

CHAPTER 4

BLACK ON BLUE, WILL NOT DO: NAVIGATING CANADA'S EVIDENCE BASED POLICING COMMUNITY AS A BLACK ACADEMIC – A PERSONAL COUNTER-STORY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This chapter explores how select “evidence-based” police scholars act as gatekeepers to research opportunities, in Canada, thus impeding critical research that pertains to Black communities.

Methodology/Approach – Using the critical race method of counter-storytelling, the following narrative demonstrates how race and racism may play a role in the collection and dissemination of research that examines racial bias in Canadian policing. This methodology aims to refute the notion of critical objectivity, which is often used to promote the principles of evidence-based policing (EBP).

Findings – Findings suggest that through various powers and levels within both the policing and academic community, a select number of scholars have influence over Canadian policing research that explores racial bias and discrimination. As such, research that may help to develop effective and efficient policing programs to address racial bias, is thwarted.

Originality – No Canadian study explores anti-racist training programs or evaluates their effectiveness. This chapter demonstrates that this may be the result of gatekeeping. The following chapter provides insight into how this is done within EBP circles.

Keywords: Policing; critical race theory; counter-storytelling; narratives; implicit bias; academia

INTRODUCTION

I think it would be best if you not focus on race and policing. The topic, just isn't you. Plus, you will have greater opportunities as a policing scholar if you steer away from this controversial topic.

This was the advice my White, ex-doctoral supervisor provided me; a first-year Black PhD student interested in establishing a career as a Canadian police scholar. Advice given by a woman who identifies as a proud member of Canada's evidence-based policing (EBP) community. In this chapter, I will explore how comments like this set the stage for the often emotional and political minefield that comes with being a Black policing scholar in the Canadian context.

Does race matter with respect to how Canadian policing functions? While the answer may be obvious to some, for others, the question continues to draw visceral denials and claims that racism is not a problem in this country (LeBlanc & Kirkup, 2020; Melchers, 2003). Canada is often championed as a nation that embraces its diversity and thus is more racially tolerant than the United States. Canadians have faith that our national commitment to equality, enshrined within the [Charter of Rights and Freedoms \(1982\)](#), protect all citizens from unfair or discriminatory behaviors, including mistreatment by the police. The truth, however, is far more complex. While a growing number of studies are beginning to utilize data that identifies and thus helps to understand the impact of racially biased policing practices (Wortley, 2019; [Ontario Human Rights Commission reports \(OHRC\), 2020](#); Samuels-Wortley, 2019), there continues to be a dearth of research. This paucity is often attributed to both formal and informal bans on the collection and dissemination of racial data that pertains to the criminal justice system (Millar & Owusu-Bempah, 2011; Mosher, 1998). This in turn, has greatly impeded research on both race and crime and racial bias within Canadian policing (Cao, 2014; Quan, 2012; Wortley, 1999). However, there too exists a less discussed barrier. This includes a select group of academics, approved by policing leaders, who act as gatekeepers to research opportunities. These "evidence-based" police researchers all too often decide what topics should be addressed, what types of evidence should be collected, and who should be granted access to policing data.

EBP is a growing ideological movement among both academics and police leaders that suggest research based on rigorous, methodical scholarly work

could and should inform police policy and practices. More specifically, EBP researchers argue:

1. Scientific research has a role to play in developing effective and efficient policing programs;
2. Research produced must meet standards of methodological rigor and be useful to policing;
3. Results should be easily translatable into everyday police practice and policy; and
4. Research should be the outcome of blending of police experience with academic research skills (Mitchell & Huey, 2019, pp. xiv–xv).

While the principles of EBP research appear rooted in the ideals of objective inquiry, there is growing concern the process in determining what studies are effective, efficient, and useful to the police, may not be as impartial as it appears. To illustrate, Walby (2021) questions the neutrality and objective nature of research that is often “based on police research partnerships where police are in a position of approving access, approving the types of data, and approving the research question” (p. 277).

This critique carries great significance as modern policing grapples with growing concerns over the oppression and marginalization of Black and Indigenous peoples through law enforcement practices (Black Experience Project (BEP), 2014; McKay, 2021; McNielly, 2018; OHRC, 2020), yet a review of EBP research suggests, the topic is rarely discussed (Walby, 2021). To illustrate, a recent introductory text into EBP research fails to thoroughly discuss racial bias or discrimination in policing (Mitchell & Huey, 2019). Thus, how can research that promotes itself as the “gold standard” (Sherman, 2015) continue to fail to address one of the most controversial issues facing policing today?

In this chapter, I will argue that in the guise of academic rigor and knowledge production, “EBP” instead reproduces non-critical, biased research that ultimately serves to silence racialized voices, discredit racialized concerns, and oppress racialized communities. The analysis below will demonstrate that, in tandem with police officials, the academic leaders of Canada’s EBP community act as gatekeepers to police data, thus systemically thwarting thorough scholarly examinations into police-racial bias and discrimination, in Canada. Using the critical race method of storytelling, the following narrative aims to refute the notion of critical objectivity, which is often used to promote the principles of EBP. As a Canadian Black woman policing scholar, I invite the reader to experience the emotional and mental trauma navigating a traditionally conservative, White social institution that too acts to protect and promote police interests.

In the pages that follow, I will document the state of racial bias police research, in Canada. I will then speak to the role that anti-bias training often plays in response to concerns over racial bias in policing. This aims to demonstrate the importance of conducting a comprehensive and objective evaluation of these programs. I then provide a critical race narrative which outlines the powerful

influence of EBP researchers, who ultimately aid in the dissolution of a valuable police anti-bias training evaluation that could have added to the limited extant of Canadian policing research. This narrative aims to demonstrate that select EBP scholars decide what is an important area of study, which in turn, contradicts the ideals of objective police research.

EXPLORING RACIAL BIAS IN CANADIAN POLICING

Canadian research consistently reveals that members from Indigenous and Black communities are grossly over-represented in the correctional system. To illustrate, Indigenous peoples now account for 30% of the correctional population, despite representing only 5% of the overall population. Black peoples also continue to be the fastest growing racialized segment within the correctional population with most recent data indicating that Black peoples account for 8% of the correctional population, despite representing 3.5% of the overall population ([Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014, 2020](#)). Debates often center whether this proportion of over-representation is due to higher rates of racial minority offending or racial bias and discrimination within the justice system ([Fitzgerald & Carrington, 2011](#)). There is however growing evidence to suggest the over-representation may be a result of police over-surveillance and harsher charging practices ([Rudin & Zimmerman, 2014](#); [Samuels-Wortley, 2019](#); [Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2016](#)). Thus, as guardians of the state and first point of contact with the justice system, scholars argue research examining racial discrimination within policing is of particular importance ([Samuels-Wortley, 2019](#)).

Exploring racial bias within Canadian policing is not new ([Lewis, 1989, 1992](#)), however the existence of racism is often downplayed and attributed to the behaviors of a “few bad apples” ([Kaye & Jacobs, 2015](#)). Despite growing recognition of issues of systemic racism in Canadian policing ([McKay, 2021](#)), police leaders continue to question how much bias exists ([LeBlanc & Kirkup, 2020](#)). But, regardless of these debates, there is growing consensus that police services must address the reality of bias and work to minimize the negative impact on racialized communities. Incorporating anti-discrimination training for officers is often identified as one area to help address racial, gender, and sexual bias and improve police-community relations ([Kaste, 2020](#); [OHRC, 2020](#)). As such many Canadian police services are promoting their participation in these trainings ([LeBlanc & Kirkup, 2020](#)). However, do they work? A systematic search of the literature could not identify a single study that describes Canadian anti-racial bias training programs or evaluates their effectiveness.

THE ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM

Anti-bias trainers argue that bias is widespread and is a result of “implicit bias” ([Fridell, 2017](#)). As opposed to explicit bias where one demonstrates conscious malice or a transparent prejudice toward particular racial and/or ethnic

groups, the curriculum defines implicit bias as “unconscious and without intent.” Therefore, associations and beliefs, as well as discriminatory actions toward particular racial groups, are often made without intention. [Greenwald and Banaji \(1995\)](#) suggest social behaviors, including how we interact with others, are influenced by learned stereotypes. It has been argued, in fact, that the nature of policing may make police officers more susceptible to implicit biases and stereotyping than other professionals. To illustrate, [Tomaskovic-Devey, Mason, and Zingraff \(2004\)](#), suggest that stereotypes around who has a propensity to engage in crime may develop as a result of socialization into the police subculture, personal experiences as a law enforcer, and access to crime data. Therefore, police officers, like all other people, may develop an implicit bias toward a group due to these factors.

[Fridell \(2017\)](#) argues that implicit or unconscious bias is important for police officers to acknowledge because it may influence how they perceive and thus interact with individuals from racialized communities. This differential treatment, in turn, can undermine public trust or confidence in the police ([Fridell, 2017](#); [Tyler, 1990](#)). Therefore, anti-bias training, for police, follows the principles of implicit bias and argues that stereotyping can lead to false arrests involving members of marginalized communities (i.e., racial, gendered, LGBTQ+) and increase inefficiencies in street patrol and investigations. As such, law enforcement officials should be trained to become aware of their potential implicit biases.

THE PROJECT: EVALUATING A CANADIAN POLICE SERVICE IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING

In January 2015, a 200-million-dollar lawsuit was brought against a Canadian police service, by two Black individuals alleging racial profiling, a term often used in reference to police stop and search activities, based on race ([Winsa, 2015](#)). In response to the lawsuit, the service implemented an anti-bias training for all members to help address strained police and racial minority relations.

Often, anti-bias training is one of few recommendations that is readily accepted by police services, when a high-profile investigation into police misconduct is conducted ([OHRC, 2020](#)). As a Black Canadian woman policing scholar who too is a former civilian with a local police service, I have always been dismayed by the distinct lack of evaluation research on this topic. I have been interested in how officers feel about anti-bias training, whether the training can reduce bias and finally if training improves police-racial minority community relations? Therefore, I was understandably excited when, in 2015, I was asked by a municipal police service, to evaluate their new anti-bias program aimed to increase police officers’ awareness of racial bias in their organization and improve the quality of police interactions with members of racialized communities. I knew this was an important project and was honored for the opportunity to explore this crucial topic. However, it never came to be. The following examines the beginning and subsequent dissolution of this important evaluation.

METHOD

I follow a personal narrative approach, which is one of three forms of counter-storytelling within the critical race paradigm (Espinoza, 1990; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). In this method, personal stories, or “autobiographical reflections” are used to provide a better understanding into experiences with racism (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32). The counter-story is used by persons of color to share their experiences, which are often unheard, within the majoritarian. The story is then examined through a critical race lens to speak to the larger sociological impact of these experiences, thus demonstrating the nuances involved in upholding status quo in a White supremacist society. Furthermore, the counter narrative aims to empower the traditionally marginalized and give voice to those who are best suited to speak to the harms of systemic oppression (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Thus, my decision to use a personal reflection in navigating racial discrimination research within Canadian policing aims to give voice and speak to the role that racism may play in both policing and academia. This may provide further insight into why research exploring racial discriminatory policing in Canada, is limited.

MOMENT OF REFLECTION

Critical race theorists stress the importance of reflexivity (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) as the validity and credibility of the research may be called into question and assumptions may be challenged. While personal case studies are viewed as a valid form of knowledge production (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), it is important that I be upfront about my “lens” as the researcher and acknowledge the role that my values and assumptions may play in this narrative. I, a Black woman and scholar, am researching a taboo topic (Wortley, 1999) that is influenced by my own experiences with racism in a traditional White conservative institution, interested in maintaining the status quo. This carries a great power imbalance. Thus, I write this article with some trepidation and risk possible retribution. However, as argued by critical race theorists, it is our stories that can lead to a better understanding of the impact of racial discrimination and thus may lead to meaningful change, leading to racial justice (Delgado & & others, 1989). So, I share my story. All is true. I have changed the names of the individuals, as well as the police department involved. However, concrete records of all correspondence documented below, exist.

BLACK ON BLUE – THE STORY

The Beginning

I open the email from Sgt. Baker, an officer with over 20 years of service at Tearhurt Regional Police (TRP) and the Head of the Diversity and Inclusivity Unit, with both trepidation and excitement. After months of discussing the possibility of leading an evaluation of the service’s new anti-bias training initiative, I knew not to keep my hopes up. While anti-bias training is often proposed as a

solution to improving police-community relations, anti-racism initiatives within Canadian policing have rarely been subject to evaluation (OHRC, 2020). In other words, this is a possible ground-breaking study. Conducting such a study would mean a great deal, both personally (as a Black woman) and professionally (as an aspiring policing scholar).

I open the email, and to my delight, Sgt. Baker confirms the TRP want to formalize a research agreement with me! This is incredible! Maybe, just maybe, Canadian police services are beginning to take diversity initiatives seriously and see the importance of evaluating their programs, to see if they do in fact lead to positive relations with members of racialized communities.

I send the email to my PhD supervisor, Prof Shultz, a White woman researcher known for her work on Canadian policing. I want to show her that, as an incoming doctoral student, I am able to cultivate my own research projects. Being the only Black student, in an overwhelming White department (both faculty and students), I refuse to be seen as a racial token. I am already aware that some of my fellow student colleagues have expressed this among themselves.

Prof Shultz responds with a congratulations! This is so awesome – what a great way to start to the school year. She does caution that the evaluation should only be a side project, not my doctoral thesis project. I am okay with that; I'm just pleased to have this incredible opportunity.

Prof Shultz offers to speak further about the evaluation on a phone call.

Me: Hi Prof Schultz. Thanks so much for your kind congrats. I am so excited!

Prof: Schultz (PS): Yes, this is exciting. But, I just have to let you know, your project will be more credible if you do a formal research collaboration between the university and the police service.

Me: Yes, of course. That makes sense.

PS: *So, due to your status as a doctoral student, and that I am a faculty member with the department, I will have to be listed as the Principal Investigator (PI) in the research agreement.* But, this is still your project, and I will help you every step of the way!

I am a little confused by this caveat. How can I lead the investigation, but not be listed as the Principle Investigator? However, I agree to this arrangement. After all, what do I really know about my new department's practices? I'm just happy for the opportunity to collaborate with Prof Schultz! Plus, this project may help solidify my position as a good student within the department and as a policing researcher. Win-win.

Me: Okay! Sounds good. Let's do it!

The Process

Months into the project, everything is going well. Even though Prof Schultz is listed as the PI, she gives me a great deal of autonomy, as promised. She of course, does review and edit all materials including the pre-test/post-test survey used in the evaluation. Furthermore, while I develop the research protocol to be submitted to the University's research ethics board, Prof Schultz reviews and approves all materials.

Prof Schultz and I eventually attend a formal meeting between university administrators and the TRP's legal team and senior officials. At this meeting, the research contract is finalized. I'm pleased to see that on this official research contract I am listed as an investigator, with status equal to Prof Schultz. This is beginning to feel real – this pivotal research project can officially begin.

Although unpaid, as the project did not have a research budget, I work diligently on the evaluation. I attend numerous day-long TRP anti-bias training sessions, on my own. It only makes sense to attend these sessions so that I can develop a better understanding of the training curriculum. I feel that knowledge of this curriculum is crucial with respect to understanding training objectives and developing a well-informed evaluation strategy. *Prof Schultz does not attend.* She feels the project is in good hands. How great it feels to know my supervisor has such confidence in me. We establish that I am responsible for collecting pre-test/post-test surveys from officers who attend the anti-bias training sessions and explain the purpose of the study to them. I am also told that, once training is complete and all surveys collected, I will be responsible for creating a statistical dataset and data entry.

As the project continues, I grow more and more interested in understanding interactions between the police and racial minority youth. I understand, as indicated by Prof Schultz, that I cannot use the anti-bias training data for my thesis, so I propose another related project. I ask to set up a meeting.

Me: I finally got it! I know what I want to do for my thesis. I want to examine racial differences in both experiences with and attitudes toward the police. I want to collect data from a sample of Black, Indigenous and White youth. I think I should also conduct interviews with frontline police officers to ensure that police perspectives are included in my analysis. What do you think?!

PS: In all honesty, I think it would be best if you *not focus on race and policing*. The topic, *just isn't you*.

My hearts sinks. I feel deflated. I feel worthless. I feel unseen. How could a topic that directly impacts myself, and members from my own community, *not be me*? How does she not see that the issue of racism in policing is both important and under-studied – particularly in the Canadian context. Shultz continues:

PS: Plus, *you will have greater opportunities as a policing scholar if you steer away from this controversial topic*.

Me: Ya, I guess you're right.

What was I supposed to say in that moment? I don't want to make my supervisor upset. She can make or break my success as a student. I was surprised by Prof Schultz's response, but maybe I should not be. I then recall a previous discussion with Prof Schultz about publishing findings from my master's thesis which examined a pre-charge police diversion program operated by a local police service. My study found that the diversion program had dramatically reduced youth charging practices and youth incarceration. However, Black youth were also more likely to be charged with drug-related offenses, and less likely to be diverted, than their White counterparts (see Samuels-Wortley, 2019). Prof Schultz suggested

that, when publishing, I should focus on the finding that suggests a reduction in criminal charges as *police would be more interested in potential outcomes from the program and not the findings that suggest racial bias*.

This was all starting to make sense. Prof Schultz clearly did not want to discuss or study issues of race and racism – especially as it pertains to the police, and therefore she wants me to do the same. I feel uncomfortable and I think she senses it.

PS: Hey, don't worry! We will figure this out. We have lots of time. This makes me think, its time you join Canada's Evidence-Based Policing (CAN-EBP) organization. I am a member. It's headed by my friend and colleague Prof Lisa Hood. You're going to love her! Membership with the organization will help increase your knowledge of Canadian and international policing issues and will help you network with other policing scholars. Plus, Prof Hood is an important policing scholar. I'm going to set up a meeting with her soon. *This is what's best for you.*

Me: Okay sounds great! I can't wait.

I think to myself, maybe Prof Schultz is right. *If I talk about race, those within policing circles will not want to work with me.* Maybe I did need to find another project or projects in which race is not the focus. This would prove that I am a well-rounded scholar who is interested in all aspects of policing – not just those that focus on race. So, while uncomfortable with Prof Schultz's insistence, maybe she did provide some sound advice. I should explore the entire range of policing issues and increase my network. I join CAN-EBP, that very evening. The next day, I receive an email from Prof Hood, welcoming me to CAN-EBP. I think to myself; she seems nice.

The Delay

It's now a year and a half into my doctoral studies. I have finished my courses – all with grades of A+ or A. I am feeling good about myself. I am now compiling a reading list for my first comprehensive exam on research methodologies and police culture. I'm also deep into the anti-bias evaluation, collecting and reviewing all surveys. In conversation with Prof Schultz, I tell her that I have developed the data set and am now entering the data.

I received an email from Prof Schultz asking me to drop off all the surveys I've collected so far. She explains that *"other" police services are starting to inquire about the effectiveness of the training program and she wants to examine the data.* At this point, I have hundreds of survey's in my possession. I find the request weird as it was established that it was going to be my job to enter the surveys. Regardless, I comply. I stress to Prof Schultz I am still very interested in entering and analyzing the data.

I visit Prof Schultz and drop off all TRP surveys in my possession. We speak briefly about the project.

PS: Don't worry about putting in the data. Let me take care of this, while you concentrate on your comprehensive exam. As your supervisor, I know what is best. It is more important for you to finish your exam. I am protecting you. I can do this on my down time. After your exam, we'll get back to this together, okay?

I get a little upset at this point, as I feel like Prof Schultz is excluding me from analyzing the data.

PS: As more surveys come in, make sure you drop them off to me, okay?

Maybe, she is right? Maybe I should focus on my comprehensive exam. After all, Prof Schultz is my supervisor, and she wants me to complete my exam. So, it's fine. I will put my full attention to the project when my exam is over. I agree.

That night Prof Schultz sends pictures of "gems" she finds within the surveys, implying some participants are not taking the training seriously. This is certainly going to be an interesting evaluation.

The Disappearing Act

A month later, I receive an email from the Graduate Coordinator from my department informing me Prof Schultz, is unavailable to all students, indefinitely. This means no contact, in anyway. I am advised that if I have to reach her, all contact must go through the graduate office. I am to be given an interim supervisor.

I am in shock. What is going to happen with my exam, but more important, to me, what is happening with the TRP project! Prof Schulz has half the surveys, and I, since our last meet, have received more from the TRP.

I write back expressing concern. In response, the graduate coordinator assures me that everything will be okay. Prof Schultz will deal directly with the TRP about the project, and I would be kept informed about next steps.

I break protocol – I call Prof Shultz. I have to. I have to know what is going on with the evaluation.

Me: I heard that some of your other students have been in contact with you, so I too am breaking the "no contact" rule. I am so sorry.

PS: You're not breaking any rule. It's fine. Everything will be fine. I think this project might be something. I'm actually in talks to do an evaluation with another service. This is going to be great. More projects for us are going to come down the pipeline. Just be patient. Bring me any additional surveys. And we'll talk more when I see you next.

Me: Um, okay but just to remind you, we have an upcoming deadline to provide a report and Sgt. Baker sent me an email asking for further information, I'm just worried that...

PS: Don't worry! I will request the project be put on hold for a bit. Just drop off any additional surveys.

Me: But, I can do the data entry! I can do this. I want to enter and analyze the data with you!

I think to myself, why am I pleading to work on a project, that I started, helped develop its evaluation instruments, attended trainings, and collected surveys materials from participants? But, I can't question my own supervisor.

PS: Just drop off the surveys.

Me: Okay.

I don't drop off the surveys. Maybe Prof Schultz will allow me to input the data, as was agreed upon.

I receive an email from the Department Chair, Prof O'Donnell asking me to bring all remaining TRP surveys, in my possession to his office. He states he will subsequently give them to Prof Schultz.

At this point, I'm confused. I don't understand why *I* cannot complete work on the evaluation. I am, after all, a co-investigator! I feel my project is slipping away and no one is telling me why. I just want to do the research that speaks to the safety of my own community. So, I refuse. I will not return these surveys, until I know what is going on.

I send an email to the Chair expressing concern over leaving sensitive confidential data in possession with anyone not related to the project. He responds by stating Prof Schultz plans to work on the project during her "downtime" and that as her "manager" there are no concerns about his handling of the data. He too suggests that I not worry about any impending TRP report deadline, based on an email received from Lisa Hood, which he forwards.

Lisa Hood – The leader of CAN-EBP? I think to myself, what does Lisa Hood have to do with my anti-bias project?

Hi Chair O'Donnell,

"I've had confirmation from TRP that [they are] fine with providing an extension on the training study...Please be assured that none of this is a big deal to anyone."

I re-read the last sentence over again – "be assured that none of this is a big deal to *anyone*." But this is a big deal to me! Why is Lisa Hood requesting an extension when one is not needed? I have continuously stressed, to both the Chair and supervisor, that I can and will work on the project. And furthermore, I thought the service cared as much about this evaluation as they publicly acknowledged their commitment to address issues of diversity and explicitly list both Prof Schultz and I as evaluators for their anti-bias training (released on March 9, 2017).

It is becoming painstakingly clear. I am being removed from my own project without notification or explanation. I was now in a position where both my Department Chair and supervisor are asking that I turn over all project data, that has my name on it. There is a huge power differential. This does not feel right.

The Gatekeeper

I am growing increasingly disenchanted. My supervisor, who claimed to support me, will no longer answer any of my calls or emails. Not only is the approval of my comprehensive exam in jeopardy, but along with Prof Schultz silence, a project that not only means a great deal to me, but could also be a significant research contribution to Canadian policing, feels like it is ending. What do I do? Who can I turn to?

I once again recall Prof Hood's email. Now that I know that she too is aware of the project, maybe she can provide some insight into why the study is no longer "a big deal." I feel confident I will hear from her. After all, she is already working with at least two students in the department, who both describe her as both kind and supportive. Albeit, the students are White, but that shouldn't make any

difference. Also, she welcomed me into the CAN-EBP community when I joined. This may be a great opportunity to have a more detailed conversation about my goals in being a policing researcher. Prof Schultz had mentioned wanting me to meet and possibly work with Prof Hood. Plus, it's common for students to reach out to professors from other universities for advice or assistance. I decide, this is a fantastic idea.

"Dear Dr Hood,

I'd like to take this opportunity to formally introduce myself...

I go on to make two inquires. I first ask if, as an acknowledged researcher in the area, she might review my draft comprehensive reading list on the topic of police culture. I thought she might have suggestions about crucial readings to add. Secondly, I ask (I have to, as its killing me!) if she has any knowledge of the TRP anti-bias training evaluation. More specifically, I state:

"I saw your email to Chair O'Donnell...I am simply inquiring as to whether you are now involved in the project. I do hope you can understand my interest on this issue as it is a project I'm still quite interested in and am excited to start. I appreciate your time."

I think, maybe not all is lost. How great would it be to have this influential Canadian policing scholar to promote the importance of this work? But, to my shock and horror, I received the following response:

"Dear Kanika,

You may not be aware, but I am currently on sabbatical, run multiple projects, have 7 students of my own and run a national research network of 650 members, so yeah, I'm busy. I'm not currently looking to take on any additional unpaid work, but thanks for asking...Also you may be unaware of this, *but I vouched for Prof Schultz [with the TRP] as the PI. I have a long standing relationship with them – they are one of CAN-EBP's partners and I am very protective of the agencies we work with* so when the matter of a deadline came up, I simply asked for them to grant an extension. No muss, no fuss. Problem over.

So, let me be clear: while I can appreciate your "enthusiasm," when it comes to asking me for favours or what my position is on this or any other project, as the kids say these days "you don't know me like that."

Good luck with your comp and future projects.

Dr Lisa Hood"

I'm humiliated. But not only humiliated, I am angry. Rather than politely state that she was busy and could not assist me at this time, Prof Hood appears to want to insult or belittle me. What does she mean when she states, "*I vouched for Prof Schultz [with the TRP] as the PI*"? Prof Schultz was never the one to start this project! The evaluation was not her idea, and in fact, I was the one to do the leg work to get the project started! But does that matter? Can projects only be vetted, if supported by the head of CAN-EBP? This can't be the way policing research work is done. Where is the objectivity? Where is the neutrality? (Walby, 2021). Furthermore, how can a White woman scholar be vetted for racial bias research? None of this makes sense or seems to follow the principles of "EBP" (Mitchell & Huey, 2019).

I immediately reply to Prof Hood and express my disappointment in her response. I write

"I am sorry my email upset you. I approached you as a known expert in the field and hoped that you might provide a bit of advice...As for TRP, I just wanted an update with respect to deadlines. I am looking to assist in any way possible. As a researcher I hope you can understand why I might be concerned about the study...I'm sorry if my email made you feel "protective" of the TRP. I can assure you I mean them no harm. I just want to conduct an objective study on bias training – a topic that has received very little research attention...*It is tough to break into policing research circles. The situation may be particularly tough for Black women as we are not 'of the norm'.*...I did not mean you any disrespect."

I am devastated that the leader of Canada's largest police research organization told me off and implied that I should never contact her again.

I wake up the next day, replaying the events in my head. Did that happen? A student, just dismissed by a senior academic for simply asking for help.

I turn on my phone and it is confirmed; this is indeed real. I see a text message from my supervisor, who has been avoiding me for weeks, and she states:

PS: "Stop all communication with Lisa. She has withdrawn from all committee work at the university as of last night...if you want to follow-up on the email content or tone, the first stop is the Chair. I'm off the grid until I come back."

And that is that. Prof Schultz does not provide any other advice, sympathy, or support. She continues to avoid answering any of my questions from previous correspondence – including why she does not want me to enter data related to the TRP project. She simply wants the data and have me go away.

I don't respond. This in fact, becomes the last correspondence I ever have with Prof Shultz.

The Chair

I receive an email from the Chair to discuss "the matter." Of course. He after all was cc'd in all correspondence between Lisa Hood and myself. Might he have some encouraging words to say? I attend the Chair's office.

The Chair: So, I read your email correspondence last night. I think it's best if you send Prof Hood an apology for *your inflammatory email.*"

He thought my response was inflammatory? Why should I be the one to write an apology for my initial correspondence which I felt was polite and professional. She was the one who dismissed me in a hostile, belittling and unprofessional fashion. My second email to her was not "inflammatory." I was simply trying to defend myself against a much more powerful scholar.

The Chair: Prof Hood is an asset to the department and is set to become an adjunct professor in the near future. I don't want to ruin this opportunity. Also, Prof Schultz is a great professor with an exemplary publishing record. I want her to feel comfortable when she returns. If you want, I can draft an apology for you.

I sit in the Chair's office feeling upset and unsafe. He does not seem at all interested in my own feelings or treatment. He asks no questions about my state

of mind, stress level or worries. He appears to only be concerned with Professor Hood and Schultz's feelings and whether Prof Hood would continue to work with the department. It is confirmed. These people have no concern for my personal welfare or my academic future.

It is at this very moment, I give up. It is no longer worth it.

I drop off all remaining surveys to the Chair.

Any evidence of my involvement in a project that means more to me than any White researcher will ever know, is now gone. I never hear from Prof Shultz, Hood, or the Chair again. There is no support for someone like me. It is clear that I don't belong here.

The Institutional Exclusion

The act of exclusion does not stop with the end of the project. I learn that Prof Schultz begins to tell fellow student colleagues that she is dropping me as a student. She expresses that I ruined the research project and, believes I should have never been admitted as a PhD student, but was only accepted because of my race.

I learn that Prof Schultz started a new research project with a larger police service to evaluate their anti-bias training program. I too learn a fellow White graduate student is acting as her research assistant. The devastation is too much. I can only assume Prof Schultz has used our anti-bias training project with the TRP to attract research opportunities. I worry about the theft of my intellectual property, but no one, in my department cares. With the silence of all in the department, to what extent Prof Schultz's new research project reflect the research methodology I helped develop for the TRP project, I will never know.

Months later, I speak to Sgt. Baker from the TRP, who initially supported me as the original evaluator. He reports he has moved on and is no longer in charge of their anti-bias training program. He shares that Prof Schultz has been in correspondence with the TRP, and has told all senior police leaders that the survey instrument, used to evaluate the training program, was flawed. How could she state that when both Prof Schultz and I worked on the instrument that also passed ethics?

It's Sgt. Baker's next statement that sends a chill. He states, "I'd advise you to get as far away from the project and Prof Schultz, because she is throwing you under the bus for it all." My heart sinks as my fears are confirmed. Prof Schultz was actively blaming me for the dissolution of the project, and in the process smearing my name within policing circles. It is official. My police research career is done, before it even began.

The End

Weeks later, I receive an email from TRP indicating that they are terminating the research contract. At this point, I am no longer confused. I'm numb. This was inevitable.

On the same day, both Prof Schultz and I receive a message from the Senior Manager of the University's research office, inquiring about research materials and also why the contract was terminated. Prof Schultz responds, stating that she will provide all information upon her formal return to the University. I also send a response confirming that I no longer am in possession of any data and too am interested to know why the project was terminated.

Shortly after, the Senior Manager confirms Prof Schultz has sent a reason for the dissolution, but that I am not privy to this information. Surprise. I continue to be left in the dark. Despite being listed as a co-investigator, I am not allowed to see the "official" reason for why the project has ended. Imagine that. Once again, it is clear. In opposition to Prof Schultz, I have no voice or power. Even in a space that claims to support and care about the issues that impact people who look like me, I am made to feel isolated, ostracized, and unimportant. I do not matter.

DISCUSSION

Using all powers and levels within both the policing and academic institution, a select number of scholars are able to block the dissemination of Canadian policing research that addresses racial bias and discrimination. The very same institutions that EBP scholars claim must collaborate to help develop "effective and efficient policing programs" (Mitchell & Huey, 2019, p. xiv). The narrative above leads to more questions, rather than answers. If Black researchers who explore issues that directly impact Black peoples are systematically excluded from this process, is this research impartial and objective? Is this because the issue of race and policing is not important? Or is it because this is an issue that police leaders and their researchers are not comfortable to explore? Are police approved researchers comfortable with the collection and dissemination of data that might be used to critique or highlight the limitations of law enforcement practices? Are the police uncomfortable with the release of data that makes them look bad? If so – do they try to prevent research on any controversial issue? What is clear, however, is when it comes to racial justice work in Canada, my experience as an emerging Black policing scholar demonstrates how easy it is for White policing researchers to do work "about us, *without* us" (Charlton, 2000).

Without any opportunity to demonstrate my skills and abilities as an evaluator, or any insight into why the evaluation ended, I can only speculate as to why I was taken off the project, as well as its subsequent termination. Did the survey results demonstrate the training was not working? If there were negative participant responses may this suggest that racism exists within Canadian policing and that anti-bias training will not eliminate the problem? Was there concern, that having a Black woman on the project, could lead to questions about objectivity if these results were buried? After all, the head of CAN-EBP herself indicated she pushed for Prof. Schultz to be the PI, in efforts to "protect the service." Furthermore, if results suggest the training is ineffective, does this look good for police services that spend large amounts of tax-payer dollars on futile training that does little to improve police-racial minority relations? As such, was the

project stopped and the results never disseminated, as a form of damage control? Was I then the scapegoat to place all blame so that Prof Schultz did not risk damage to her close relationship with the police, by publishing a study that would make training efforts appear woefully inadequate?

Regardless, what I do know is that this experience not only negatively impacted me as a Black doctoral student but made me realize how important data is for the Black community who are supposed to trust that police services are making the right decisions with respect to training. As such, I realize that, as a Black woman scholar dedicated to understanding the role and impact of race and racism in Canadian policing, I could not work within the Canadian “evidence-based” policing community. I cannot sell my soul to diminish the importance of race and racism, with respect to law enforcement.

CONCLUSION

Luckily, I overcame the obstacles and barriers in my early doctoral career and was able to find a supportive supervisor and colleagues who believe in my work. This too includes law enforcement officials and other policing scholars who are actively engaged in research that aims to improve police and racial community relations. Therefore, I must make it clear that not *all* policing researchers feel and conduct themselves in the manner of those mentioned in this story. However, when the leader and current members of the Canadian policing community do act as gatekeepers to vital data, and is supported by police leaders, there is cause for concern. These leaders and members will likely dismiss this article as “unscientific,” but this is my story, my truth, and my evidence.

To truly improve the institution of Canadian policing, law enforcement officials can no longer continue to push hopeful and positive tropes that fail to address the cynicism and frustrations of racialized communities. This only continues to ignore the voices of those who are affected the most, and impedes meaningful reform.

More transparency from police services, is needed. In order to document racism and evaluate the impact of initiatives that aim to address anti-racism and increase public trust, we require improved race-based data collection, and fair access to evaluate anti-racism initiatives. This requires a commitment to work with researchers, including researchers of color, and members of the racialized communities who are willing to make critical inquiries into law enforcement practices. We can no longer rely on researchers that just give the police the answers they are looking for.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to thank Dr Scot Wortley for their endless support during the difficult period discussed in the story.

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