath, 1958 and Hall and Wayman, 1990), and through the lobbying of like-minded individuals, encompassing all effective traits and strategies of Washington lobbyists, including Brussels and London (McGrath, 2006). Therein lies the significance of the findings from the study. Those interviewed have mastered each of

these traits and characteristics; however, they caution against the campaign contributions due to bi-partisanship, of which all four recommend.

Avoidance Factors in Lobbying #1 - Pigeonholing.

In the research literature, African American lobbyists revealed tactics being used to relegate and keep them in a marginalized position through pigeonholing:

“The fact is that people do not accept the changing roles and fortunes of [B]lack people because they want to pigeonhole us. There’s a need on part of [W]hite people to have one [B]lack spokesman. They do not accept for us the same diversity they accept for themselves. It’s a divisive tactic”. (Jaffe, 1992, p. 2)

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet shared that by being an African American educational lobbyist it is assumed that he is Democrat and can only work with Democrats. In fact, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet posits himself as an Independent with the capacity to work with Republicans and Democrats. He lamented, “I can see that being a hindrance there”. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess expressed a concern about getting too good at her position, “I tell people...you are underutilizing my skill set. And they are like I did not know you could do that”. She claims that it is not necessarily a bad thing that you become known for something; however, “they put you in this little pigeonhole”.

The significance of this finding in how African Americans describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position is that they are subject to receive the same marginalization as African American school children. Simply being African American is enough to pigeonhole African Americans into roles inferred to be areas of

Black interest such as social services, child care and Civil Rights. On the contrary, as indicated by the participants in the study, none advocate for Civil Rights.

Of the four, on “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet lobbies for Health Care for which he specifically targets mental health care. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet lobbied for Health Care but only as a part of a larger concern with African American females with an HBCU for whom he was lobbying and located in the community he serves. Both “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess and “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess are quick to point out that their interest is entirely education both having had experience with the education code and legislative bills in the system they both serve.

This study puts a spotlight on practices being used to limit access to the decision making process. Recognizing that the marginalization actually exists is the first step. The next step is putting measures in place to either halt the practices or disrupt them. Measures to put in place are educating African American educational lobbyists on the tactics described in this study such as inferring partisanship and using ones skill set as an overarching generalization to one’s ability to be effective.

Research Question #2 - How do African American Educational Lobbyists Exercise and Interpret Their Acts of Lobbying?

All participants in the study acknowledge the importance of “Having the Ability to Influence or Impact” through a strong network as found in the research literature. Richard Hall (2006) discusses how lobbyists tend to lobby the same people over time and often lobby “like minded” people or people and organizations that have access to other like-minded people. This practice is called “brokering” where an individual will seek to

connect two people together who share the same interest but not necessarily share the same role in the legislative process.

Having the Ability to Influence or Impact. During the study, the African American educational lobbyists were asked about attaining champions for bills, gaining access, and about building a circle of contacts. All acknowledged the importance of a strong network and the ability to identify the champions of the bills. The way an African American lobbyist would do this is by learning the personality traits and interests of the people they want to influence. This would include discovering that a decision maker or another lobbyist is an avid painter. Attending galleries or showing an interest outside of the process for that person's interests will gain access.

A comparison and contrast of the three forms of lobbying reveals a system of strategic planning and alliances in order to ensure interests are being met. The three forms of lobbying are solidary, purposive and materialistic. As a part of interpreting their acts of lobbying, African American educational lobbyists would consider providing some sort of gain in order to gain an interest. Although not popular to discuss, gifts are a part of the lobbying process be it dinners as previously mentioned, providing rides to meet with other clients or sending complimentary treats. However, due to regulation on lobbyist, incentives cannot surpass a certain amount of dollars, such as \$25.00. It is through these approaches that the African American educational lobbyists have been successful. Training and experience in this area would be essential.

New Finding: Dual Credibility Standard. Although not unique in concept towards the African American educational lobbyist, the uniqueness to having to exercise and

interpret acts of lobbying while lacking credibility is significant. I find this significant in that the African American educational lobbyist has a *dual credibility standard* they must navigate throughout the system. This is a new finding for this study that was not mentioned in the literature. Not only do they have to be credible by displaying the common traits and characteristics of White lobbyists, being “conceptually White”, they must also be sure not to associate too commonly with issues that are exclusively African American interest driven as shared throughout the study. This dual credibility standard is a political dual consciousness.

Only by packaging a deal that is all inclusive instead of for African American interests alone can the African American educational lobbyist garner support, a purposive tactic that benefits the status quo versus providing an equitable solution for the marginalized. Failing to meet both of the *dual credibility standards* results in a lack of credibility. The lack of credibility hinders the African American educational lobbyist’s ability to be a voice because they themselves continually lose theirs.

Avoidance Factors in Lobbying #2 - Lacking Credibility

Credibility requires that the lobbyist establish a reputation for being knowledgeable about relevant policy issues, for being reliable and honest in the provision of both information and opinion to policy makers, and for being consistent over time (McGrath, 2006). It is the perception of credibility that gains access to the legislative floor and to the proverbial decision making table. African American educational lobbyists already have limited access thus limiting their credibility. Therefore, the acts described by the participants in this study should serve as a platform to all aspiring and current African

American educational lobbyists. As noted by “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet, “Being perceived as partisan can be a hindrance”. Similarly to being pigeonholed by inferred partisanship, activity exercising the act of bi-partisanship will definitely corrupt credibility. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet shares his feeling on how perception influences access:

I think the perception is -- I always say, I try to come clean cut. I try to dress in a nice suit, I try to wear nice shoes. Wear a nice clean shirt. I try to look them in the eyes and be up front. I try to -- those perception makes a difference. You know, I go, I play golf -- I learned how to play golf. I try to play a little poker with them if they got a poker game going on. I think the perception is there. My perception is there.

This finding is significant and in that there are not many African American educational lobbyists. Further, the lack of mobilized interests by the African American community in general has halted the ability to be elected to office or be invited during the legislative process. Between 1887 and 1901, just five [B]lacks served in Congress (USHR, 2013). Further, not providing timely information or providing information that is incorrect will harm one’s credibility. Providing information that results in a bad decision will ultimately result in that decision maker not utilizing the African American educational lobbyist’s service. According to “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet,

One of the surest signs is you can lose your credibility and your trust is, uh, is to lie or to um, assume or um, you know, provide a uh, a opinion on a issue or a question and you happen to be wrong on that”

Just as in any industry, once word gets out, the credibility is lost and the career of the African American educational lobbyist is thus in jeopardy.

Research Question #3 - How do These African American Educational Lobbyists Describe Their Impact and Influence on Education?

Focusing on African American Education Achievement. When focusing on African American Achievement, the ability to impact and influence is limited to mitigating factors similar to those that halt African American education achievement found in the literature despite describing their ability to influence, positively (Haynie, 2002; Milner, 2002; Jaffe, 1992; Wolman and Thomas, 1970). The African American educational lobbyists in the study all share the ability to lobby for African American interests successfully with the support of their firms. They have the ability to lobby successfully because they have built upon the credibility they all share.

Their credibility took time to develop however. Each participant has over 15 years of lobbying experience. A new lobbyist would not have the same success. Because of the experience they had, the participants in the study are able to garner the access and the ability to influence and impact. Starting out that was not the case.

Avoidance Factors in Lobbying #3 - Deficit Model Thinking as a Hegemonic Practice.

Deficit Thinking is the belief that people cannot and will not succeed based upon pathological, familial, economic, or race factors (Valencia, 2012). Interestingly, the African American educational lobbyists in this study mostly felt that being African American had minimum impact when describing their ability to influence or impact

education. I find this interesting because each identified situations that countered their descriptions. In multiple cases, they described practices of other Black lobbyists that were detrimental to the overall impact of African Americans lobbyists.

They described instances where Black lobbyists separated themselves from other Black lobbyists by not wanting to be in the same room; they described instances where Black lobbyists will not identify with being a Black lobbyist; they describe instances where Black lobbyists misrepresent their true interests; and they described instances where Black lobbyists refused to advocate or lobby for Black interests, choosing to purposely only advocate or lobby for non-Black interests.

Hegemonic behavior may be difficult to see...the [African American lobbyists] are led to believe that their perception is important when, in actuality, it is not valued (Carter and Larke, 2003). Hegemony as a practice is when the oppressed gives permission to the oppressor to oppress by actively participating in the oppressing of oneself. It is the point that Woodson (1933) makes in *The Mis-Education of the Negro*, "Once you control a man's mind, you know longer have to send him to the back door. If there isn't one, he will build one himself". This practice occurs when the person oppressed becomes comfortable being oppressed, assuming they will gain some form of credible outcome or appreciation for fitting the definition as described by the oppressor.

In the educational setting African American students will purposely not raise their hands to questions knowing that the teacher will not call on them to answer the more difficult questions. Furthermore, they will not volunteer to lead in a classroom or take on any initiatives where the "ruling" group is the majority and is represented by the teacher.

However, these practices are often covert and unbeknown to both the oppressor and the oppressed. In lobbying, the practices are less covert. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet reveals one of the least appealing aspects of being an educational lobbyist:

“There are Black lobbyists who readily do not identify with being a Black lobbyist. They say they are a lobbyist who happens to be Black”.

These Black lobbyists further reveal that they choose not to see color but sees everyone as the same, which is a key focus of Hegemony and practices that lead to Deficit Thinking.

Failure to see color fails to acknowledge the cultural capital each ethnicity brings and thus relegates the person of color to an invisible status. Without any African American voice, the African American educational interests are therefore muted and silenced. In this case, the African American lobbyist has overtly displayed a hegemonic practice by seeking to not represent Black interests despite being Black. I am not insinuating that all African American educational lobbyists should lobby for African American interests. I am however saying that they should not purposefully ignore those interests because they are African American. A White lobbyist would not ignore White interests because they are White.

Another example of *hegemony* as a practice is the finding that African American lobbyists do not like being in the same room together. Across all four participants’ experiences, they mentioned being unwelcomed by other African American lobbyists during proceedings. In some cases other African American lobbyists became upset that the four participants in this study have chosen to address African American interests,

specifically. To make the point about packaging deals and by not wanting to be the only one means that access is further delineated. To choose purposefully not to advocate for African American interests results in less access to influence and impact. Truthfully, these lobbyists do not know of what they do, especially when they misrepresent their interests for the “all mighty dollar”, according to “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess.

The significance of this finding again shows how the African American educational lobbyists limited access and ability to influence and impact is further exasperated by their own self-fulfilling prophecy, fearing the presence of one another resulting in an attitude of inferiority and ceasing to be unique. There are not enough at the table to fight to be the only one. That further silences the African American educational lobbyist’s voice.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Symbolic Convergence Theory

Throughout the study, the issue of race continued to come up which is why Critical Race Theory was a choice for the Theoretical Framework. CRT has a number of premises: “Racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society” (Bell, 1992, p. ix); the use of storytelling to challenge racial (and other) oppression; and interest convergence. From an educational perspective of Critical Race Theory, Gloria Ladson-Billings provided a conceptual framework where she highlighted “conceptual whiteness” and the “education debt”. “Conceptual Whiteness” emerged in the study findings as a precursor to the *dual credibility standard*, where they must be weary of appearing partisan and advocating for African American interests exclusively. Each participant expressed examples of both success and struggles utilizing both

partisanship and advocating for African American interests as an advantage when navigating the system.

All four participants expressed that race did play a part in some observations made during the time in their roles, some covert and others overt. In the issue of race, it was shared that despite their successes, they do not gain the same recognition as their White peers. The participants express this concern despite indicating that their success record is as impressive. “Truth” the Absolute Prophet spoke about legislation that is coming out in his state where there is only one African American is a part of the process but not as a lobbyist. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess shares that “You have forces that are working to maintain the current power structure because it benefits them”. “It is an issue that impacts the African American community”, according to “Truth” the Absolute Prophet, and “there are three White lobbyists being paid a substantial amount of money to lobby for a community of which they have no vested interest.”

One finds in the study that African American educational lobbyists fall victim to interest convergence which is when a mainstream group accepts a marginalized groups position only as a benefit to the marginalized group such as Arizona acknowledging Martin Luther King’s birthday as a holiday in order to gain the Super Bowl. “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess admits to gaining access sometimes because of a level of attractiveness and other times because “she is a person of color and they need to fill a quota”. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess shares a similar tale about people commenting that they need her brain and that she fits all three needs. She is a lawyer, a woman, and an African American – the Triple Asset.

New Finding: Reverse Interest Convergence. However, what was newly discovered in the study was the exact opposite of interest convergence, “*reverse interest convergence*”. Under three tenets, the marginalized group accepts the mainstream group proposition to the greater benefit of the marginalized group versus doing so to assimilate or accommodate:

Tenet 1 - Purposely advocating only for African American and Latino children

Tenet 2 – Purposely negotiating pre-designed outcomes

Tenet 3 - Knowingly accepting assumptions in order to gain advantage.

Interest convergence is when a mainstream group accepts the marginalized group proposition only to the economic benefit of the marginalized group. Reverse interest convergence is the opposite; those marginalized accept the mainstream proposition to the greater economic and resource benefit of the marginalized group. The African American educational lobbyists in this study accomplished this through purposeful strategy versus doing so to assimilate or accommodate.

Although viewed as a purposive tactic that I deemed detrimental earlier in the study, packaging an issue holistically in order to benefit African American children mostly would be an example of *reverse interest convergence*. One may consider the above mentioned tenets as ways to maintain status quo or to the benefit of the African American educational lobbyists themselves; however, all four mention those tactics and strategies as ways they have learned to navigate the system, ways they utilize the system they learned when performing their acts of lobbying, and ways they recognize how the system becomes an impact factor in influencing policy.

Both “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet and “Irony” the Hidden Prophet admitted to using the packaging approach to benefit African American achievement interests. Recognizing that this tactic was seen as purposive lobbying and potentially *hegemonic* in nature, when the African American educational lobbyist’s interests converge with others in order to benefit that of African American educational interests, we have reverse interest convergence. To ensure that is the case, where the convergence ultimately benefits African American educational interests in the form of equitable funding and additional resources such as technology or books for new libraries, care must be taken to ensure that the end is justifying the means. As in the case of “Irony” the Hidden Prophet who decided to use the pigeonholing or perception that she only can work with African American children as her niche. She has made it hers. She accepted that reality and decided that is exactly what she will do.

Seeing both these statements as “*reverse interest convergence*” would have one to consider the mind set and the purpose of the interest going in to the negotiations and consider the pre-expected outcomes they are hoping to achieve. In other words knowing this term should allow for a planned “reverse” convergence with the goal of benefitting the primary group versus doing so to accommodate other’s disinterest.

Negated Findings

Symbolic Convergence Theory did not have any significance in the study and is therefore negated. I feel this is the case because of the purposeful sample size of four and the overall size of the population, 200 as of 2013. African American educational

lobbyists as a group are even smaller. For Symbolic Convergence to occur there has to be a group consciousness identified. There was not one identified during this study.

Symbolic Convergence Theory explains the appearance of a group consciousness...not in terms of individual daydreams...but rather in terms of socially shared narrations or fantasies (Bormann, 1985). In the case of this study, this was not possible also because only two of the participants worked in the same state. Although there could be developed a shared narrative about *The System*, upon reviewing the audio recording and reading the transcripts there was none found. There would need to be an opposing view point and narrative about the African American educational lobbyists that they themselves develop a common narrative to oppose.

Recommendations

According to Birnbaum (2006) very few African Americans get the experience they need to become professional lobbyists. The number of African American lobbyists in general are low which makes the number of African American educational lobbyists even lower. There is a needs for the specific development of African American lobbyists.

Three recommendations to fulfill this need are as follows:

- 1) Mentoring for African American Lobbyists
- 2) Providing Legislative Process and Advocacy Courses
- 3) Developing Internship Opportunities in Lobbying Fields of Choice

However, African American lobbyists need to fill this need as mentors, providing internships and assisting with the course development in the legislative process and advocacy. Freire (1993) states, “The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle

for their redemption” (p. 36). The oppressed in this study are the African American educational lobbyists as indicated by lobbying factors they must avoid in order to be effective, gain credibility, and focus on African American educational achievement.

If the oppressor is doing the mentoring, providing the internships and developing the courses, the oppressed remain oppressed because they will be developed according to the perception of the oppressor. Only when one knows that they are incomplete can they become complete (Freire, 1993). Thusly, this study provides a snapshot of the incompleteness of the African American educational lobbyist. It is through the snapshot of incompleteness that the recommendations for African American educational lobbyist’s development can be enacted.

The Book of Acts for the New Lobby

Here begins the Book of Lobbying Acts – 2015 A.D. As we journeyed though the life experiences and lobbying practices of four African American educational lobbyists in the United States, we discovered that a prophecy was being discovered, being acted upon and is now recorded. Through the Gift of Prophecy, the Prophets and the Prophetess each voice a plan for the establishment of a *new Lobby*. This *new Lobby* however is unlike any other in the United States, for it does not come to bring peace or goodwill but rather to turn mentee against mentor, employee against firm, and staffer against decision maker. Peace can only be attained through the establishment of the new lobby. The newly established Lobby shall be erected in three phases: Mentoring, Establishment of a Course, and Developing Internship Opportunities. These phases will from here forth be known as Discipleship, Missionary Work, and Fellowship.

The *new Lobby* brings good news that all who enter in this prophecy shall inherit the *new System*, as we hold to the Acts for the development of African American educational lobbyists who will lobby for education. The Acts for the development of an African American educational lobbyist is bound to be controversial by mere subject alone. The idea and the concept will elicit demands for explanation followed by epithets of disappointment and allusions to radicalism and racial pragmatism by the System Pharisees.

I should expect to receive sneers and disillusionment in addition to questions of my wanting to invoke an “un-American” approach to an “all-American” practice that has been around since the late 18th century. The proprietary claim that is found in the statement that my mind has conjured is indicative of a pre-positioned discourse promulgated by a cultural system designed to ensure that all access and influence is provided and promised to a mainstream group and culture, which relegates others without the resources to mobilize influences that would permit equitable decision making abilities. Too much emphasis on the law of *the System* rather than the practice.

The issue of *equity* vs. *adequacy* is what will drive my response to any and all critics of the *new Lobby*. To challenge its design, development, and implementation is to contradict the pluralistic free market ideology that permeates the persistent meritocratic discourse of those who argue that their school’s right to have does not mean all should equally have, a hypocritical activity. Kozol (1991) quotes John Coons,

“the natural fear of the conservative is that the leveler are at work here sapping the foundations of free enterprise...there is no graver threat to the capitalist

system than the present cyclical replacement of the fittest of one generation by their artificially advantaged offspring...to defend the present public school finance system on a platform of economic or political freedom is no less absurd than to describe it a egalitarian...the existing system [is] a scandal (p. 206).

As a result of this understanding of what it means to have and have not and how one can have and have not, I have researched, studied, and am charged through the voices of the Prophets and Prophetesses to describe a *new Lobby* which provides accessibility and influence to urban education: communities, schools and organizations.

The *new Lobby* will support the acceptance that the United States is a multicultural nation with a multicultural society living under a socially construed monocultural fantasy. The monoculturalism which sneers at equity of access will sneer at the sheer thought that a program has been designed, utilizing empirical research studies by known scholars in the field of lobbying research: Milbrath (1958,1960); McGrath (2009, 2006); Koger and Victor (2009); Esterling (1997, 2007); Hall and Deardorff (2006); Berry (1978); and Ferrin (2004, 2003). All Gentiles are now accepted in the body of the *new Lobby – the new System*.

Through the prophetic voices in this study, the establishment of the *new Lobby* for the development of African American educational lobbyists will seek to educate and mentor prospective educational lobbyists through *discipleship* in the operational attributes, characteristics, and strategies one uses to become an effective lobbyist. Through this *new Lobby* African American educational lobbyists will be able to gain access to areas of legislative process thought *missionary works* where African Americans are usually

excluded for lacking knowledge of the legislative process, lacking coalitions and allies, lacking resources, and lacking mobility to influence.

Credibility will no longer be a deterrent to the successful engagement of the African American educational lobbyist in the legislative process, *the System*. Upon exiting the program via graduation, following an internship and/or mentorship with a firm, the African American educational lobbyist will be knowledgeable of experiences as a lobbyist, a new Prophet or Prophetess is beginning to emerge. The newly emerging Prophet or Prophetess will also have implicitly engrained in his logic, the habits, communicative styling, and mobilization tactics essential to a successful lobby for the interests of those they represent. They will go forth through *fellowship* and be fishers of men and women who seek to be a voice for the voiceless.

These *Acts* will include public and private interests, big and small, for the development of the African American educational lobbyists will include multiple pedagogical approaches and theoretical frames of inquiry and thought to ensure a critical consciousness and responsiveness (Gay and Howard, 2000; Gay, 2002). This critical inquiry and thought will permit the African American educational lobbyist to see himself in the context of who he is in relation to society, how he is viewed in society, and how his experiences have shaped his reality and socially converged or divergent fantasies and myths of what it not only means to be an African American but what it means to be an African American residing in the United States – thus developing a Culturally Responsive Advocate and Lobbyist (CRAL) to mirror that of a CRIL (Culturally Responsible Instructional Leader). Multiple contexts of being will be explored,

identified, and acknowledged throughout the program, which would include training for school principals to become CRILs.

The Stakeholders

It should go without saying that the immediate stakeholder in the program is the student himself, the African American educational lobbyist. Followed by the student is the student's family and community, the urban community, urban schools, the university or college, the student's mentor(s), the student's mentee(s), and the lobbying firm with whom the student interns. The list of stakeholders is long and may include more since the successful development of African American educational lobbyists will begin to change the outcomes of some marginalized groups and systems – poor, people of color, disenfranchised, and “Apartheid” schools (Kozol, 2005) – the Gentiles.

In biblical terms, Gentiles are those who are non-Jewish yet inherit the kingdom through grace. It is through grace that the newly emerging Prophets and Prophetesses will inherit the *new System*. As stakeholders, each individual has the responsibility to ensure that the developing African American educational lobbyist is nurtured and challenged throughout the establishment of the *new Lobby*. They each must be willing to leave all behind and bear up their individual interest, becoming a “struggling” Prophet or Prophetess.

The developing African American educational lobbyist's learning should not be sequestered to the university or college or the middle school and high school campus. It must be done in the field as a *missionary*. For while they learn the ways of the *new*

Lobby, they are spreading the faith as well. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet shares the following when asked about the development of African American educational lobbyists,

I think it would be um, effective. I think it would not only provide uh, some critical professional development for African American lobbyists, but I think it would bring uh, and create interest um, in the -- not only the profession, you know, getting our people, our African American students involved and interested uh, uh, in the profession.

“Truth” the Absolute Lobbyist shares “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet’s enthusiasm about the program,

I just think it’s a good opportunity for African Americans in education. I think we should put more funding. I hope you guys start a program. If I could help, I’d be willing to give everything I can towards it.

In all facets of the program, the developing African American educational lobbyists will be placed in real word applicable surroundings which will permeate and supplement the learning experiences. When mentors go to conferences [for instance] or professional meetings, [the developed African American educational lobbyist] could attend as well (Larke, Patitu, Webb-Johnson, & Young-Hawkins, 1999, p. 51).

In addition, the university or college and urban middle or high schools must ensure (not just encourage or implement) a multicultural learning environment throughout the program. The assurance of a multicultural learning environment and experience is accomplished through the systematic integration of multicultural curriculum, instruction, practices and procedures. The community and family members will need to provide

support and understanding of the development of the African American educational lobbyist. “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess proclaims the early support she received from the church and her mother:

I had a church that I grew up in that had a lot of educators in it. Uh, and -- and focused a lot on educational things. So that was my exposure there. And, my mom, who at the time, did not have a degree, she went back -- she's since went back and earned her degree in her fifties -- but -- but supportive of it. I mean, so, we always had that.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet indicates a need specifically from the Black community as a whole:

We need to have a perspective from the Black community. If -- if -- and you know, what's being debated right now and has been debated for awhile is closing the achievement gap. I mean, we all know that it's -- it's -- it directly impacts the Black community, but if we have a developing policy that's being debated at uh, on the hill, being debated at the state legislatures, that's debated at the stakeholder groups that's having these briefings as it release a report and there's no one the panel or no one that's testifying that's Black, that's from the community or from the school um, that can give that insider perspective on how this is gonna effect the bottom line or how this is gonna relate or imp- or -- or -- or relate to actual practice um, it's - and it's just - it's just - just -- it's just not advantageous. Um, and you just really -- they're not gonna a clear -- a clear picture on -- on how this

is gonna impact the community. They may think -- they may have good intentions, there would also be unintended consequences though.

Through his development, traditions may be challenged, customs become unaccustomed, and dialogue and discourse begins to take on another form and shape:

... “at some point... [an individual] finds that...he has slipped into the new language without a decision having been made...he finds himself fully persuaded of the new view but nevertheless unable to internalize it and be at home in the world he helps to shape...He [will] use the new theory nonetheless, but he will do so as a foreigner in a foreign environment... (as cited in Bowman, 1985, p. 136).

African American educational lobbyists essentially will not know of what they speak or of who he is becoming because the discursive language in his mind and the persistent social dialogue will not permit him to rest easy with the new found information and significance, a Prophet or Prophetess is reborn. As the African American educational lobbyist begins to internalize the lobbying characteristics coupled with thinking how he thinks and exists in relation to others and how he views himself as an "other", he will not only be unique in culture and race but he will be unique in action and being – an African American who is a lobbyist, in addition to being a lobbyist who is African American.

Program Design

Acts 1 for the New Lobby. There are two significant programs and studies for the design of this *new Lobby*. The first program is the *Minority Mentorship Project – MMP* (Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990). The MMP of Texas A&M University is a program that incorporates the educational strategies of multicultural education, human relations

training and cross cultural mentoring to educate pre-service teachers to reflect the concerns of the diverse student population (as cited in Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990). For the first phase of this program design, a similar framework would be used. For instance, this program like MMP will link a selected group of faculty (mentors) with African American graduate students – cohort - who is interested in becoming an educational lobbyist. Throughout the program, the student will have this mentor(s). The program will begin at the beginning of their graduate degree program in one of the following areas: education, political science, law, public administration, history, business administration, government, communication and journalism.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess does not support a program designed specifically for the development of African American educational lobbyists, citing specifically, “I would not be supportive of that, because, I am real careful about limiting things too much”. However, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess elaborates further explaining the importance of gaining exposure in more than one area:

...if you're say -- here's how you, a young African American can gain exposure to this area that you may not expo- you haven't been exposed to or -- most of the time I come at from the perspective of people like, oh go to law being a lobbyist gives you more opportunity to be an advocate than maybe being a lawyer in whose -- if you wanna be in the courtroom, because you're having to interact, personally, and sell ideas or per- or projects to people all the time. Whereas, in the -- in the legal setting -- and, I can say this, because I have practiced law -- it builds up.

Similarly, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess feels that providing training without experience would not be beneficial:

Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. My personal philosophy is if you haven't lived it, you can't do it... We don't need -- the best -- the best teacher for doing this work is going through it. Finding out where you can make a difference. Before -- you know the theory of it is great. You'll be a great *theorition, but to go in and be a tactical strategist requires doing- Like had I not been a public affairs officer I don't think I'd be an education advocate now.

Therefore, two of the four participants would want to see a program designed specifically for African American educational lobbyists, while two would not. It is clear that there is a distrust to moving individuals to one specific area versus providing options. A later phase in the *Acts* provides this opportunity.

According to Ferrin (2003), there is no particular background or career path that prepares individuals to act as in-house lobbyists at colleges and universities (p. 16). Nevertheless, the same study reveals these as the top areas of back ground for in-house lobbyists – number one being political science. According to “Truth” the Absolute Prophet the best candidates for African American educational lobbyists are people who are in education:

A person educated. A person who been in the school system. Person who did the teaching. A person who knows about -- know about the schools... a person understand the schools. Uh, parent... people who got kids, school board members.

As far educational background needed to be prepared, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet shares the importance of a willingness to communicate:

I think you should be great in communication or history or I think another thing would be speech communication and history, because you can't be afraid to get in public. You can't be afraid to get up and speak before people. You got to be very firm on that. So, I think that's -- that's one, I would say, definitely get a lot of speech courses

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess cites “strategic planning...crisis management, media relations, and grass roots organizing when asked about recommended backgrounds while “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess does not specifically cite a background, mentioning that people from “all walks” find their way into lobbying:

... one where you're open to new ideas. When you're willing to explore. Um, I mean, I think that's how you can have the -- the people who become good lobbyist are involved in the legislative process. Regardless of where they came from, whether it's a legal back- a law background, or political -- or, you know, just a government relations -- a -- uh, government background, or PR, I mean, you got folks coming from technical fields, they end up in this.

In Nastas and Swanson (1984) the educational area mentioned most frequently...is that of government, followed by communication, politics, and business administration.

Education was a surprise for Ferrin; however, part of this program's focus is on urban education. Thusly, there should be education graduate students in the program for the sake of public education interests that seem to fall on disinterested agendas. The issue is

mobilization of influence to which most if not all urban schools and communities are unable to access.

Acts 2 for the New Lobby. The second phase of the *new Lobby* will utilize components of a Michigan framework suggested in a study by Nastras and Swanson (1984) where they found which educational and work experiences surveyed lobbyists in Michigan agreed would make the most effective lobbyist. Within this framework is the mentoring aspect. The study recommended that the role of the lobbyist be based upon the role of what the business lobbyist does (p. 283). For this program, the role of the African American educational lobbyist will be based on what specific areas of interest each individual cohort member wishes to lobby – no more than three – in order to ensure specialization in those areas. At least one must be a social interest – urban education and the others can be two of their choosing. Two other roles are based upon the nature of the organization which the lobbyist represents – private interest, public interest, or in-house, and the issues on which the [African American educational lobbyist] must be knowledgeable (p. 283). The educational African American lobbyists will study how to represent all three interests – public, private, and in-house – for, there are unique ways to represent each: as an exchange or persuasion (Milbrath, 1958), as an entrepreneur (McGrath, 2007), as a legislative subsidy (Hall and Deardorff, 2006) or a polarized agent – bipartisanship (Koger, 2009).

The business school according to Nastas and Swanson (1984) and the political science or government department of a college or university should develop a joint program with the political science or government department to provide business lobbyist training (p.

284). The design of this new Lobby will require a joint effort by the eight graduate areas surveyed lobbyists feel are most effective to successful lobbyist. The education program in colleges and universities will develop this program. Other departments in which the students are attaining their masters degrees will join the effort by offering seminars to teach for example, but not limited to, governmental process, business ethics, and effective oral communication – face to face is the preferred method of communication by legislative members. “Truth” the Dimensional Prophet states

I think you gotta get some host families, bring them into the city. Put ‘em up and I think you need to go out to the national Black lobbyists group get a hold to all those guys let them know. How many can intern with you? Not gone cost you anything, they can walk with you. I’ve had so many walk with me. I’ll give ‘em a tour of the capitol and walk with me and show them everything.

He shares further how he would recruit African Americans into lobbying via internships,

All these institutions have those people. Allow those kids to do interns. And they can follow that lobbyist around during the session. That’s one of the best role model in the world. Put a badge to him. Let him follow him around.

They should do. I see a couple young lobbyists up here in policies. But, you see more White kids up here than you see African American.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess offers her services to young students interested in learning about the process as a start:

Now, if you’re interested in doing this or something else, here’s my contact information, here’s my email. You follow up with me and I promise I will follow

through with you. Because I had a mentor who did that. Because it will pay off. Most of the people -- you'd be surprised, particularly African American folks, how many of them started as interns in college in the -- in the capitol.

"Justice" the Dimensional Prophet points out that while in college there is no training to be a lobbyist. One finds training through the development of contacts:

...you can't really major in lobbying, there's no really, uh, uh, field of study that you can learn at a school to become a lobbyist, but, you know a lot of it has to do be done you know, on the job. A lot of it has to be done with you know, creating a -- you know, professional development uh, with folks that are already in a policy position per say.

He indicates the importance of entering into training and finding an audience with key decision makers, know who the key decision makers are:

...that's another good way we can kinda get into the profession and show your -- your -- your uh, value is to actually really show your expertise, you know, getting your expertise before those that are in -- that are important decision makers.

So, to be versed in the ability to develop receptiveness in "like minded" friends and individuals is one essential key to gaining access, influence, and mobilization (McGrath, 2007, Carpenter, Esterling, & Lazer, 2007, Esterling, 2007, and Hall and Wayman, 1990).

Acts 3 for the New Lobby. In order to ensure multicultural program integration, components of multicultural education will be ingrained in all areas of study by the African American educational lobbyist cohort in phase three. Utilizing the multicultural

frameworks of Banks (2004), Banks (1998), Milner (2007) and Gay and Thomas, (2000) the African American educational lobbyist cohort will develop a critical mind and view, receiving the *Gift of Prophecy*. This is an important characteristic that was not revealed in any study. The primary ideal traits that repeated throughout all the studies for this program were communication, relationship-building, honesty, integrity, and credibility (McGrath, 2006; Milbrath, 1958; Milbrath, 1960; Hall and Wayman, 1990; and Carpenter, Esterling, & Lazer, 2007). Only in McGrath (2006) was recognition and respect for gender/sexuality mentioned. Having a critical mental disposition will be of great emphasis in this program, not only drawing upon multicultural pedagogical skills for teaching the African American educational lobbyists but ensuring that they recognize and develop a view that racism is an enterprise in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The theoretical frameworks and methodologies applied in phase three will be *Critical Race Theory (CRT)* education (Ladson-Billings, 1994), *Knowledge Construction* and *Transformative Knowledge* (Bank, 2004), *Critical Cultural Consciousness* (Gay and Howard, 2000) and Milner (2007). CRT has a number of premises: “Racism is normal, not aberrant in American society (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 58); the use of storytelling to challenge racial (and other) oppression; and interest convergence. What makes CRT significant to this program is its view on race. CRT sees race is a part of America and so should the developing African American educational lobbyists. Bank’s (2004) knowledge construction process describes four steps to the knowledge construction process which will lead to curriculum reform: the *contributions approach* –

focusing on heroes, holidays and discrete cultural elements; the *additive approach* – focusing on added content, concepts, themes, and perspectives; the *transformative approach* where the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, and events from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups; and the *social action approach* where students make decisions on important social issues and take action to help solve them (p. 15).

Banks (2004) knowledge construction concept includes what he has termed *transformative knowledge* also called *operational knowledge* (p. 230). Because knowledge is in important ways related to power, transformative knowledge is constructed in order to challenge the existing and institutionalized meta-narrative (as cited in Banks, 2004, p. 230). This is an important significance to this program as educators, scholars, and institutions seek to impact the learning outcomes of students.

In order to engage in transformative knowledge, African American educational lobbyists will be taught five types of knowledge: *personal/cultural knowledge*; *popular knowledge*; *mainstream academic knowledge*; *transformative academic knowledge*; and *school knowledge* (Banks, 1998, p. 6). All these types of knowledge are interrelated as one can scaffold off the other dependent upon the experiences planned in the classroom and community environment – with mentors. Furthermore, transformative knowledge is a critical component to the knowledge construction process and is a critical additive to the transformative approach level of Banks (2004) approaches to curriculum reform. Utilized in conjunction with one another, transformative knowledge and the transformative approach are significant to this program for attaining the goal to “reform

schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups will experience educational equity (p. 3).

Critical Cultural Consciousness as defined by Gay and Howard (2000) is the students ability to analyze their own ethnic heritages; analyze the assumptions and beliefs they hold about other ethnic groups and cultures; and compare assumptions about cultural diversity with other groups' version of knowledge, truth, and reality" (p. 7-8). The significance of this concept in the Multicultural Education discipline is that it applies to pre-service teachers. Geneva Gay argues that Multicultural pedagogy, processes and practices should be intertwined throughout pre-service teacher education and not situated in only one department and taught by one professor. Furthermore she argues that multicultural professors should be experts in the area.

Lastly, the program will incorporate Milner's (2003) five promising principles on teaching that can empower Black male students in urban school contexts:

- 1) envision life beyond their present situations;
- 2) come to know themselves in relation to others;
- 3) speak possibility and not destruction
- 4) care and demonstrate that care, and
- 5) change their thinking to change their actions (p. 239).

These five principals are critical to the program in that along with the critical consciousness proposed by Gay and Howard (2000) this pedagogical practice allows the students to think critically. As an African American educational lobbyist seeking to affect access and influence, this must be a critical trait. Again, a critical mind is not a trait that was mentioned in any of the literature as being a characteristic of an effective

lobbyist. However, I posit that having a critical mind and consciousness is a characteristic of an effective African American educational lobbyist who is a CRAL (Culturally Responsive Advocate and Lobbyist), for the decision to lobby for or against will often come down to a critical review of the mobilization efforts of friends, allies, fence riders, or opposing interests, the Office of the Prophet and Prophetess is once again in session.

The ongoing phase is training and development of university or college staff, communities, mentors and mentees, and urban school staff and students. The training and development in each of the pedagogical frameworks will be of great necessity. University and college staff must be versed and practiced in utilizing Milner and Banks in addition to having a working knowledge and application of CRT and Critical Consciousness. This may be a tough sell. However, other stake holders not mentioned are the president of the university and the in-house lobbyist, the [person] of public affairs or government relations.

These individuals will need to be uniquely involved. One of the educational lobbyists coming out the *new Lobby* may very well become either a working in-house lobbyist for the university or college. Additionally, they may become a state or federal lobbyist who is lobbying on behalf of a “like minded” interest (Carpenter, Esterling & Lazer, 2004), or they may be in opposition. Therefore, the mutually and jointed vested interests of all stakeholders will be evident to all, and the progress and process of a fully developed African American educational lobbyist will provide access and influence on a state and national level.

Acts 4 for the New Lobby. Once established, the significance of the *new Lobby* is its potential to “spread the good news” not only in the urban education environment but in urban communities and on university and college campuses, where equity and access has been an issue for AHANA students (Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1987) and where African Americans in education are vanishing (Larke and Larke, 1995). To develop an African American educational lobbyist outside the “traditional” way, which permeates and proselytizes a Western view of meritocracy, will be momentous and result in multiple mobilization efforts. The *new Lobby* will be established as a contrast to the teachings of the System Pharisees.

Producing African American educational lobbyists, who have the internalized ability to invoke a critical consciousness and transformative knowledge when evaluating potential political and policy interests, will produce influence and access for voices which are legislatively silenced due to a lack of representation in the committee hearings and on the legislative floor. It is critical that the critical consciousness be keen so as to recognize miss information as in when Moses was misinformed about the Promised Land being inhabited by giants (Bible Gateway, 2015). “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess laments concerns over new lobbyists being misinformed about the process:

So, universities and colleges, you know, be substantive, not just surface level.

Um, you -- you’ve got to help expose them to what’s -- what the real situation is.

Which means, more practical experience. And, not just, oh, okay. It’s career day, let’s bring in somebody to talk. Okay, how about developing that to maybe it’s an ongoing conversation that you have with a series of people or something like that.

Add some breadth, some depth to it. So, that people can really, you know, be able to sink their teeth into it and give them something to think about when they're trying to decide what to do or how to do it. You know, and -- and bringing in people who are not gonna sugar coat it.

She laments further,

There's nothing worse than not telling, you know I'm not saying give 'em all the, you know -- it's all the doom and gloom. But, there is nothing worse than getting out there and you were not told the truth about what really happens.

"Justice" joins the lamenting regarding when community representation is not present to provide an accurate accounting during the process:

I mean, it's --it's -- the problem is real, you know, you're -- you're in your rooms where you know, policies, that they're discussing, debating policies that will directly affect African American students or students of color um, if not of color, disadvantaged students, and that there is not any -- hardly any representation from the Black community. I -- I can't tell you how many times, I've -- I've seen that. The problem is real, I know that a l- you know, these -- these White stakeholder groups, they know it's real, I mean they're looking in the room. And, it's -- it's - it's just -- it's just -- it's just concerning, um, and uh, it's a real -- it's a real problem.

However, Moses was not meant to enter the Promised Land. His role was to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt and get them to the Promised Land. It was Joshua, Moses's

successor, who was the leader to take them into the Promised Land (Bible Gateway, 2015).

New Prophets and Prophetesses will emerge as the prophets of old will not be permitted to inherit the *new System*. Like Moses, the Prophets and Prophetess of the old *System* were warriors. Warriors will no longer be needed in the *new System*. Whereas Black interest groups such as the NAACP would become involved too late, during the implementation stage of policy, the African American educational lobbyists, accepting the call to the Office of the Prophet or Prophetess, with their unique knowledge set across academic disciplines and processes, will be able to provide access producing knowledge and information such as being involved in the informative and formulation stages where the arguments are being heard (Brown, 2009).

Finally, a lasting impact of the *new Lobby* is the mentorship influences the African American educational lobbyists will have in the final semester of the program when they are linked as mentors with African American students in Urban high schools where an elective would be offered entitled “The Legislative Process and Advocacy”. “Justice” the Dimensional Lobbyist posits,

I think, uh, you know, utilizing social media, I think that’s key. I think uh, you know, providing educators and students, uh, information about uh, you know, conferences or um, uh, training programs or briefings uh, about how to advocate, you know, how to get into the profession, I think that would be great. I mean, again, Aaron, a lot of it has to do with being able to provide information. Folks need to know what they need to know.

A course in legislation and advocacy would provide the necessary information in addition to allowing students to get involved in the process as “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet suggests,

... in my work and in my travels, and my engaging with individual educators and then with students, college students and high school students, they just, they don't know how to get involved. Uh, and even if they know how to get involved, they don't know, you know where to go to look for information. I mean, information is there, it's just a matter of trying to make sure that they know about and -- and get involved there.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet recommends the following that the course would provide:

...try to improve their technology skills. Uh, do a little bit of statistics. For example, know the status of how many students in the school district. Uh, know the socio economic development of the community.

The course will begin at the high school level. Though guidance counseling, students will be identified who may show an interests in advocacy, legislations, community relation, law or other fields. As the course develops over time a joint university Urban school district partnerships for the recruitment and retention of African American students into the teaching profession is an expected outcome. The schools of education will be places where universities and colleges will seek to recruit African American educational lobbyists who exhibit the *Gift of Prophecy*.

Implications for Future Studies

Throughout this study and during the literature review, I could not help but notice the possibilities that would come from this study, having not heard the voices of the African American educational lobbyists in the 21st century. There are certainly stores of information located as archival data is AME churches and/or at the NCAAP headquarters that are worthy of study in order to elicit more voices. Future studies on African American lobbyists should include this archival data.

It has been posited by multiple sources that the White majority will soon be the minority as people of color will be the majority. It was also stated that in 10 years the Latino population would be the majority. However, the number of Latino lobbyists is also shockingly low. Additionally, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet lamented on multiple occasions that “educators are not a part of the process and are often left out of the decision making despite decisions impacting them the most when education policy is debated and enacted”. Neither the Latino voices nor the educator voices are being heard. Therefore, the following are recommendations for future study:

- 1) Hearing the Voices of Hispanic Educational Lobbyists and Their Role in Lobbying for Education.
- 2) Hearing the Voices of K-12 Teachers and Their Role in Advocating for Education.
- 3) A Critical Discursive Analysis of African American Educational Lobbyists and How They Navigate Educational Strategy.

- 4) Developing a Qualitative Framework for Interviewing African American Political Elites: The Oral History of the Congressional Black Caucus's Role in Educational Policy.
- 5) A Critical Race Inventory on the Perceptions of Real Estate Agents about Schools and Communities and the Impacts of Real Estate Practice on Minority Population Learners.

Conclusions

As indicated by the implications for future studies, there are others whose voices have not been heard. Conducting a similar study with other marginalized groups will give them their voice. One of the outcomes of this study is towards the development of African American educational lobbyists. This study provides a snapshot of how African American educational lobbyists describe their personal characteristics; how African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying; and how these African American educational lobbyists describe their influence or impact on education. Hope for the future is that future studies will be conducted on this topic.

The Book of Prophetic Lamentations

Here Begins the Book of Prophetic Lamentations - 2015 A.D. In the beginning there was the people and from the people there was birthed a nation. From the nation there became interests and from those interests there came needs. Soon, instead of needs there came of wants and desires, and from those wants and desires there came the Lobby. This book is the lamentations of four African American educational lobbyists who having been called are “struggling” Prophets and Prophetesses.

As the analysis of their voices reveals, the African American educational lobbyist cannot exist within a system, for it is the system that seeks to maintain the status quo. They exist in contrast to the system while at the same time navigating the system, which is set up to ensure the failure of marginalized groups, which include children of color – “minority population students”. There are national implications.

The findings from this prophecy will be used for the development and training of African American educational lobbyists, *discipleship*. As a result, a *new Lobby* will be established, and through the establishment of the new Lobby the new prophets and prophetesses will inherit the *new System*. However, as it was in “Eden” and as it is in the New World, the *System* churns unchallenged lurking for aspiring young African American educational lobbyists for whom it can devour.

Putting on the Full Armor of the Prophecy. Therefore, as the scribe of these books of prophetic inclination I am charged with undoubtedly citing the “Ten Declarations” of the *new Lobby* as spoken to me by “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet, and “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet. All who are navigating the old system and all who will inherit the *new System* must do so with the *Full Armor of the Prophecy*. Verily, I declare unto you:

- 1) Thou shall not be underutilized.
- 2) Thou shall not be partisan.
- 3) Thou shall not be limited to social services and civil rights.
- 4) Thou shall not be dishonest.
- 5) Thou shall not provide incorrect information.

- 6) Thou shall not work with dishonest individuals.
- 7) Thou shall not separate from other Black lobbyists.
- 8) Thou shall not discount one's Black identity as a lobbyist.
- 9) Thou shall not use thy term lobbyist in vain.
- 10) Thou shall not advocate only for non-Black interests as a lobbyist.

Failure to enter the old system with the *Full Armor of the Prophecy* will assuredly result in a placated standardization *the System* steadfastly supports through factors of lobbying meant to marginalize, stigmatize, and hypnotize. We remain invisible and blind. A maintenance of the status quo in the old system is always the goal of the oppressor for to challenge the oppressor's status forces the oppressor to see itself in the mirror for who the oppressor is and how the oppressor operates. Thus, the oppressor begins to feel oppressed when their power is challenged.

To challenge, however, is the role of the Prophet and Prophetess as it is written in the Book of Prophecy. And, as the Book of Prophecy unfolds, mentoring, discipleship and the fellowship of new African American educational lobbyists will be the outcome. Through the *new Lobby* voices of African American educational lobbyists will continue to be heard and the Prophecy will be revealed.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Form

Investigator: Aaron J. Griffen Dr. Norvella Carter, Advisor
Home: (281) 772-6717 (281) 788-4388
Work: (281) 985-6590 (979) 862-3802

Project Title: Hearing the Voices of African American Lobbyists and Their Role in Lobbying for Education

You are being invited to take part in a research study being conducted by Texas A&M University. You are being asked to read this form so that you know about this research study. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part in the research. If you decide to take part in the study, you will be asked to sign this consent form. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefit you normally would have.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to hear the voices, the life experiences and lobbying practices of five African American educational lobbyists in the United States. The purpose is to use discourse to determine how they describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position, how they exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying and how they describe their influence or impact on education.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are an African American educational lobbyist, you have served in your position for a minimum of 5 years, and you are presently serving as a lobbyist at the federal or state level.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

Five people (participants) will be enrolled in this study nationally

What Are The Alternatives To Being In This Study?

The alternative is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

Your participation in this study will last up to two hours. The procedures you will be asked to perform are described below.

The visit will last about 60 to 90 minutes. During this visit or interview I will ask questions from an interview protocol/questionnaire. In order to get exact information

from you, and increase the strength of the study, you will be audio taped in the 60 to 90 minute interview session.

Your name will be pre-coded to the recording tape that will be used to record the interview session. The transcriptions (writing down from the tape what you said) will also be coded in order to further protect your confidentiality. Written reports may entail the use of quoted material. At the conclusion of this study, the information gathered and audio tapes, identifiable only by subject number will be stored in a locked file that only I will be able to access.

A follow up visit may occur which will last up to 30 minutes.

A visit will include but may not be limited to face to face visit, phone chat, or face to face web chat via online web chat services (i.e. Skype or Gmail).

Will Video or Audio Recordings Be Made Of Me during the Study?

Required recordings:

The researchers will take an audio recording during the study so that I will be able to get exact information from you and to increase the strength of the study. If you do not give permission for the audio recording to be obtained, you cannot participate in this study.

_____ I give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

_____ I do not give my permission for audio recordings to be made of me during my participation in this research study.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

There will be no more risks than you would come across in everyday life.

Are There Any Benefits To Me?

There is no direct benefit to you by being in this study. What researchers find out from this study will help provide insight about African American education lobbyists and how they view their influence and impact for mobilizing interests for education, providing equity and access to education, and how they view the importance of educational interests. African American lobbyists who wish to lobby for educational interests can use this study by reflecting on their own experiences in other lobbying fields. Additionally, African American educators as well as universities and colleges can use this study to create programs for the recruitment and development of African American educators and students who aspire to be educational lobbyists.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

There will be no costs for taking part in this study, aside from your time.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

You will not be paid for being in this study.

Will Information From This Study be Kept Private?

The records in this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only Aaron J. Griffen will have access to the records.

Information about you will be stored in locked file cabinet. This consent form will be filed securely in an official area.

Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law. People who have access to your information include the Principal Investigator and research study personnel. Representatives of regulatory agencies such as the Office of Human Research Protections (OHRP) and entities such as the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program may access your records to make sure the study is being run correctly and that information is collected properly.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the Principal Investigator, Aaron J. Griffen, M.Ed. to tell him/her about a concern or complaint about this research at 281-772-6717 or akgriffen@neo.tamu.edu. You may also contact Dr. Norvella Carter, the faculty advisor for this project, at Texas A&M University at (979-862-3802) or ncarter@tamu.edu. This research has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University.

For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I agree to be in this study and know that I am not giving up any legal rights by signing this form. The procedures, risks, and benefits have been explained to me, and my questions have been answered. I know that new information about this research study will be provided to me as it becomes available and that the researcher will tell me if I must be removed from the study. I can ask more questions if I want, A copy of this entire consent form will be given to me.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

Date

INVESTIGATOR'S AFFIDAVIT:

Either I have or my agent has carefully explained to the participant the nature of the above project. I hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge the person who signed this consent form was informed of the nature, demands, benefits, and risks involved in his/her participation.

Signature of Presenter

Date

Printed Name

Date

APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

Title: *Hearing the Voices of African American Educational Lobbyists and Their Role in Lobbying for Education*

This is an interview with _____ conducted by Aaron J. Griffen, PhD candidate at Texas A&M University, Teaching Learning and Culture – Urban Education.

Today is _____. The time is: _____.

This interview is being conducted as part of a research study “Hearing the Voices of African American Educational Lobbyists and Their Role in Lobbying for Education.”

This is meeting **1** of this interview.

The purpose of this study is to examine and interpret the life experiences and lobbying practices of five African American educational lobbyists in the United States - how they describe their personal characteristics related to success in their position, how they exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying and how they describe their influence or impact on education.

To begin this interview, I would like to start with some information related to you, your background, and your career.

Background and Career Information

1. Tell me about yourself
2. How many years have you been a lobbyist? For education?
3. Please provide your formal educational background?
4. What was your occupation(s) prior to becoming a lobbyist?
5. What were your lobbying interests prior to becoming an educational lobbyist?
6. What or who were some of your major influences that developed your interest in becoming a lobbyist?
7. Is anyone else in your family a lobbyist?
8. Why did you become a lobbyist?
9. Talk about your transition to being an educational lobbyist?
10. What went into your decision to join your organization (start your own firm)?
11. How much longer in your career would you consider being a lobbyist? Why?
12. If there were anything or anyone that could prompt you to change careers, who or what would that be?
13. Describe what you would consider to be the most appealing aspect of being a lobbyist. For education?

14. Is there anything you consider to be the least appealing aspect of being a lobbyist?
For education?

15. If you had your choice of any other job or profession, what would it be? Why?

Personal Characteristics Success and Effectiveness

1. What organizations, groups, or clubs do you belong? What positions have you held?
2. How does your connection to any groups or organizations provide you any advantages or disadvantages as a lobbyist? For education?
3. Have you ever held a position in public office or were you a candidate?
4. Please share your political party activity. What positions have you held?
5. How does your political party activity provide you any advantages or disadvantages as a lobbyist? For education?
6. What do you feel are some of the important personal qualities, values, and behaviors necessary for being a lobbyist? For education?
7. What do you think are some of your really strong qualities that have helped you as a lobbyist? For education?
8. How do you develop a circle of contacts?
9. Explain how developing a circle of contacts is both a benefit and a detriment to your success and effectiveness.
10. How would you recommend attaining champions for bills? – Difficult?
11. Please share some of the important life experiences that you have had which facilitated your choice to become a lobbyist? For education?
12. What interpersonal dynamics do you feel impacts your effectiveness as a lobbyist? (How were you motivated toward becoming a lobbyist for education?)
13. How important is direct vs. indirect communication? How should one balance them?
14. What role, if any, did your upbringing play in your wanting to be a lobbyist (educational lobbyist)?
15. What values, interests, goals, and beliefs influence the way you conduct yourself, personally and professionally?
16. Describe some of the obstacles or restrictions that cause you the most concern as you attempt to carry out your duties as an educational lobbyist?
17. Does perception influence access? For African Americans? How?
18. Tell me about your experiences testifying before committee.
19. Which branch do you prefer: Legislative or Senate?
20. How has your personal life been affected by your decision to become a lobbyist (educational lobbyist)?

Interpreting the act of lobbying

1. What is your job as a lobbyist for your organization?
2. In what areas of lobbying do you spend most of your time?
3. As a lobbyist, how did you go about establishing a successful circle of contacts?
4. Please describe some of the approaches/techniques you used in gaining access to inside information. What are your most important sources?
5. From your experiences as a lobbyist, name 2-3 key dimensions of

lobbying for sustained success – the habits, tactics, and strategies– that enable a lobbyist to guide successful educational policy over the long term.

6. How much freedom do you have to determine your tactics on most problems?

7. How often do you alter your own personal tactics? Why?

8. Describe these in the context of your concrete experiences as an African American lobbyist.

9. If lobbyists play an important part in swaying public opinion and public interest, what are their secrets and what are the limits to their powers? How does being an African American lobbyist add to or limit your powers?

10. How does educational lobbying differ from other areas of lobbying?

11. Explain the major obstacles or interests which oppose educational reform, restructuring, or lobbying?

12. How should lobbyists work both sides of the aisle on educational issues?

13. Where would you rank the importance of joint activity with other lobby organizations on education policy?

14. How often do you consult other lobbying groups for strategy on education policy?

15. How often is your personal recommendation on (education) policy adopted?

16. Have you ever been sidelined? – How often? Common? Describe that experience.

17. What are the impacts on ones career if they do not go along with the team?

18. Explain how you would consider representing a client who produced conflict.

19. How would you hold policy and law makers accountable for student achievement at the national, state and local level?

20. Are you familiar with the School to Prison Pipeline? How have or would you influence policy and/or strategy to address the School to Prison Pipeline?

Ability to Impact and Influence Education

1. How should policy and law makers measure the success of their schools? Is high-stakes testing a viable answer?

2. In your view, how much is student achievement impacted by schools versus the impact of policy?

3. What is your role as an educational lobbyist?

4. If you could lobby and mobilize interests in three key areas of education what would they be? How would you mobilize those interests?

5. What group or groups would you consider to be opponents of those educational interests?

6. How is their strength and ability to mobilize interest against those educational interests measured?

7. Could you share how you keep an eye on the alignments of important people for or against an education issue or bill?

8. How often do policy makers come to you to solicit you view on any policy matter? Educational matter?

9. How do you feel that being African American impacts whether or not your view on a policy matter is solicited?

10. Describe a specific policy matter where being an African American impacted whether or not your view on the policy matter was solicited?
11. How have you responded to perceived practices tactics or processes which do not permit you to have any input in a policy matter?
12. What specific approaches would you follow to try to get a member of Congress or any public official to see your point of view?
13. Which approach has worked best and least?
14. How would you utilize the approaches to impact and influence educational policy.
15. How has becoming an educational lobbyist affected your perspective and actions as a lobbyist?
16. How do you communicate your view on educational policy with your organization?
17. What changes have you influenced and impacted in policy to address the issues that are related to education?
18. How have you maintained your focus on education as a priority during the era of Global Warming, Gay and Lesbian Rights, Sub Prime Mortgages, and "March on Wall Street"?
19. In your view what is the state of education in the United States of America?
20. What is your ultimate goal as an educational lobbyist?

Perceptions of African American Lobbyists

1. Is lobbying healthy for our democracy?
2. Are gifts, entertainment, and spending large amounts of time on the Hill paramount to what a lobbyist does?
3. How often do you partake in speech writing, preparing reports, answering correspondence, writing legislative bills, or entertaining out of town visitors?
4. Describe your role as an African American lobbyist.
5. What is your major policy role?
6. How have you had to overcome being an African American in an area that is mostly non-people of color?
7. How does being an African American reflect your sense of belonging to the profession of lobbying or a sense of camaraderie among lobbyists?
8. Do you feel you have to qualify yourself each time you approach someone?
9. How much demand is there for African American lobbyists? Educational lobbyist?
10. What is your record of success in comparison to other non-African American lobbyists in your organization? What is your criterion for success?
11. How often are you called upon by a member of Congress or Senate?
12. Do you receive "leaks" (advance information)? Is this frowned on or accepted?
13. Upon becoming a lobbyist, what areas were you geared towards by your organization?
14. Did you have any input in the areas you would lobby?
15. Regarding educational lobbying, what specific educational areas are you geared towards by your organization?
16. Do you have any input in any specific area of education for which you and your organization should lobby?

17. How have your actions as a lobbyist impacted educational policy?
18. Can you talk about the most difficult decision you made as a lobbyist and what impact it had on education.
19. Share a decision you did not agree with regarding education and its impact on education.
20. What is the legacy you would hope to leave as an African American educational lobbyist?

Training and Development of African American educational lobbyists

There are some who would consider the focus of this study to be un-American by that I mean, I am bringing to light insights and mobilizing an interest in an area that some would say is “color-blind” and is based on merit – the act of lobbying and the lobbying process.

1. How do you see your interests as an African American educational lobbyist?
2. Why should anyone want to be an educational lobbyist?
3. How do you think others would feel about a program aimed at the specific development of African American educational lobbyists?
4. Can you tell me about the “K” Street Project and its impact on the number of African American lobbyists in Washington?
5. Why would anyone consider the specific development of more African American educational lobbyists as unhealthy in our democracy?
6. How did you learn the skills necessary for your work? Were you trained in a specific way?
7. What specific specialties, techniques or subject matter should one develop to a lobbyist?
8. What educational background would be best suited for one to become an educational lobbyist?
9. How would you recruit African American educators and students to become educational lobbyists?
10. What advice would you give to aspiring African American educational lobbyists? To the University and Colleges who are developing them?

Summarization Question:

Is there anything I did not ask or that you have not mentioned that you would like to add about yourself, about your experiences, about being an African American educational lobbyist, and/or about the development of African American educational lobbyist?

We have come to the conclusion of our interview. I thank you for your participation in this study.

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Letter Script

Aaron J. Griffen
13506 Lakewood Meadow Drive
Cypress, Texas 77429

August 3, 2013

“African American Educational Lobbyist”
Podesta Group
450 K Street
Washington, D.C. 20004

I am Aaron J. Griffen, a doctoral student at Texas A&M University and I am conducting a study on African American educational lobbyists. In order to gain more insight and information on this topic, I would like to interview five African American educational lobbyists. The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life. There will be no costs for taking part in this study, aside from your time. Your participation in this study will last about 60 to 90 minutes. A follow up visit may occur which will last up to 30 minutes. During this visit or interview I will ask questions from an interview protocol/questionnaire. In order to get exact information from you, and increase the strength of the study, you will be audio taped in the 60 to 90 minute interview session.

All information gathered during the study will be confidential. Please respond to this letter stating your interest and to discuss your participation in this study. I can be reached at 281-772-6717 or akgriffen@neo.tamu.edu.

Yours truly,

Aaron J. Griffen, M.Ed.
PhD Student
Texas A&M University

APPENDIX D

Recruitment Email Script

Hello, I am Aaron J. Griffen, a doctoral student at Texas A&M University and I am conducting a study on African American educational lobbyists. In order to gain more insight and information on this topic, I would like to interview five African American educational lobbyists. The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life. There will be no costs for taking part in this study, aside from your time. Your participation in this study will last about 60 to 90 minutes. A follow up visit may occur which will last up to 30 minutes. All information gathered during the study will be confidential. Please respond to this email stating your interest at akgriffen@neo.tamu.edu or contact me at 281-772-6717 in order to further discuss your participation in this study.

Yours truly,

Aaron J. Griffen, M.Ed.
PhD Candidate
Texas A&M University

APPENDIX E

Phone Script

Hello, I am Aaron J. Griffen, a doctoral student at Texas A&M University and I am conducting a study on African American educational lobbyists. In order to get more information on this topic, I would like to interview five African American educational lobbyists. The interview will last approximately 60 to 90 minutes and will be at a location of your choice. A follow up visit may occur which will last up to 30 minutes. The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

All information gathered during the study will be confidential. I will be the only person with access to your consent form, which links your name with the subject number. Your identity will be disguised through this specific coding. In order to get exact information from you, and increase the strength of the study, you will be audio taped in the 60 to 90 minute interview session.

Your name will be pre-coded to the recording tape that will be used to record the interview session. The transcriptions (writing down from the tape what you said) will also be coded in order to further protect you confidentiality. Written reports may entail the use of quoted material. At the conclusion of the study, the information gathered and audiotapes, identifiable only by subject number, will be stored in a locked file that only I will be able to access. The information obtained from this research will be used for the publication or educational purposes of this researcher only and nor for any other purpose.

APPENDIX F

AARON JERMAINE GRIFFEN

Curriculum Vitae

Principal
Sierra High School
Harrison School District 2
5940 Traditions Drive
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80924
Phone: 281-772-6717
Email: akgriffen@tamu.edu
ajgriffen1974@gmail.com

Educational Background

Texas A&M University PhD (Candidate) Curriculum and Instruction, Urban Education	College Station, Texas 2010 to Present
Prairie View A&M University Mid-Management Certification M.ED Educational Administration Secondary English Certification (6-12) B.A. History B.A. English	Prairie View, Texas 2004 2002 2001 1999 1997

Areas of Research Interest: Curriculum and Instruction, Urban Education, Diversity and Multicultural Education, Equity, Urban Policy and Analysis, Critical Studies, Teacher and Student Efficacy, Resiliency, Qualitative Inquiry, Narrative Analysis, and Professional Development.

Professional Experience

Principal – Sierra High School

Harrison District 2, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 2014 – present.

Research Associate – Center for Urban School Partnerships, Texas A&M University, College Station (Fall 2013).

Graduate Assistant – Urban Policy and Analysis – Co-Professor, Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, Texas A&M University College Station, Texas (Fall 2013).

Graduate Assistant – African American Learner in Urban Settings – Co-Professor,
Department of Educational Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education, Texas A&M University
College Station, Texas (Spring 2013).

Assistant Principal - T. S. Grantham Academy for Engineering
Aldine Independent School District, Houston, Texas, 2006 - 2014

Classroom Teacher - T.S. Grantham Academy for Engineering
Aldine Independent School District, Houston, Texas, 1999-2006

Selected Editorial Publications

International Journal of Diversity in Education, Associate Editor
SAGE Open, Associate Editor

Refereed Journals/Books/Chapters

Griffen, A.J. (Submitted 2015). Product of the ghetto: A learning success story. Chapter
Submission. *Telling Our Stories*.

Griffen, A. J. (Submitted 2014). From “Mammy” to Michelle Obama: An essay on the
role of Black women as community leaders. *The Sound Historian*. Baylor University.

Watkins-Johnson, J., Lewis, C., and Griffen, A.J. (2013). The exodus of Black
principals from urban to suburban schools. *The International Journal of Diversity in
Education*.

Selected Conference Presentations

Griffen, A.J., (2015, April). Navigating the misconceptions. Presentation. African
American Youth Leadership Conference. Colorado College. Colorado Springs,
Colorado.

Griffen, A.J., Gannette, C, Thomas, D. (2015, February). Bridging best practices with
Cultural Competency. Presentation. Educating Children of Color Conference.
Colorado College. Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Griffen, A. J., Cain, A.D, McClain, K. (2014, April 4). Gender stereotypes and gender
traits: How external enactments result in our bias and conflicts. Roundtable Session.
American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting. Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania.

Griffen, A. J. (2014, March 8). From “Mammy” to Michelle Obama: An essay on the
role of Black women as community leaders. 118th Annual Texas State History
Association Conference, San Antonio, Texas.

Reid, N., Knipple, K., Griffen, A.J., Rockins, N., Willis, P., (2013, June 24). PBIS: The Aldine Way. Region IV Positive Behavior Intervention and Support Conference. ESC 4 – Houston, Texas.

Griffen, A. J. and Cain, A. D. (2012, April 13). The Aldine Way Project: Chronicling the oral histories of the Aldine way. Texas Oral History Association Conference. Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas.

Griffen, A. J. (2012, April 13). The symbiotic relationship of narrative analysis and oral history: thematic, linguistic and social analysis. Texas Oral History Association Conference. Texas State University, San Marcos, Texas.

Selected Professional Development Presentations:

Griffen, A.J., (2015, May 27). Developing equity consciousness and practice. Cultural Competency Series. Sierra High School Staff Training.

Griffen, A.J., (2015, May 27). Cultural misconceptions, identity, and social constructs of cultural competency. Harrison District 2 Administrator End of Year Reflections Meeting. Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Griffen, A.J., Gannette, C, Thomas, D. (2014, July 27). Bridging best practices with Cultural Competency. Presentation. Harrison District 2 New Staff Institute. Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Griffen, A. J., and Flores, G. B. (2014, January 17) District In-service: Grantham Academy discipline data updates and Safe and Secure Schools updates.

Brown, R., Griffen, A. J., Adams, J., and Flores, G. B. (2013, September 28) Understanding the Invest evaluation modules Domains 2 and 3: Instructional domains.

Griffen, A. J. & Flores, G. B. (2013, August 16) Grantham Academy in-service: Safe and Secure Schools and Emergency operations and procedures.

Flores, G. B. & Griffen, A. J. (2013, August 16) Grantham Academy 2012-2013 discipline data and attendance review: Integrating Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports with Professional Learning Communities.

Griffen, A. J. (2013, August 14) Grantham Academy new teacher campus policy and procedures overview: Safe and Secure Schools, emergency operations and procedures, work orders, referrals, and technology implementation.

- Griffen, A. J. (2013, August 12-13) Invest Domain 1 – “Planning and Preparation”: Demonstrating knowledge of students. Aldine ISD New Teacher Induction, 2013.
- Griffen, A. J. (2013, May 10) National Junior Honor Society Induction Speaker.
- Griffen, A. J. (2013, January 16). Invest video conference correspondence guide training for English Language Arts and Reading teachers.
- Griffen, A. J. (2012, December 20). Invest video conference correspondence guide training for teachers.
- Griffen, A. J. (2012, December 17). Invest video correspondence training for administrators.
- Brown, R., Griffen, A. J., Adams, J., and Flores, G. B. (2012, October 8) Understanding the Invest evaluation modules 1 to 11: Instructional domains.
- Griffen, A. J. (2012, August 21) Grantham Academy in-service: Safe and Secure Schools and Emergency operations and procedures.
- Flores, G. B. & Griffen, A. J. (2012, August 21) Grantham Academy 2011-2012 discipline data and attendance review: Effort based abilities, learning environments, and building student efficacy.
- Griffen, A. J. (2012, August 17) 21st century instructional experiences for the 21st century learner: Learning with purpose and meaning through cultural relevancy, the development and implementation of critical learner centered environments, and applying best practices of learning research.
- Brown, R., Adams, J., Griffen, A. J., & Flores, G. B. (2012, August 16) Grantham Academy Invest evaluation training: Instructional domains.
- Griffen, A. J. (2012, June 7) Grantham Academy and Reed Academy Safe and Secure Schools and Emergency operation and procedures: Emergency evacuation, lock down, and campus security.
- Griffen, A.J. (2012, May 11) National Junior Honor Society Induction Speaker.
- Griffen, A. J. (2011, August 22) Aldine ISD Ethics presentation: Grantham Academy.
- Griffen, A. J. (2011, August 21) Grantham Academy in-service: Safe and Secure Schools and Emergency operations and procedures.
- Griffen, A. J. (2011, August 20) Grantham Academy Title I Compact: 7th grade

orientation.

Griffen, A. J. & Flores, G. B. (2011, August 16) Grantham Academy discipline data review 2010 – 2011 school year: Positive Behavior Support and Love and Logic training.

Brown, R., Adams, J., Griffen, A. J. & Flores, G. B. (2011, August 15) Grantham Academy staff in-service: Teaching with the brain in mind and teaching with poverty in mind.

Griffen, A.J. (2011, May 12) National Junior Honor Society Induction Speaker.

Griffen, A. J. & Flores, G. B. (2011, January 14) Grantham Academy discipline data fall review August 23, 2010 - January 14, 2011: Discipline data, building blocks for successful leadership, and learning how to fish.

Griffen, A. J. & Davis, J. (2011, January 5). Team A.M.C in-service at Grantham Academy: Leadership traits and utilizing the tools we have.

Duong, R., Scott, J., Griffen, A. J., & Flores, G. B. (2010, October 13). District in-service at Grantham Academy: Teaching for rigor and relevance.

Griffen, A. J. (2010, August 20). Grantham Academy teacher handbook presentation: Duty, sac, d-hall, lunch d-hall, and maintenance.

Griffen, A. J. (2009, August 17). Grantham Academy co-teaching and support facilitation: A professional marriage.

Griffen, A. J. (2010, August 17). Grantham Academy safe and secure schools and emergency operations and procedures presentation: Building safety and security, fire safety, crisis preparation and response, and lockdown procedures.

Griffen, A. J. And Flores, G. B. (2010, August 17). Discipline data, utilizing love and logic, and campus positive behavioral support and management: District in-service at Grantham Academy.

Griffen, A. J. (2010, August 12). Implementing Fred Jones with love and logic video session I: Working the crowd and room arrangement.

Griffen, A. J. (2010, June 7). OEYP 2010 Grantham Academy summer school policy and procedures: Summer school staff presentation.

Griffen, A.J. (2010, May 8) National Junior Honor Society Induction Speaker.

- Griffen, A. J. (2010, March 23). Grantham Academy teacher handbook presentation: Duty, sac, lunch d-hall, keys, committees, socials.
- Griffen, A. J. (2009, August 21). Grantham Academy safe and secure schools and emergency operations and procedures presentation: Building safety and security, fire safety, crisis preparation and response, and lockdown procedures.
- Griffen, A. J. (2009, August 21). Grantham Academy teacher handbook presentation: Duty, sac, lunch d-hall, keys, committees, socials.
- Griffen, A. J. (2009, August 17). Discipline data, utilizing love and logic, and campus positive behavioral support and management.
- Griffen, A. J. (2009, August 17). Ethic training: Grantham academy in-service
- Griffen, A. J. (2009, August 12). Aldine I.S.D department of transportation in-service: ethics training.
- Griffen, A. J. (2009, June 6). OEYP 2009 Grantham Academy summer school policy and procedures: Summer school staff presentation.
- Griffen, A.J. (2009, May 10) National Junior Honor Society Induction Speaker.
- Griffen, A. J. (2008, August 19). Grantham Academy discipline data review 2007-2008
- Griffen, A. J. (2008, August 22). Grantham Academy teacher handbook presentation: Duty, sac, lunch d-hall, keys, committees, socials.
- Griffen, A. J. (2008, August 15). Grantham Academy safe and secure schools and emergency operations and procedures presentation: Building safety and security, fire safety, crisis preparation and response, and lockdown procedures.
- Griffen, A.J. (2008, May 9) National Junior Honor Society Induction Speaker and Ceremony Presenter.
- Griffen, A. J. (2007, August 17). Grantham Academy teacher handbook presentation:
- Griffen, A. J. (2007, August 14). Grantham Academy discipline data review 2006-2007
Duty, sac, lunch d-hall, keys, committees, socials.
- Griffen, A. J. (2007, August 10). Grantham Academy safe and secure schools and emergency operations and procedures presentation: Building safety and security, fire safety, crisis preparation and response, and lockdown procedures.

Griffen, A. J. (2006, August 12). DISC survey presentation: Grantham Academy waiver day.

Community and School Based Projects

“That Old Stallion Spirit”: Oral History of Sierra High School – Stallion Strong, 2015.
PASA de Sierra (Peruvian Amazon Study Abroad Program of Sierra). 2015.
The Aldine Way Project: Chronicling the Oral History of the “Aldine Way”. 2013-current.

Selected Keynote Speaking Engagements

Griffen, A.J. (2015, April 7). Prayer for Colorado Springs High Schools. Speaker. New Life Men’s Breakfast. New Life Church. Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Griffen, A.J. (2015, February 17). Keeping the Dream. Speaker. Panorama Middle School Black History Celebration.

Selected Panels

Summer Bridge Educator Panel Discussion, 2015
Principal Selection Panel Interviews, 2015
Counselor Selection Panel Interviews, 2013
Assistant Principal Selection Panel Interviews, 2011
Assistant Principal Selection Panel Interviews, 2010
Counselor Selection Panel Interviews, 2010
Sam Houston Administrator Cohort Panel Discussion, 2006
Assistant Principal Selection Panel Interviews, 2001

Community Service

Watch D.O.G.S (Dads of Great Students), Moore Elementary, Cy-Fair ISD, 2013-present.
Lakewood Trails Neighborhood Watch, Block Captain, 2013 - present
Lakewood Trails HOA Board of Trustees, Member – at – Large, 2006 - 2008
Lakewood Trails HOA Board of Trustees, Vice President, 2003 - 2006
Lakewood Trails HOA Community Newsletter Editor, 2003-2005

Memberships

Teaching Learning and Culture (TLAC) Graduate Student Association (GSA), 2014
American Education Research Association (AERA), 2013
Texas Oral History Association (TOHA), Texas A&M University, 2012
Prairie View A&M University National Alumni Association (NAA), 2012

Kappa Delta Pi (KDP) International Honor Society in Education, 2011
Center for Urban School Partnerships (CUSP), Texas A&M University, 2010 - present
Texas Association of Secondary School Principals (TASSP), 2010 - present
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), 2010 – present
Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honor Society (STD)- PVAMU chapter, 1997
Wisconsin Sleepers Incorporated, 1995 to present

Awards and Honors

Urban Teaching Award – Texas A&M University, 2013

Presented by Dr. Norvella Carter, Director - Center for Urban School Partnerships (CUSP)

Aldine I.S.D Middle School Coach of the Year, 2004

Presented by Aldine I.S.D Athletics Department

October Teacher of the Month, 2001

Presented by Grantham Academy for Engineering

Grants

Discover Grant, 2015

Presented by the International Academy of Science Amount: \$10,000

Special Ed 100 Grant, 2015

Presented by the International Academy of Science Amount: Funded \$0

George Bush Presidential Library Foundation Graduate Student Travel Grants – Texas A&M University, 2014

Presented by the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation Amount: Unfunded

Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture Graduate Student Research and Presentation Grant – Texas A&M University, 2014

Presented by the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Culture Amount: \$500.00

OGAPS Graduate Student Presentation Grant – Texas A&M University, 2014

Presented by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies Amount: Unfunded

OGAPS Graduate Student Research Grant – Texas A&M University, 2014

Presented by the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies Amount: Unfunded

CEHD Graduate Research Grant – Texas A&M University, 2013

Presented by College of Education and Human Development Amount: \$1,000

CEHD Graduate Travel Grant – Texas A&M University, 2013

Presented by College of Education and Human Development

Amount: \$500

Excellence in Education Award Application – National Center of Urban School Transformation, 2013

Amount: Unfunded

Community Oral History Grant - Baylor University Institute for Oral History – Baylor University, 2013

Amount: Unfunded