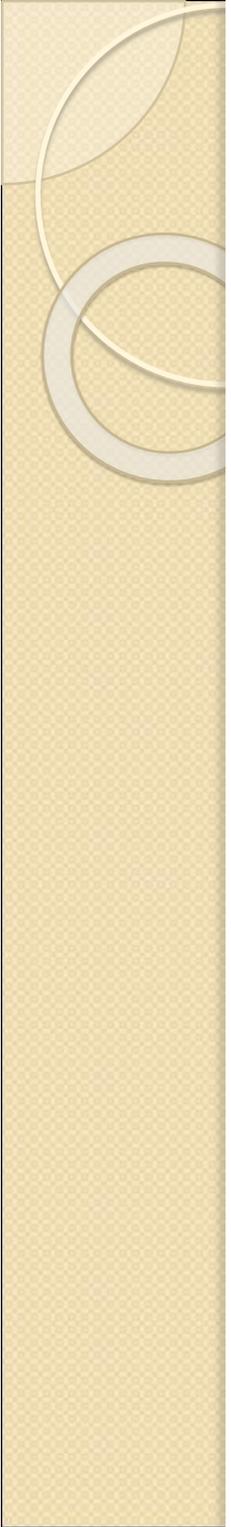


*Institutional diversity discourses and Black student experiences in Canada and the U.S.*

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# About Me

- Born in Toronto, Ontario to Caribbean immigrant parents
- B.Sc. Psychology and Economics, *University of Toronto*
- B.Ed. *University of Toronto* (secondary school specialization in 'Urban' education)
- M.A. in Adult Education and Counselling Psychology (*OISE/UT*)
- Ph.D. (2015) in Education from *Cornell University* in Ithaca, New York with a specialization in Learning, Teaching, and Social Policy



# Funding

- SSHRC (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Dissertation Fellowship) 2011-2012. (\$20,000 USD)
- Grant covered data collection costs (travel, research participant honoraria, equipment costs)

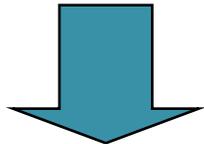
# Sequence of Questions and Methodological Actions (Constas, 2009)

## Questions

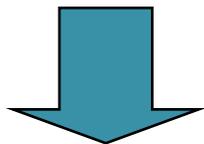
What is the problem?



What are the design requirements, given the problem definition?



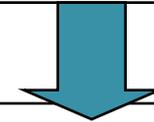
What population will be studied (or other data source?)



How will data be collected?

## Actions

- Selection, Focus & Justification
- Contextualization
- Definition & Operationalization
- Specification of empirical content



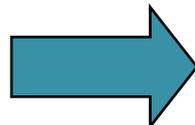
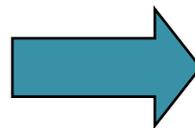
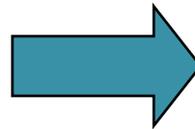
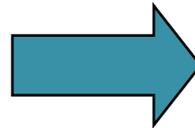
- Substantive ambitions
- Developmental trajectory
- Epistemological claims
- Political content



- Population knowledge
- Sampling strategy
- Sampling bias



- Instrumentation
- Orientation to the field (socially/pol.)

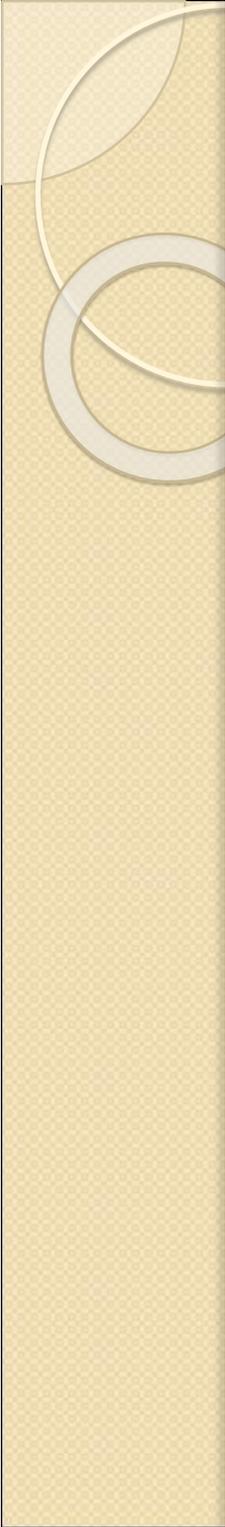


# Methodology

## Qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2002)

- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2002). Handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & In Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). The Sage handbook of qualitative research. Thousand Oaks: Sage





# The Research Problem?

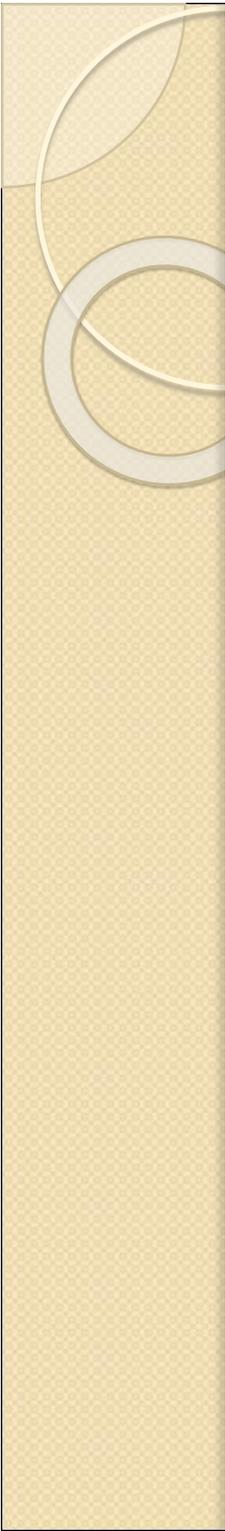
Many quantitative and qualitative studies in the U.S. and Canada show that Black students are underrepresented in higher education and have higher attrition rates.

## Methodology (continued)

**Epistemological aims:** Descriptive (What does it look like? Actual experiences of students)

### **Data collection:**

- Collective case study (Stake, 2007).
- A cross-sectional sample of 42 Black students at both institutions were interviewed and 12 Diversity Administrators.
- Discourse/textual analysis of published documents, web sites, and advertisements related to diversity initiatives.
- Observation of lectures, public spaces, social events.



# Epistemic Aim and Approach

## Type of knowledge: Descriptive study

- To understand the problem, a detailed description of the students' experiences will be sought.
- According to the typology provided by Denzin and Lincoln (2002), my project fits into the tradition of critical theory/constructionism. This is because rather than seeking a positivist experimental outcome showing causation, this descriptive work will show how social constructionism is embedded in the process. Its foundation is located within a social critique (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002).

# Case Study Analysis

- Stake, R.(2005). *Multicase research methods: Step by step cross-case analysis*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Stake, R. (2010). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, Calif. Sage.

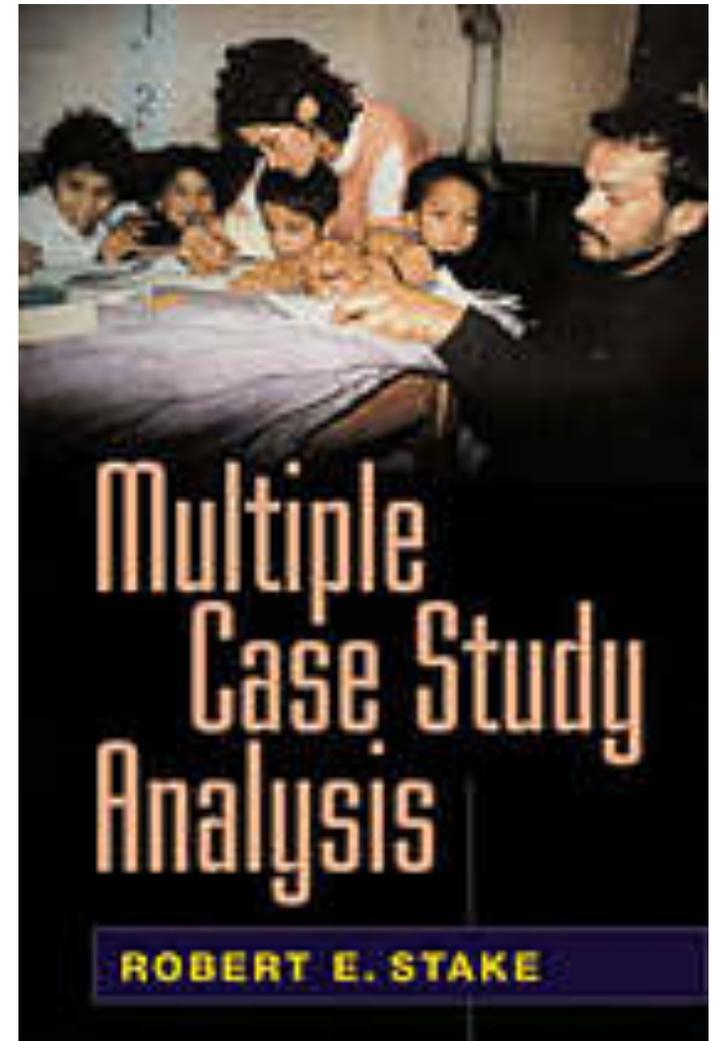


Table 3.1 Research questions

CONTEXT	QUESTION	DATA COLLECTION METHOD/CHAPTER FINDINGS
<b>Individual</b>	i) How do Black university students articulate their responses to diversity-related media at their institutions?	Qualitative interviews with a sample of Black students from each institution (Chapters Five and Six)
	ii) How do Black students experience the practices associated with institutional diversity discourses in their everyday interactions within their institutions?	
<b>Institutional</b>	i) How are diversity discourses manifested in university policy statements, web sites, brochures, and mission statements?	Qualitative interviews with diversity administrators at both institutions (Chapter Four, Chapter Seven)
	ii) How do these diversity discourses influence institutional practices?	
<b>National</b>	i) What are some of the similarities and differences between the institutional diversity discourses in Canada and the U.S.?	Textual analysis of policy documents (Chapter Four)

# Stratified Purposeful Sample

Country	Gender	Racial Identification	Year
U.S. (students)=21	Male (11) Female (10)	Black	Sophomores (6) Juniors (6) Seniors (5) Graduate students (3)
U.S. (administrators)=6	Female (4) Male (2)	Latina (1) Black (3) White (2)	
Canada (students)=21	Female (15) Male (6)	Black	Second year (4) Third year (7) Fourth year (5) Grad students (5)
Canada (administrators)=6	Female (3) Male (3)	Black (3) White (3)	

# Qualitative Sampling

## 15 Forms of Purposeful Sampling (Patton, 2002)

### Sampling Methods

- Extreme or deviant
- Maximum variation
- Homogeneous
- Typical/modal case
- Snowball or chain
- Critical case
- Theory-based
- Confirming/discon.
- Stratified purposeful
- Opportunistic/emerg.
- Purposeful random
- Political importance
- Convenience  
desirable

### Basic Logic

Information Rich/Contrast (e.g., success v. failure)

Patterns found in heterogeneous cases

Similarity within a particular groups (one end of a spectrum)

Modal-like sampling –but usually based on qual data

Building from key informants onward –social networks

Event/case based that provide illustrative/telling data

Based on prior empirical/theoretical knowledge of construct

Search for cases (interactively) that support/challenge findings

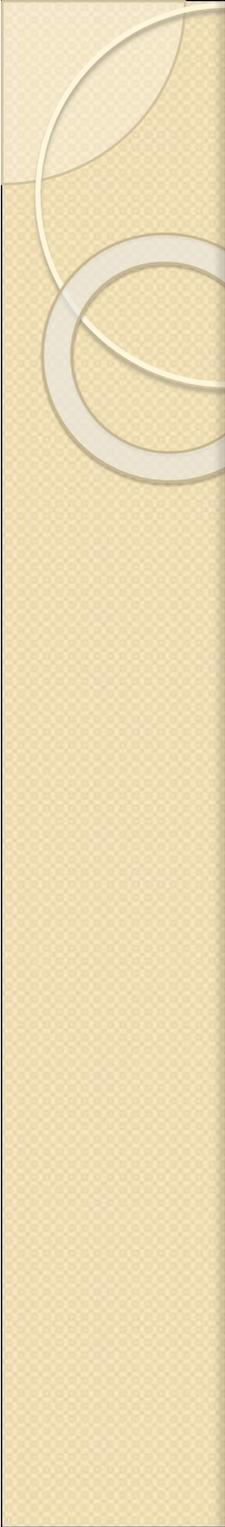
Samples within samples (gender, SES...interact. Assumptions)

Impromptu decisions about sampling

Same logic as quantitative

Political sensitivity/valence

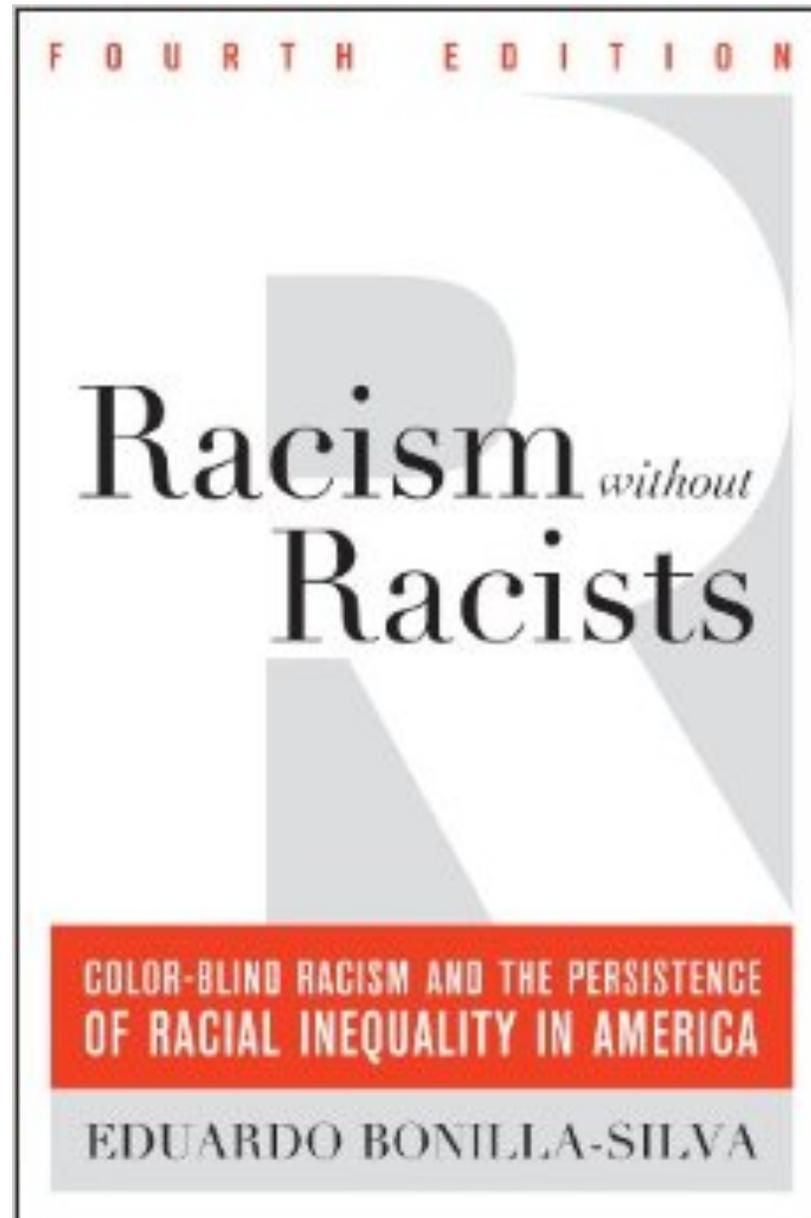
No logic—”who can I get?” Most common and least



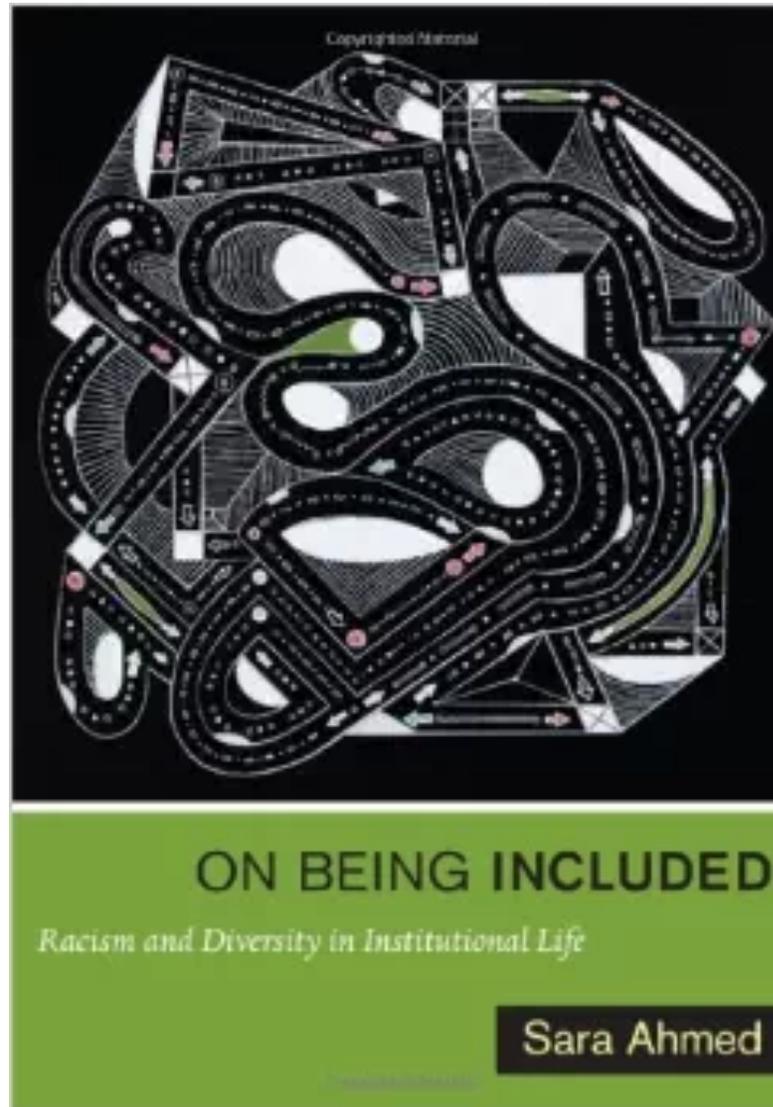
# Theoretical Frameworks

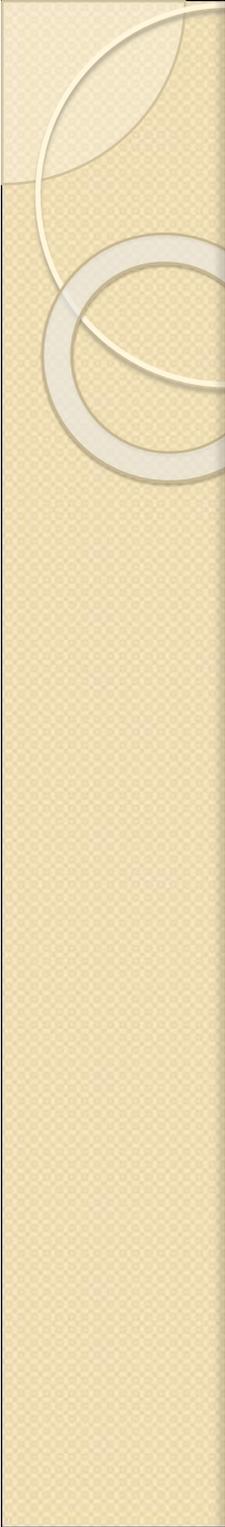
- **Critical Discourse Analysis of Language** (Ahmed, 2012; Fairclough, 1995).
- Social Reproduction (Bourdieu, 1984; Jackson, 1968)
- Agency (counterstorytelling hooks, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).
- **Color-blind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; 2014)** refers to the idea that racial inequality exists simultaneously with the contemporary view that race is no longer relevant. Its primary manifestations are in subtle, racially coded language, and in institutional practices.

# Bonilla-Silva (2006;2014)



# Ahmed (2012) On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life



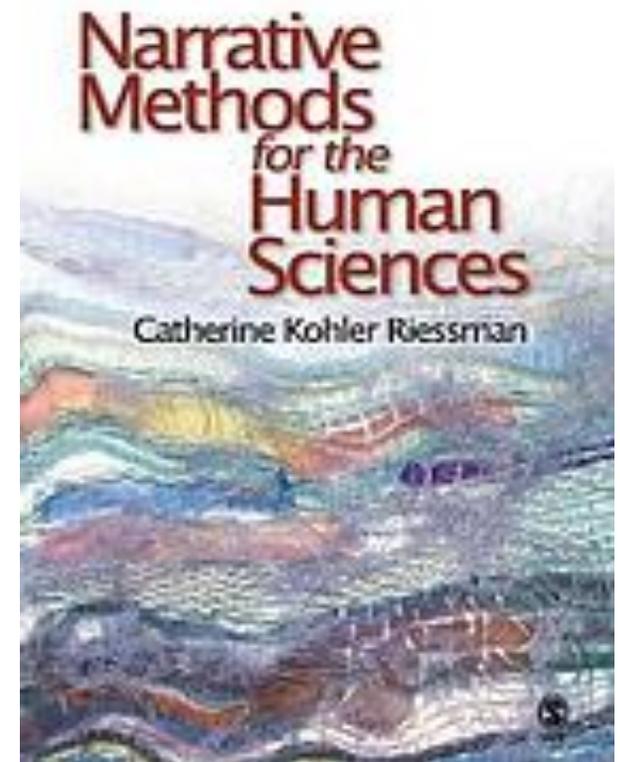


# Timeline of this study

- September 2011-November 2011  
Research Ethics approval process
- Data collection November 2011 to  
March 2013
- Transcription and Data Analysis January  
2013 to March 2013
- Writing period March 2013 to 2014

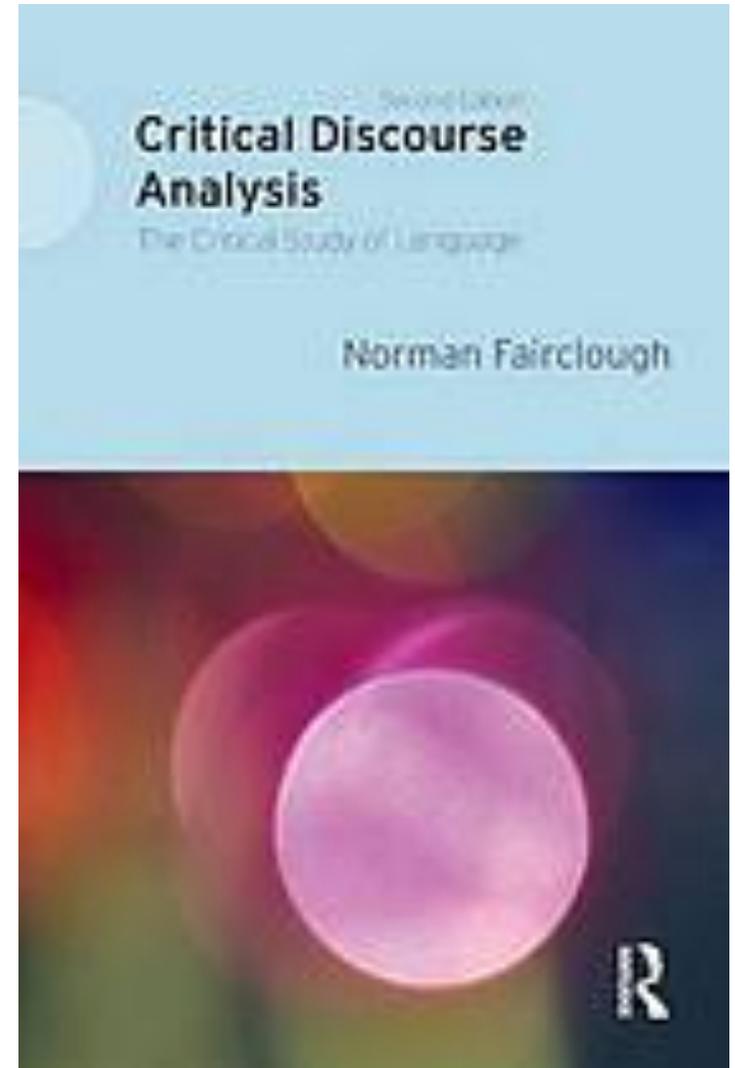
# Data Analysis

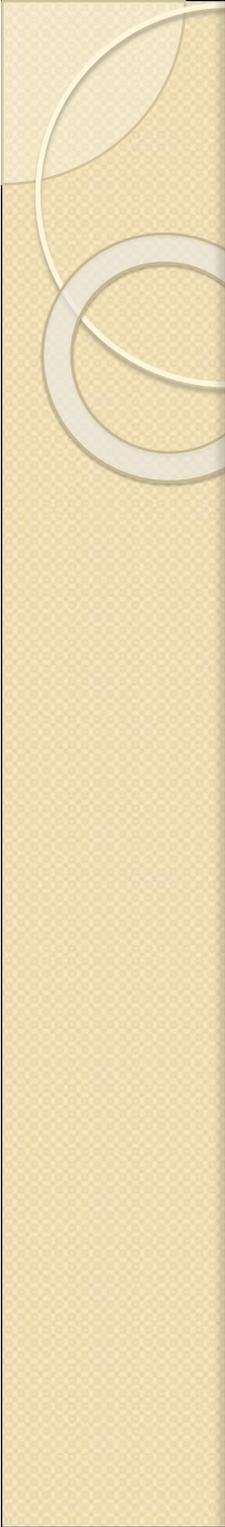
- Interviews with participants:  
Narrative analysis (Chase, 2005; Riessman, 2008)
- Riessman, C. K. (2008).  
*Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Text (CDA)
- Validity: member checks with interview transcripts sent to each participant for review.



# Critical Discourse Analysis

- Fairclough, N. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Routledge.
- Wodak, R. (2013). *Critical discourse analysis*. London: Sage.





# **Main Findings: Textual and Visual Analysis**

- Diversity used a promotional feature (competitive differentiator) of the both universities.
- Language drew on managerial diversity discourses
- Diversity focus on undergraduate students

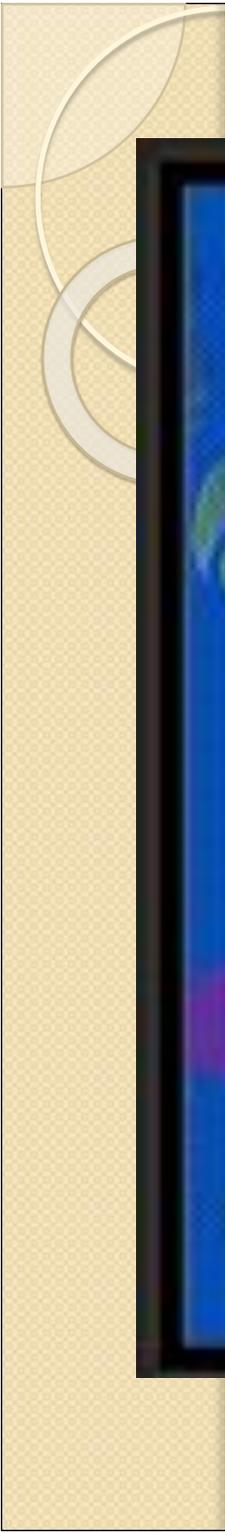
Community

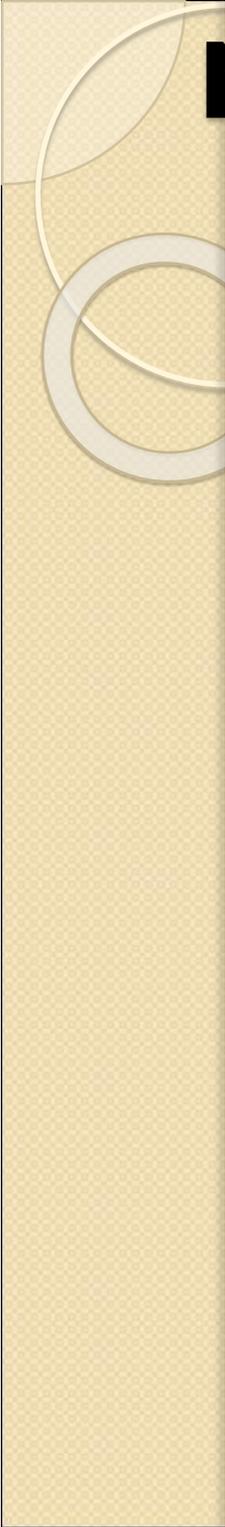
Individual

I am Diversity I am **UB**

2011-2012

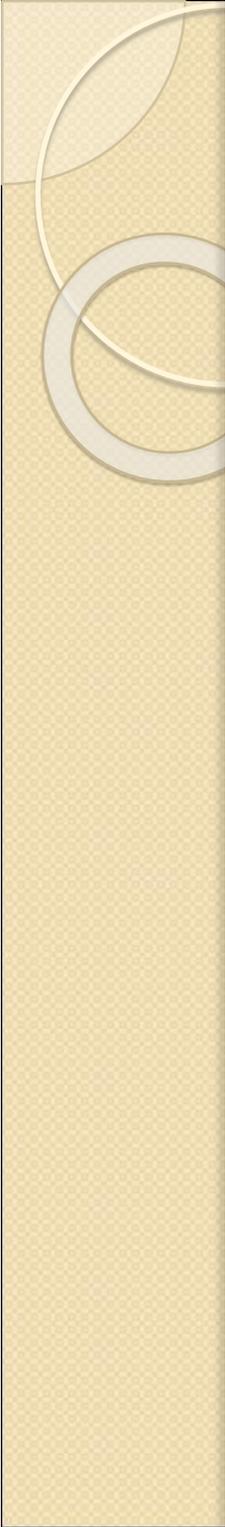
students *first*





# **Main Findings: Student Interview Narratives**

- Canadian and U.S. participants had similar experiences.
- Contradictions between discourse of inclusivity and actual experiences of exclusion.
- Black students' discussion of diversity draws on more of a human rights/social justice frame than the university discourses.



# Main Findings: Diversity Administrators

- Almost all were disillusioned by the limitations of their ability to effect change.
- Institutional hegemony in the form of power relations/hierarchy, language (silencing race talk), managerial discourses, globalization, recruitment of international students.
- Consistent with Ahmed's (2012) metaphor of the 'brick wall' that diversity administrators come up against.



# Limitations?

- Sample size: two institutions
- Methodology: focus groups?
- Selection bias
- Researcher objectivity/subjectivity shaping the data.