

Articles

Engaging Community: Exploring the African-Canadian Experience Through Dialogue and Script Writing

Jennifer R. Kelly, University of Alberta

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to contribute to our understanding of how researchers and adult and continuing education scholars can work collectively with communities of adults. It illustrates the links between theory and practice in community-university engagement. The paper expands our understanding of the ways in which research data and arts-based activities can be used as the basis of knowledge generation when working with adults in communities. In particular the paper examines the process of producing a play script based on data generated through oral history interviews undertaken with people from the Caribbean who came to Alberta in the 1960s to early 1970s. This process resulted in unearthing of new knowledge, insights, and understandings within African-Canadian communities in Alberta.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette communication a pour but de contribuer à notre compréhension de la façon dont les chercheurs et les chercheurs-boursiers en éducation permanente et en éducation aux adultes peuvent travailler de concert avec des communautés d'adultes. Cela illustre les liens entre la théorie et la pratique en engagement communautaire-universitaire. Plus particulièrement, la communication examine le processus de production d'un scénario basé sur des données générées pendant des entrevues orales sur l'histoire entreprises avec des peuples des caraïbes qui sont arrivés en Alberta au cours des années 1960 et 1970. Ce processus eut pour résultat la découverte de nouvelles connaissances, de nouveaux aperçus et de nouvelles compréhensions des communautés afro-canadiennes de l'Alberta.

INTRODUCTION

This paper contributes to the existing body of continuing and adult education literature that explores the relationship between theories and practice of community-based research partnerships. Further, it illustrates that an arts-based research process such as the writing of a play script can offer an opening for discussing potentially difficult knowledge forms (around sensitive intersections of race, class, and gender) as well as a way to build on and continue knowledge generation. Such arts-based processes allow us to recognize that knowledge is not static and final, but rather part of a process of conceptualization and re-conceptualization. The presentation of interview data through a non-traditional format can contribute to our theoretical understanding and perhaps require broadening of the concept of “community” by allowing for the emergence of complexity and heterogeneity within the often singular perception of African-Canadian identity and community. Developing of the script and community engagement around the issue of African-Canadian immigration experiences illustrate that new knowledge insights and understandings can be generated through this form of arts-based research activity.

This paper will briefly outline the research design perspectives and theoretical framework of the overall research program. It will explain the broader research context within which the play and the script developed, namely, the African-Canadian experience from the early 1900s to post-World War II immigration, with a focus on the 1960s and early 1970s. Next, it will examine the script research design and will report on some findings and interpretation of the process. The last two sections of the paper provide a brief discussion of implications and possibilities for further research and the practice of continuing adult education, followed by some conclusions.

RESEARCH DESIGN PERSPECTIVE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The initial research upon which this paper is based was funded in 2006 by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Standard Research Grant entitled *Racialization, Immigration and Citizenship (RIC) 1900–1960s*. The development of a script received additional funding from an Edmonton Cultural Capital grant in 2008. The core research project has been divided into three broad periods—1900–1920 (exploring in particular “racialization”), 1921–1945 (focused on “citizenship”), 1946–1970s (emphasizing the “immigration” experience and extending the period to the early 1970s)—that constitute the formation of African-Canadian communities and their experiences in Alberta 1900–1970. This paper relates to the 1946–1970 period, in particular to interviews conducted with women and men who emigrated from the Caribbean in the 1960s and early 1970s. Since the overall purpose of the broader research is to explore community formation, it seemed expedient to see if the data could be used in multiple ways to explore community formation through a process of writing and reading a script covering this later period. Community formation in this context refers to the process whereby various individuals and groups who arrive as, for example, Jamaicans, Americans, or Nigerians become African-Canadians or Canadian Blacks. To what extent do they identify themselves as one community, unified or not in values, attitudes, and ideologies? Community as a concept has come under scrutiny through the work of theorists such as Zygmunt Bauman (2001), who points out that “it will be never immune from further reflection, contest and argument; if anything, it may reach the status of a ‘rolling contract’, an agreement to agree which needs to be periodically renewed, without any renewal carrying a guarantee of a next one” (p. 14). It was this process of agreement without guarantee that I was interested in exploring.

The development of the play, therefore, came out of a more traditional approach to research that involved data generation via interviews and document analysis. However, as the data generation unfolded, it became apparent that the use of a script could act as a vehicle for further knowledge generation and dialogue around the concept of community. This proved to be the case. While the original intent was to bring focus groups together to discuss experiences of immigration and community building as described in the interviews conducted with women and men who emigrated from the Caribbean in the 1960s and early 1970s, it soon became apparent that dialogue was an important method for exploring new knowledge generation and community identity.

From an adult and continuing education perspective, the paper draws on theorists such as Paulo Freire (1970), who advocates starting with and giving recognition to community knowledge as well as the transformative potential of dialogue. Further, I take up Etienne Wenger's idea that "learning is an integral part of our everyday lives and that through engagement in the everyday we can tap into the sources of knowledge" (1998, p. 28). Communities have knowledge that can be accessed through dialogue. Several adult educators who work in the area of arts-informed or aesthetic education are also influential in conceptualizing this paper. As argued by Sharan Merriam,

there needs to be recognition that adult learning is more than cognitive processing . . . and that it takes place in various contexts has not only enhanced our understanding of *how* adults learn but expanded our thinking as to which instructional strategies might be employed to foster adult learning. (2008, p. 97)

Learning, in this context, involves an empathetic connection between people. As a process, the play is able to offer people a medium for

surfacing and reflecting critically on their own experiences and those of others around the same or similar phenomena. This parallels Armstrong's concept (2005) of how the arts can constitute two spaces of artistic potential: private space (self-understanding) and social space (understanding others through generative conversation about community within society). (Hayes & Yorks, 2007, p. 93)

Further, it can be argued that one of the goals of community-university engagement is captured by SSHRC's website description of its Community-University Research Alliance (CURA):

By working together as equal partners in a research endeavour, post-secondary institutions and community organizations can jointly develop new knowledge and capabilities in key areas, sharpen research priorities, provide new research training opportunities, and enhance the ability of social sciences and humanities research to meet the needs of Canadian communities in the midst of change. (SSHRC, 2010)

One of the important aspects in relation to dialogue is the play's ability to allow for differences (identification with geographic region, gender, sexualities, and class) to surface during the exploration of immigration experiences. As Scher notes,

the arts create a multiplicity of views that can offer many entry points for conversation and change. In the arts, we are each in our own way engaged in a battle against homogenization, struggling to build a new sense of ourselves, a sense of possibility, and a way of seeing outside of the ordinary. (2007, p.6)

Review of earlier literature on this area confirms that ready engagement in a dialogue opens many topics for discussion that other more traditional textual approaches might not. Arts-based encounters can be an exciting venture to engage with a topic that might not otherwise be aired (Scher, 2007).

The ability to discuss issues surrounding how we engage and use the concept “community” also illustrates how we view everyday experiences. How does the narration of the everyday lives of people who came from the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s relate to knowledge? In particular I draw on the work of Henri Lefebvre, a French social theorist and philosopher who argues that what is regarded as trivial in everyday life (micro aspects) is just as complex as what is traditionally perceived as the macro-sociological—“both levels ‘reflect’ the society which encompasses them and which they constitute” (1991, p.140). They cannot be analyzed as separate domains. Drawing on Lefebvre’s dialectical approach to the study of everyday life, we are able to link the specific instances of comings and goings within the African-Canadian communities to the wider issues of race and racialization as well as to other social issues taking place on a national and international level.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

Pre-World War II Black Experience

The narratives from the interviews provide a specific historical context that frames the ways in which understandings of the descriptor “Black community” emerge. Through the broader research project and accessing archival data it is evident that three main movements of African-Canadian immigration in Alberta make up the present day African-Canadian community: early pioneers, Caribbean immigrants, and continental Africans. During the data generation in the broader research project, I documented that some Black communities developed in Alberta well before the Caribbean immigration that began in the 1960s. Interestingly, many of those interviewed had not known of earlier waves of immigration at the turn of the 20th century.

Immigrants of African descent who made it into Alberta between 1905 and 1911 formed the core of the early Black settlers. Of those who took out homesteads from 1905 to 1930, almost half failed. In many cases, Black immigrant communities lacked infrastructure development, were isolated on marginal lands, and faced racial discrimination. Many of the settlers returned to the United States, particularly after some middle and western states repealed “Jim Crow” laws.¹ The rest resettled in Calgary or Edmonton and surrounding communities, leaving only a few settlers on the pioneer homesteads. This group of pioneer families and their descendants remained the dominant Black group in the province until the second movement occurred (for further discussions, see Kelly, 2006).

For urban Blacks who had to interact with Whites on an ongoing basis, racism and discrimination were an everyday occurrence. Community and political responses were required, so the Coloured Protective Association was formed in the early 1900s in Calgary to resist White racism. In the 1920s, organizations such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association were also active in the community, as was the Alberta Negro Colonization and Settlement Society. Testament to community activism during the 1920s and 1930s is the regular *Edmonton Bulletin* and *Edmonton Journal* column entitled “Our Negro Citizens.” The cultural and social occasions advertised and commented on were often organized by members of the African Methodist Episcopal and Shiloh Baptist churches (Cui & Kelly, 2010).

During the 1920s and 1930s, women of African descent were largely directed toward servile roles as domestics, children’s nurses, or servants. In an interview that I conducted for the Edmonton-based Alberta Labour History Institute in 2001, Gwen Hooks, a descendant of these early pioneers who was born and grew up in Alberta and went on to become a teacher, spoke about opportunities for employment in the 1940s:

Housework was about all there was at that time . . . [whereas men] usually had jobs shining shoes; that's about all they could get. Then eventually they got to be porters; but shining shoes [was mainly what was available]. I wanted more, and I decided I wasn't scrubbing any more floors unless they were my own.

Post-World War II Black Experience

In the late 1950s the Calgary branch of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters—the essentially all-Black union of CPR sleeping-car porters formed from the mid-1940s United States international union that was established in Canada in the mid 1940s—translated their fight for human rights beyond their workplace into other areas of employment and housing. Along with groups such as the local Association for the Advancement of Coloured People, their fight for human rights in Calgary resulted in Blacks being able to access public-sector employment. These union/cultural/social groups provided a means of getting together and expressing common concerns, a process that enabled the development of Black identity and community formation and group consciousness—

a form of continuing adult and community education. Such groups encouraged a collective identity formation and enabled people to recognize that although they came from differing class and cultural backgrounds, they had common experiences with racism. Within these organizations, women played a vital role in developing a sense of community and support for male workers. So, for example, Calgary's local of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters had an active Ladies Auxiliary during the 1940s. According to the union newspaper, *The Black Worker*,

All through the history of the struggles of workers to build trade unions to improve their wages and working conditions, the wives, mothers, sisters and other women relatives of workers have played an important role in not only giving inspiration to the workers but in helping to cement and mobilize the families of the workers. (July 1954, p.1)

It is also important to record the role of arts in this community's activity; one well-liked Black jazz/dance band, formed from sleeping-car porters and others, had access to the Mayor and dignitaries during the campaign for public sector employment because of their popularity and appearances at municipal events; they used that access to argue for opening up municipal employment opportunities for Blacks.

Within Black communities there was a sharing of experience and mutual support. Little has been documented about adult education within these communities, but undoubtedly people would meet at church and other social gatherings and discuss the issues of the day and plan community events. Cui and Kelly (2010) have identified several arts-based and political groups active in Edmonton during the early 1920s. There is no reason to suppose that they were not influenced by Farm Forum radio and the travelling movie shows (from the University of Alberta Extension Department) in the same way that other rural communities were. They would also have had access to news of other Black communities in such places as Halifax, Montreal, Vancouver, and the United States that was carried coast to coast by the sleeping-car porters on the railways, as such news would filter through from the mainline stations in Calgary and Edmonton. Black news-sheets, music, and ideas would ride the rails. The formation of African-Canadian communities reflected similar and earlier formations of African-Canadian communities in other provinces (Mathieu, 2001). Black pioneer families and their descendants remained the dominant Black group in the province until the second wave of immigrants began to arrive in the 1960s.

From the 1960s

With the relaxation and opening up of the immigration laws in 1962 and again in 1967, immigrants from Caribbean countries such as Jamaica, Trinidad, Guyana, and Barbados increased the Alberta Black population. Revisions to the Immigration Act that finally took place were prompted not by any major desire by government and immigration authorities to further develop a “racially” pluralist society, but rather by economic expediency. This group of immigrants was diverse in terms of geographic origins and occupational skills, many being technicians, tradesmen, clerical workers, and teachers (who were able to emigrate from the Caribbean directly into jobs as teachers, usually in rural areas or First Nations reserves). Retired teachers such as those who are members of the Mico Old Students Association (retired teachers who attended Mico Teacher Training College in Jamaica and still meet in Edmonton) can still recall those early immigration and teaching experiences (Kelly & Cui, 2010).

These workers from the Caribbean were joined later by students from the Caribbean and countries in Africa who would graduate from the University of Alberta and go on to enter a wide spectrum of professions. In the 1980s and 1990s, these groups of diasporan Blacks were joined by others from African countries who were fleeing war or trying to make a better life for themselves and their children. Census data suggests that approximately 2% of the population in both Edmonton and Calgary are Black, with the majority of those who were born outside Canada coming from African or Caribbean countries.

This latest period of immigration was also marked by renewed political self-organization. Cultural groups such as the National Black Coalition of Canada and the Council of Black Organizations (now the Council of Canadians of African and Caribbean Heritage), as well as the Jamaica Association of Northern Alberta, the Nigerian Association, and so on, provided many new immigrants a link to their homeland as well as a forum for challenging the racialized state of Canadian society.

Ironically, the influx of these newer immigrants from the Caribbean and the African continent served to subsume the early African-Canadian pioneers. The considerable number of people involved, combined with a lack of knowledge of an earlier Black presence in Alberta, meant there was initially little formal attempt to be inclusive and build community, and Blacks from the Caribbean were considered representative of all Black groups. Although highlighting the historical enables us to tease out some of the similarities in experiences among various African-Canadian communities (primarily associated with learning to be Black in a White society, see Kelly, 1998), it is also worth being cautious with regard to history. Canadian theorist Rinaldo Walcott (1997) argues that “historical experience is a potent ingredient in desires for community, it cannot be understated because it is what often complicates discussions and leads to assumptions concerning communities of the same” (p. 226).

PLAY SCRIPT RESEARCH DESIGN

As noted earlier, once the interviews and other research data were being processed it became clear that developing a script would be a useful addition to the overall research project. With the help of some additional funding from a community grant, I was able to hire a playwright, Pat Darbasie, whose heritage is Caribbean, to develop a script.

Several questions are highlighted through the study but two crystallize this aspect of my research: How might African-Canadian adult learners become engaged in an educative process about community through arts-informed practices? and How do these differing periods of African-Canadian immigration contribute to a sense of a unified community? Here, my main

focus was to establish participant accounts of the Black immigrant experience in Alberta and Canada during the 1950s and 1960s. I was keen therefore to allow their voices to provide both data and direction for the investigation. Following one-on-one, semi-structured interviews, some of the participants were re-engaged in a number of focus groups to determine how the interview data might be best used in a play format. This process consisted of the playwright and me working for several sessions with a group of senior men and women from the Caribbean who came to Canada in the 1960s and early 1970s.

The six to eight members of the focus groups had immigrated to Canada as skilled labour, needed to fill various shortages in the local economic market during the late 1950s to early 1970s, and therefore were not representative of the stereotype of African-Canadian immigrants as solely unskilled labour likely to become an economic drain on the state. Many had been teachers before coming to Canada and were able to continue in their profession due to a teacher shortage and growing bureaucratization at the time of their immigration (Kelly & Cui, 2010).

The focus groups were held at critical points during the development of the script and were useful as a sounding board for ideas and directions that the project might take. Traditionally, a process of workshopping occurs when a script nears completion, but many of the focus groups were engaged at an earlier stage of pre-writing and were not just a reality check on events discussed, but rather contributed content and structure for the writing of the play. For example, the first session was used to discuss the overall project and purpose and to find out if there was anyone else in the community whom the group felt should be interviewed. The participants acted as part of a snowballing process offering names of other potential interviewees as well as possible themes relating to their own lived experiences that we as researchers might be able to follow up. Social life emerged as an important theme that we chose to develop in the script and so many of the discussions were centred on reminiscences about social gatherings, events, and places that brought the community together during the later 1960s and early 1970s.

The outcome of our various focus group meetings was the script *West Indian Diary*, highlighting the experiences of five main characters who provided space for discussions to take place around their immigrant experiences. Once a draft of the script had been written we wanted further feedback from the community and organized a reading of the draft play with community members taking the parts of the main characters. Those gathered for the first play reading were a heterogeneous group representative of the present-day African-Canadian community in Alberta; namely descendants of early black pioneers; immigrants from the Caribbean during the 1950s, 60s, and 70s; and immigrants from different countries in Africa. This was particularly instructive, as these groups engaged in dialogue about each other's experiences and gained new insights and understandings. Only four of the five characters were read but the reading led to a discussion that ranged from issues of representation in the play through to gender politics and shared experiences of racism.

Through adult education techniques we were able to start the discussion with the following questions:

- The play wouldn't be *West Indian* unless it contained . . . ?
- The most vivid thing about that time for me was . . . ?
- Is there a topic that you wouldn't like explored in the play?

These guiding questions allowed for discussion of some contentious issues, such as gender relations within the different communities and the problematic nature of dealing with gender relations when one comes from a marginalized group.

With these new perspectives incorporated, the playwright workshopped the play in Toronto with actors who had lived experiences within African-Canadian communities. On return

to Edmonton, the number of characters had grown to ten and now included a young female descendant of the early pioneers who illustrated the interaction between the two initial communities (United States pioneers and Caribbean immigrants) and became part of the second semi-public reading of the play. Response was generally favourable, but an omission was noted and discussed: Would the African-Canadian communities have included students from countries in Africa? The audience was able to recall that during their early days, students from the continent of Africa were part of the diaspora in Edmonton. Inclusion of a student character might well add to the complexity of dialogue enabled through the encounters between the different groups of people who emigrated from countries in Africa.

Interviewing participants revealed the complexity of black self-identification:

Participant: No . . . I am not African-Canadian. Right now I say I am a Canadian. Whoever doesn't like it, I say, where are you from? I say I am from Jamaica originally, that's it.

JK: So, you keep to the Canadian, why not the African-Canadian?

Participant: No, I don't know anything about Africa. (laughter) I don't know anything about Africa. I am not saying I am an African. I am black. I [am] originally from Jamaica. I am now Canadian . . . The thing is, right now in the United States you hear them talk about African-American . . . why not say, alright I am an American, I am an American born and grown in America. I am an American, what's wrong with that?

INTERPRETING THE RESEARCH/READING

Some of the main themes to emerge from the scripting process included isolation, marginalization, and the importance of community and community contacts in overcoming these factors. Many of these early immigrants recalled being isolated in rural communities because of limited employment opportunities or having to develop their store of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984) in order to access professional jobs. Even in towns and cities, new immigrants experienced some marginalization in relation to housing, work, and social situations, all of which encouraged community development.

Participant: But in those days . . . for instance, you go and you see somebody put up a notice "room for rent" and you, the black person, go there. The moment you go they tell you they forget to take down the sign. You have a friend that's white go the next day, [the sign] is still there.

Of note, discussions of gender surfaced through the development of the early script and provided an avenue into discussions reflective of what Stuart Hall might identify as the end of the innocent Black (1996b, p. 474). As Hall argues, "what is at issue here is the recognition of the extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences and cultural identities which compose the category 'black'; that is, the recognition that 'black' is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category" (1996a, p. 443). In other words, representations of blackness do not run along a single narrative of good versus bad, rather complexities abound. Some participants in the development of the script suggested that not all portrayals of the African-Canadian experience were necessarily appropriate for public presentation as some might not reflect well on the community. Others highlighted gender within the early script and suggested that the play should represent the negative aspects of gender relations between men and women. The tensions that emerged in these discussions raised issues of authenticity and ownership: who has

the right to represent the African-Canadian community and should those representations always be positive? In response, the group discussed the potential audience for the finished play since, for some, issues of context were vital in terms of interpretation and meaning. It was argued that a play staged for the wider Edmonton community offered a different social context from one in which the African-Canadian community was reflecting on itself.

What makes these forms of contested knowledge socially and intellectually significant is that, while written accounts of family or community histories presently exist (Carter, 1988; Foggo, 1990; Hooks, 1998), the knowledge mobilized by this project was analytic rather than just descriptive and it drew on sociological and critical cultural studies perspectives. I was able to gain a sense of how these differing communities converged over specific issues, such as racism, at some times and issues of geographic origins at other times. Further, supporters and partners of this project were all organizations with which I have worked over the past fifteen years or more and which have long track records of working with communities. By linking with these organizations, this project enabled newcomers to learn about the history of the community with which they would be identified—African-Canadian—and in particular about the experiences of early black pioneers. For other more established members, engagement with these new bodies of knowledge allowed for capacity building and recognition of African-Canadians in the wider Canadian mosaic. This factor is becoming increasingly important with the publication of the recent new citizenship guide, *Discover Canada*, which portrays Canadian history in simple lineal terms, largely ignoring the Chinese Exclusion Acts, the “white-only” immigration practices, war-time ethnic internment, and the contributions of non-white immigrants to Canadian society—particularly in Western Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009).

Through examination of knowledge forms enabled by the script, the receptor communities were allowed to engage with a number of questions, among them: Can a single narrative and descriptor such as “African-Canadian” be applied to the historical experiences of people from the United States, the Caribbean, and a number of countries in Africa? What sort of citizen does this imply?

IMPLICATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

When the final version of the play is performed for the general public, the knowledge mobilization process discussed above has the potential to expand and enrich the public’s intellectual understanding of African-Canadian experience. In particular, knowledge mobilization will allow for recognition of the complexities and heterogeneous nature of African-Canadian identity and community formation and of African-Canadians’ place in the present Canadian context (Anderson, 1983). The project is designed to have a social impact on the receptor and collaborative communities, allowing for conceptual engagement with what it means to be a community and a citizen within that community. These questions are of particular interest to some of our partners in the broader project—the Council for the Advancement of African Canadians, and the Black Settlers Alberta Saskatchewan (BSAS)—who deal with groups marginalized on the basis of geographic or ethnic origin. Further, in addition to understanding the complexities of community, the knowledge from this exploratory research provides for a further understanding of the heterogeneous nature of the Black population. African-Canadian communities can learn to act strategically around identity and issues of identification and argue for recognition of intersec-

tions and the relational dimensions (of particular interest to the Caribbean Women's Network) with regard to racialization, immigration, and citizenship.

The play can be a starting point for an ongoing development of learning that moves from practice to theory and back again (Cocklin, 1996). In addition to understanding the complexities of community, knowledge from the existing research gives an intellectual boost to those continuing and adult educators who would argue for recognition of intersections and the relational in theorizing issues with regard to community and immigration. It will, for example, allow women to discuss issues of gender relations in relation to men without assuming a fixed unity within the community. The plan is to continue this work with other community groups who are supporters of the project. We plan to use the actors to highlight characters in the play as a basis for workshops with youth and immigration groups whose job it is to settle newcomers to Alberta.

A recently acquired SSHRC Public Outreach Grant should assist with a professional production of the play, and with a more developed website and other knowledge displays. This can include the development of learning circles using the practice of "dig where you stand," a Swedish adult education technique that encourages participants in learning circles to use their own knowledge, information, and documentation as a starting point for exploring issues (Lindqvist, 1978). This approach will allow participants to use the play as a catalyst for discussing their own family's experience of immigration; these experiences can then be captured and preserved through digital stories. These digital stories can be regarded as a continuation of learning and knowledge distribution as members of one learning circle take that knowledge back into the community. Thus we have sustainability of the technique and the knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

I acknowledge that this arts-based intervention through the process of scriptwriting is not a fully developed "performing community arts" activity. Instead, what we have created is a blended community-arts/research/professional play script rooted in community knowledge. The script is part of a larger project using multi-modal research methods and contributing to a multifaceted presentation (display panels, website, community meetings, etc.) of an understanding of the formation of African-Canadian communities and their experiences in Alberta from 1900 to the 1970s.

The reading of the script made it possible for participants from the different communities within the broader African-Canadian community to learn about themselves in relation to each other. Other issues also surfaced, such as how the descendants of the early black pioneers regarded the newer folks from the Caribbean, and to what extent racialization was a factor in the different phases of African-Canadian immigration. This process also allowed for discussion of our ready use of the concept of community. What do we mean by the term "community"? What actions (social, intellectual, political) might be enabled and constrained through the use of the term? We recognize already that community can be a complicated, even problematic, concept, as has been much discussed by Benedict Anderson (1983) and Stuart Hall (1996 a and b). Working beyond the academy is not a process that can be bridged solely by desire; it is a process that requires researchers' long-term commitment to building trust. It should be noted that my involvement with the groups partnering in the research project stretches back over 15 years of community organizing. Therefore, I am mindful of the ways in which the concept of community has been used by those with research grants and the power to name and categorize such groupings into "objects" of our analysis. Developing a focus support group for the project—drawing on those who are most concerned not just with knowledge production but also with making that knowledge public, proved vital.

For those university-based continuing and adult education scholars interested in community-university engagement, it should be noted that this research flows from more than 15 years of continuous work with these differing community groups—work that is not often recognized in annual assessments!

ENDNOTES

1. Jim Crow laws were state and local laws enacted in the United States between 1876 and 1965. They mandated racial segregation in all public facilities to create a supposedly “separate but equal” status for black Americans.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism*. London, UK: Verso
- Bauman, Z. (2001). *Community: Seeking safety in an unsecure world*. Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- (No Author). *The Black Worker* (June, 1954) p. 1.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. Cambridge, MS: President and Fellows of Harvard College, and Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Carter, V. (1988). *The window of our memories*. St. Albert, AB: B.C.R. Society of Alberta.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada. (2009). *New Citizenship Guide*. Ottawa, ON: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/discover/index.asp#online>
- Cocklin, B. (1996). Applying qualitative research to adult education: Reflections upon analytic processes. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 28(1), 88–116.
- Cui, D., & Kelly, J. (2010). “Our Negro Citizens”: An example of everyday citizenship practices. In A. Finkel, S. Carter, & P. Fortna (Eds.), *The West and beyond: New perspectives on an imagined region* (pp. 253–277). Athabasca, AB: Athabasca University Press.
- Foggo, C. (1990). *Pourin’ down rain*. Calgary, AB: Detselig Enterprises.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York, NY: Continuum.
- Hall, S. (1996a). New ethnicities. In D. Morley & K-H Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 441–449). London, UK: Routledge.
- Hall, S. (1996b). What is the black in ‘black’ popular culture? In D. Morley & K-H Chen (Eds), *Stuart Hall: Critical dialogues in cultural studies* (pp. 465–475). London, UK: Routledge.
- Hayes, S. & Yorks, L. (2007). Lessons from the lessons learned: Arts change the world when.... *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 116, (Winter), 89–98. doi: 10.1002/ace.279
- Hooks, G. (1998). *The Keystone legacy: Reflections of a Black pioneer*. Edmonton, AB: Brightest Pebble.
- Kelly, J. (1998). *Under the gaze: Learning to be Black in White society*. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Press.

- Kelly, J. (2006). Building Black identity and community. In T. Fenwick, T. Nesbit, & B. Spencer, *Contexts of adult education: Canadian perspectives* (pp. 49–57). Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing.
- Kelly, J., & Cui, D. (2010). A historical exploration of internationally educated teachers: Jamaican teachers in 1960s Alberta. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*. Retrieved from <http://www.umanitoba.ca/publications/cjeap/>
- Lefebvre, H. (1991). *Critique of everyday life*. London, UK: Verso.
- Lindqvist, S. (1978). *Gräv där du står*. Stockholm, Sweden: Bonniers.
- Mathieu, S.-J. (2001). North of the colour line: Sleeping car porters and the battle against Jim Crow on Canadian rails, 1880–1920. *Labour/Le Travail*, 47, 9–41
- Merriam, S. (2008). Adult learning theory for the twenty-first century. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 119, (Fall), 93–98. doi: 10.1002/ace.309
- Scher, A. (2007). Can the arts change the world? The transformative power of community arts. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 116, (Winter), 3–11. doi: 10.1002/ace.272
- SSHRC. (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.sshrc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/cura-aruc-eng.aspx>
- Walcott, R. (1997). *Black like who?* Toronto, ON: Insomniac Press.
- Wenger E. (1998). *Communities of practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

BIOGRAPHY

Jennifer R. Kelly is a community activist, researcher, and educator and is currently chair of the Department of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta. She is author of *Under the Gaze: Learning to be Black in White Society* and *Borrowed Identities*.

Jennifer R. Kelly est activiste communautaire, chercheuse et éducatrice et occupe présentement le poste de présidence du département des études sur les politiques en éducation à l'Université de l'Alberta. Elle est auteure des publications suivantes : *Under the Gaze: Learning to be Black in White Society* et *Borrowed Identities*.