

Open Access Theory

Making Social Work Research Black - Beyond Number Politics

Patricia Bailey-Brown, MSW, RSW^{1*}

Citation: Bailey-Brown, P. (2025). Making Social Work Research Black - Beyond Number Politics. Journal of Critical Research Methodologies.

Editor: Dionisio Nyaga, Ph.D.

Editor: Rose Ann Torres, Ph.D.

Accepted: 11/02//2024

Published: 01/02/2025



Copyright: ©2025 Bailey-Brown, P. Licensee CDS Press, Toronto, Canada. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

¹Faculty of Health, York University, Canada

²ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-6972-2425>

*Corresponding author: Patricia Bailey-Brown, patricia.baileybrown@gmail.com

Abstract. Current approaches to social work research have continued to push Black lives, bodies, experiences, and ways of doing, thinking, and being to the margins. When researchers do turn their attention to Black people and communities, so-called anti-oppressive and intersectional practices do little to center the humanity of their subjects. Instead, Black research subjects are objectified, othered, and silenced. Furthermore, research often appeals to political climates steeped in anti-Blackness; appeases the expectations of funders with their own biases and agendas; and paternalizes Black people and commodifies their realities rather than giving voice and honor to their truths. This article seeks to disrupt these colonial and Western approaches to research by challenging the systemic racism embedded in both our society and social work practice. With particular focus on some of the most vulnerable members of Black communities – 2SLGBTQ+ immigrants, refugees, women, and youth—the article explores research methodologies and practices rooted in theories that validate Black people’s ways of doing and being and decentres colonial values. As people experiencing oppression are best equipped to identify its ways of operating and pathways to disrupting it, Black and feminist theories are crucial to this work. This includes Critical Race Theory to disrupt the inherent racism in current research practices; Systemic Theory to examine how Black voices are silenced and sidelined to bury historical and contemporary truths; and Black Feminist Theory to critique the way that women, queer, and gender nonconforming people are objectified.

Keywords: Race and racism, colonialism, Black, feminism, 2SLGBTQ+

Introduction

The summer of 2020 marked a global pivot point for anti-Black racism. After the brutal and unjustified death of George Floyd, a Black American man killed by white Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin, the subject of systemic anti-Blackness was placed at the center of collective consciousness. Professionals, institutions, organizations, and entire sectors began to critically reflect on the way that anti-Black racism had, for centuries, threatened the wellbeing of Black people in Western society. The field of social work was not exempted from this reckoning. A profession rooted in addressing inequity and injustice found itself wrangling with the way that anti-Black racism has shaped the history of the field and continued to influence present-day practice and the research that informs it.

The unfortunate reality is that existing approaches to social work research have marginalized Black communities, bodies, and experiences. This marginalization has been two-fold. On the one hand, there has been a marked lack of research into the experiences of Black people and communities and how they are specifically affected by the social issues that social work exists to address. While as social work researchers, we know that issues like homelessness, mental health, substance misuse, precarious employment, and food insecurity can affect any demographic, it is also well understood that marginalized identities can have significant impact on the wellbeing of an individual. Yet, there is often shortage of research that contextualizes Black people's experiences of these challenges in the realities of race, racism, and Black identity.

On the other hand, where social work research has attempted to answer the call to be more inclusive and equitable, the Eurocentric research approaches that are considered the golden standard in our field often miss the mark. Quantitative studies reduce the complexities of Black experience to numbers and statistics that lead to generalizations and stereotypes that often do more harm than good. Positivist paradigms reduce Black people and communities and their concerns to subjects of scientific study. Even anti-oppressive approaches meant to humanize and center Black research subjects often objectify, other, and silence them instead.

We also cannot ignore the context in which research about Black people and communities happens. Politics and institutions are still coloured by the historical legacies of anti-Blackness. Research is often conducted by organizations and individuals with biases and agendas which make it difficult for studies to be truly anti-oppressive and anti-racist. Instead, Black people are paternalized, their realities are commodified, and their truths are ignored. Black researchers pay the price too. Patricia Hill Collins (1989), for example, described the way that Black women researchers are often encouraged to conduct studies in ways that 'use their authority to help legitimate a system that devalues and excludes the majority of Black women' (p. 753) and risk being ostracized if they dare to colour outside the lines. Similar assertions could be made for many other Black researchers,

especially those who hold intersecting marginalized identities (e.g., queerness or disability).

These issues—the outright exclusion of Black people in social work research and the use of ill-fitting Eurocentric models when Black communities are studied—represent two sides of the same coin. At best, research that disregards and reinforces racism informs policy that does not meet the needs of Black communities. At worst, it actively harms them and results in poor and inequitable outcomes for Black people engaging with societal systems and social services. Over my career as a social worker, I have seen the effects of these policies play out in the lives of real clients. As a psychotherapist working with Black refugees and newcomers to Canada, I have seen the bureaucratic red tape clients have had to jump through to access social services while refugees from predominantly white countries have been given ample resources. Black clients who have visited healthcare institutions seeking mental health care have reported having their symptoms downplayed and concerns dismissed by healthcare providers.

While these experiences are anecdotal, they are representative of a larger and well-documented systemic issue of anti-Black racism within institutions that are led or engaged by social work. Anti-Black racism is apparent in the over-policing of Black communities on both sides of the Canada/US border; the disparate outcomes of Black communities during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic; the disproportionate suspensions and expulsions of Black students in schools; and, most recently, the refugee crisis that left hundreds of Black asylum seekers sleeping outside of Toronto shelters and two of those refugees dead from inadequate care.

Remediating the issue of Black exclusion and marginalization in social work research is more than a DEI initiative or an academic pursuit. Until social work research intentionally and effectively reframes its approach to properly include and consider Black people and communities, our policies will continue to be harmful and potentially deadly. While the need to make social work research Black is pressing, it will not be an easy problem to solve. It will require a significant transformation of the way we approach and practice research of Black bodies, communities, and experiences. Specifically, challenging the Eurocentric research practices that have dominated social work calls for methodologies and practices rooted in theories that decentre colonial values, actively confront anti-Black racism, and validate Black people's ways of being and doing. We need approaches that ensure that social work research does not study Black people as objects and 'others,' but values their lived experience as a critical tool to identify and disrupt oppression in our practice and policy.

This article will provide you with a pathway to producing social work research that is truly anti-racist and equitable. We will explore methodologies, frameworks, and theoretical lenses that will disrupt racism in current practices, intentionally amplify and center Black voices (both as researchers and participants), and value Black people's ways of knowing, being, and doing. However, before we can set our sights on a future of Black

social work research, we must look back at the history that has created the problems we aim to fix.

The Dark History of Anti-Blackness in Social Work Research

If the history books are to be believed, the field of social work was founded by white sociologists. Most social work textbooks name figures like Jane Addams, Mary Ellen Richmond, and John Augustus as the pioneers of a field dedicated to remedying social issues. Those textbooks leave out the rich legacy of Black scholars and activists who made considerable contributions to the field of social work as we know it. Wright et al. (2021) rightfully highlight W.E.B. Du Bois for his research on social phenomenon and social justice advocacy; Frederick Douglas for his study of social welfare; and Eugene Kinckle Jones who made major contributions to the development of social work as a profession. The erasure of these Black forefathers of social work is not a coincidence. Social work emerged at a time when racism was the norm, and the profession is underpinned by the racist ideologies that were pervasive at the time. Those early social work organizations and institutions did little, if anything, to consider and care for the needs of Black communities.

Este et al. (2017) paint a powerful picture of how Black-led organizations in the late 1800s and early 1900s emerged in response to the disregard of Black people in social welfare. They write about the Coloured Women's Club of Montreal, a group of Black women who "were driving forces in identifying, addressing, and delivering services needed in order to survive in a society where racism was pervasive" (p. 92). Similarly, Black churches and charities stepped up to fill the gaps that white-led social welfare organizations disregarded or perpetuated, taking on significant political risk to counter the racist policies that marginalized Black communities. (Wright et al., 2021).

Social work research was as exclusionary as the practice was. When Black people were discussed, it was through the lens of 'racial sciences' that positioned them as inferior. Accepted as scientific fact, these assertions were used to justify slavery, dehumanize Black people, and ultimately exclude them from contributing to official social welfare reform (Wright et al., 2021). Some of the research that has focused on Black people has been outright exploitative and discriminatory. Healthcare research, for example, has a long and violent history of dehumanizing Black research subjects. Examples include Marion Sims, who is known as the 'father of gynaecology,' conducting experimental surgeries on enslaved women; the medical industry's use of Henrietta Lacks' stem cells without her knowledge or consent; and the Tuskegee Syphilis Study that denied Black men treatment for the disease to examine its progression when left untreated (Brooks and Fields, 2021).

It is only in recent years that studies in social work have turned their attention to Black lives and experiences (Este et al., 2017), and even still, that research rarely examines their psychological and social experiences or

intentionally counters the racist assumptions and ideas that treats Blackness as a deficit (Cramer and McElveen, 2003). Furthermore, research on Black people and communities has tended to be one dimensional, compounding the marginalization of Black people with intersecting identities. Black Feminism emerged from the way that Black women were excluded from racial justice and feminist works (Collins, 2000).

But while Black scholars and activists, like Black Feminists, have fought to counter the marginalization of Black people in research, the history of social work research is defined by the continued exclusion of Black scholarship that began with the disregard of Du Bois, Douglas, and Kinckle Jones. Razack and Jeffery (2002) point to the “lack of ethnic, cultural, and racial diversity among social work professionals in social services and the universities” (p. 261). Collins (1989) echoes this when she discusses how Black women’s access to positions of influence in academia has been intentionally limited and their knowledge has been dismissed. Ultimately, as an institution that has been dominated by whiteness, social work has not made room for Black researchers or research subjects to be seen as legitimate and valuable to the profession.

From a Dark History to a Bright Future

We cannot move beyond the dark and racist history of social work research by pretending it does not exist. Of course, we do not want to repeat a history of research that dehumanizes, marginalizes, ‘others,’ and excludes Black people, communities, scholars, and researchers. Understanding how social work research began allows us to recognize the ways in which anti-Black racism has manifested in the past and how it continues to shape the present-day practice of social work research. It is only with that acknowledgement that we can begin to chart a different path forward.

The importance of this acknowledgement of history and commitment to a more anti-racist future in social work has been voiced by social work associations on both sides of the Canada/US border. America’s National Association of Social Workers (2021) recently issued an apology for the racist policies the profession upheld in the past, including support of eugenics, segregated settlement houses, and the blocking of African American suffrage. Similarly, the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (2020) acknowledged how the social work profession “has historically been and is currently complicit in perpetuating anti-Black racism through practices of segregation, surveillance, policing, and exclusion of Black communities from health and social services.”

These moments of recognition are a first and critical step toward a more inclusive and anti-racist approach to social work research. By acknowledging the dark history of social work research and being sensitive to the historical trauma Black communities have endured, researchers can move toward decolonizing research practices, amplifying underrepresented voices, and contributing to a more just and equitable social work landscape. As the Canadian Association of Social Workers (1991) eloquently put it:

“[W]e are being called upon to question traditional assumptions and theories, re-examine admissions criteria and teaching modes, broaden our worldview, and act deliberately to respond to the realities of diversity. At the same time, we have an unprecedented opportunity to reaffirm, in new ways, the very tenets that underlie our profession” (pp. ii-iii, cited in Razack and Jeffery, 2002, p. 257).

It is time to answer that call, and develop social work research that prioritizes race, racism, and the lived experiences of Black people. This will require us to challenge hundreds of years of systemic racism, and that will not be an easy task or a short-term one. However, with thoughtful and intentional effort, we can reframe how we approach social work research in ways that honour, value, and benefit Black communities, subjects, knowledges, and issues. This will require us to ground research in theories that challenge Eurocentric ways of knowing and center the humanity of Black people; redefine research paradigms and embrace methods that reflect the complexity of the Black experience; centre Black voices and prioritize cultural sensitivity in research design and execution; and take a holistic approach to research that considers the diversity of Black experience and how race, gender, and other identities complicate social issues within the Black community.

As we continue our exploration of a framework for making social work research Black, we will review theoretical lenses like Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Theory, and Intersectionality; examine the impact of qualitative research methods, community-engaged research, and participatory research; and consider the importance of researcher positionality, power dynamics, and research accessibility.

The Lens: Theoretical Frameworks

Research without a theoretical framework is like a ship lost at sea—it may float, but it will lack direction. Theoretical frameworks allow researchers to study and explain a phenomenon through a specific lens. That lens shapes every element of the study. As Luft et al. (2002) note, “The framework shapes the types of questions asked, guides the method by which data are collected and analyzed, and informs the discussion of the results of the study. It also reveals the researcher’s subjectivities, for example, values, social experience, and viewpoint” (p. 5). The theoretical framework also reflects the assumptions the researcher has made about the subject, the values they hold as a researcher, and how they will process what they learn through their study (Collins and Stockton, 2018; Luft et al., 2002, p. 5). In simpler terms, a theoretical framework colours the study, and the findings may be significantly shaded by the framework applied.

By this token, we can conclude that using theoretical frameworks that do not center Black voices, acknowledge Black ways of being, thinking, and doing, and value the lived experience of Black people as a source of expertise will result in studies that do not properly represent or empower Black communities. If we want to effectively make social work research Black, it is important to ground research about Blackness in theoretical frameworks that are rooted in the realities of Black life and culture. Let us explore three frameworks that do exactly that.

Critical Race Theory

The professional study of race as a social issue began with social workers and social welfare leaders who were committed to addressing the structural and systemic inequities experienced by Black people in the United States (Lauve-Moon et al. 2023). Scholars and activists like W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells, Alexander Crummel, Sara Collins Fernandis, Edmund Hynes, E. Franklin Frazier, Eugenia Burns Hope, and Mary Church Terrell stood at the forefront of the effort to remedy the effects of racism. Critical Race Theory (CRT), created by Derrick Bell, emerged as a formal theory with a “broad mission to investigate, deconstruct, and ultimately eliminate racist structures and inequities” (Daftary, 2020, p. 442). At its core, CRT asserts that race is a social construction and racism is a permanent and formative part of Black people’s lived experience. It calls for an intersectional understanding of Black lives and prioritizes the voices and narratives of Black people as valid sources of knowledge (Daftary, 2020). CRT also defies the typical ‘objectivity’ prescribed in Eurocentric models of scientific inquiry and acknowledges that the researcher plays an integral role in shaping their studies (Daftary, 2020).

Benefits of Critical Race Theory

As we have noted, social work research has historically objectified Black bodies, culture, and community and positioned researchers as experts and Black people as mere objects of study. CRT provides a meaningful antidote for that in three important ways. Firstly, it places Blackness in context, acknowledging that race and racism directly impact the social issues that Black people experience (Lauve-Moon et al., 2023). CRT demands that the problem being studied is “placed in social, political, and historical context” (Daftary, 2020, p. 439) and that the impact of power, privilege, oppression, structural inequality, and white supremacy be considered in research design and analysis (Razack and Jeffery; Daftary, 2020; Lauve-Moon et al, 2023).

Secondly, CRT acknowledges Black people as experts on their own lived experiences, recognizing that they have “special access to knowledge to which privileged groups do not have access” (Lauve-Moon et al., 2023, p. 114). As such, it leans into methodologies that give voice to the research subjects through counter-storytelling and narrative. CRT researchers often use qualitative methods like focus groups, two-way interviews, and

autoethnography (Lauve-Moon et al., 2023). Daftary (2020) notes, “This is not only a stylistic choice, but a conscious political statement aimed at revealing the self-serving nature of the carefully constructed metanarrative surrounding race set by the white dominant group” (pp. 445-446). In other words, a CRT framework counters the silencing and marginalization that Black people have faced in social work research and society at large.

Finally, CRT prioritizes social justice, requiring that the injustices discovered by research be properly addressed (Daftary, 2020). CRT is both a framework and a call to action. Derrick Bell notably believed that “the standard and institutions created by and fortifying white power ought to be resisted,” and he saw academic study as a foundation for societal resistance (Daftary, 2020, p. 422). As social work is a profession aimed at addressing social inequities and fostering social justice, a CRT approach offers a “critical analysis of the status quo” (Collins and Bilge, 2016, pp. 29-30) that is well-suited to research designed to shape anti-racist policy and practice.

Black Feminist Theory

Like Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Theory was developed as a response to marginalization. For Black women, the battle was two-fold, as they were required to confront both sexism and racism and the way those oppressions converged. Notably, Black women were excluded from movements meant to address both kinds of oppression, with scholars highlighting “sexism within the Black Power Movement and racism within the second wave feminist movement of the 1970s” (Lewis and Williams, 2023, p. 230). A group of Black, queer women, known as the Combahee River Collective, were integral at planting the seeds of Black Feminism. Scholars like Audre Lorde, bell hooks, and Patricia Hill Collins grew those seeds into a formal Black Feminist Theory that “encompasses theoretical interpretations of Black women’s reality by those who live it” (Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant, 2023, p. 11). Like CRT, Black Feminist theory positioned Black women as experts on their realities (Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant, 2023) and situates those realities in their political, socio-economic, and historical contexts through Black women’s scholarship and standpoints (Bryson, 2001).

What Black Feminist Theory does that CRT does not is examine the intersection of race and gender and the specific inequities that comes from those interlocking oppressions (Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant, 2023). It centres Black women, rather than obscuring their unique and specific experiences in general studies of Black people or women (Lewis and Williams, 2023). It takes a holistic approach that sees Black women’s multiple marginalized identities as its own phenomenon (Collins, 1986) rather than taking an “add-on” approach that simply forces Black women’s unique experience to fit into existing theories.

Benefits of Black Feminist Theory

Black Feminist Theory's historical reflection considers the gendered stereotypes and narratives—such as the Jezebel, the Mammy, the Sapphire, and the Welfare Queen—that have been used to categorize, generalize, and marginalize Black women. Lewis and Williams (2023) aptly note, “These controlling images, ideologies, and stereotypes of Black womanhood encompass the interlocking systems of racism, sexism, and classism experienced by Black women” (p. 233). One of the ways Black Feminist Theory counters these interlocking oppressions is through self-definition (Lewis and Williams, 2023, p. 230). Self-definition is rooted in providing space and platforms for Black women (and Black people, more generally) to speak for themselves. It includes “validation of silenced experiences, storytelling, and engagement in discourse to understand new information and make meaning of what is there” (Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant, 2023, p. 12). Self-definition allows Black women to create a narrative that counters the negative images that devalue and disenfranchise them and instead define for themselves what is true and important (Bryson, 2001, p. 10; Collins, 1986, pp. S16-S17).

Another value of Black Feminist Theory is that it embraces the complexity of research subjects, allowing for research questions, findings, and policy and practice recommendations that consider multiple realities. Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant (2023) note that Black Feminist Theory allows researchers to fully account for the complexity of research problems impacted by interlocking oppressions and create “the action-oriented research designs required to envision just- and equity-centered solutions” (p. 10). Simply put, this framework ensures that Black research subjects—women or otherwise—are seen holistically enough to create interventions that will actually be effective.

A third benefit of Black Feminist Theory as a theoretical framework is that it creates space for Black researchers to pursue studies in ways that do not reinforce the objectification of their research participants or themselves. Like CRT, Black Feminist Theory challenges the idea of research objectivity. Collins (1989) describes Eurocentric research methods that require researchers to detach emotionally from their research, remove their personal values and ethics from the process, and engage in debates to defend their arguments (p. 754). While these expectations are presented as standards of academic rigour, they contribute to the objectification of Black women by requiring scholars to “devalue their emotional life” and “displace their motivations for furthering knowledge about Black women” (Collins, 1989, p. 754-755). By contrast, Black Feminist Theory invites researchers to own their ideas and take positions on issues that are shaped by their personal experience (Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant, 2023, p. 12). This invitation also comes with certain obligations for the researcher to take accountability for their knowledge claims and practice empathy in their research approach (Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant, 2023).

Finally, Black Feminist Theory addresses the power imbalance so often present in research, where researchers are seen as objective experts and research participants are treated as objects of study. Through the use of dialogue rooted in care and connection, Black Feminist Theory allows for co-creation of knowledge between researcher and research participants (Smith Budhai and Lewis Grant, 2023). This approach is in keeping with Black women's cultural tradition of exploring and validating new knowledge through dialogue in community and sharing of personal viewpoints (Collins, 1989).

Intersectionality

This article has already made mention of intersectionality as a component of both Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Theory, but it is also a theoretical framework on its own that can be applied to social work research. In fact, it is vital for social work research studying Black communities, which have too often been reduced to singular identities. First developed by Kimberle Crenshaw, Intersectionality “examines how various forms of discrimination and oppression intersect to create a distinctly different and compounded form of oppression and discrimination” (Lauve-Moon, 2023, p. 115). If this sounds reminiscent of Black Feminist Theory, it is because that is where Intersectionality got its roots. However, as a theory, it has been expanded to consider how other identities interlock to form unique forms of exclusion, stigma, and marginalization (Wu, 2021). Consider, for example, how differently people who are Black and queer, Black and disabled, Black and homeless, or any other combination of marginalized identities might experience the world. Intersectionality offers a way to understand how diverse and complex the experiences of Black people are and how their realities are shaped by multiple axes of social division (Collins and Bilge, 2016).

Intersectionality as a theoretical framework does share other similarities with both Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Theory. It values the knowledge and expertise of marginalized people, especially for their understanding of how their social identities create negative outcomes and how they have learned to navigate and resist those challenges (Bailey et al, 2019). It also calls on researchers to place their research problem, question, and findings in the sociocultural and systemic contexts where the people and phenomenon they are studying exist (Lewis and Williams, 2023). These similarities mean that Intersectionality, like Black Feminist Theory and CRT, contributes to research findings and interventions that tend to the real needs, concerns, and experiences of the Black people they study.

Benefits of Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a theoretical framework is also beneficial to social work research on Black people, communities, and issues in unique ways. For one, Intersectionality is rooted in social justice goals and action.

Matsuzaka et al. (2021) write that responsible stewardship of intersectionality requires that researchers weave social justice aims into every stage of their research. The authors go on to argue that research rooted in Intersectionality can be a catalyst for sociopolitical action, especially if the researchers engage the community they study. Additionally, Matsuzaka et al. (2021) assert that researchers should be diligent about ensuring their positions and practices do not maintain the marginalization of Black people in academia, reproduce exclusion and dominance in knowledge production, or misappropriate Intersectionality for the benefit of the researchers and their institutions.

An Intersectional theoretical framework also resists the tendency of social work research to adopt dominant group thinking. For one, it does not position marginalized identities as opposite of dominant identities — “BIPOC versus White, sexual minority versus heterosexual, transgender or gender nonconforming versus cisgender, disabled versus able-bodied or neurotypical” (Wu, 2021, p. 222). Instead, it considers them as complete identities, not defective or divergent by nature, but affected by the oppression our society places on them. Additionally, intersectionality does not ask people to choose, rank, or prioritize one identity over another (Wu, 2021). Rather, it sees intersecting identities as part of an inseparable whole. Intersectionality also drives researchers to study the social processes that affect marginalized identities (e.g. patriarchy, homophobia, ableism, etc.) rather than problematizing identities and categories that have been marginalized (Wu, 2021). In other words, Intersectionality seeks to understand and challenge oppression and how it impacts people with marginalized identities.

A Final Thought on Theory

Black researchers, scholars, and activists have provided a solid foundation for social work research that explores Black lives, experiences, culture, and issues. Blackness is distinct from whiteness. It cannot be effectively studied by examining it through theories that are rooted in Eurocentric and colonial values and beliefs. Instead, Black-centered research requires theoretical frameworks that are specific to the complex realities of Black people. Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Theory, and Intersectionality all hold merit as lenses for studying social issues and their impact on Black communities. These frameworks are effective because they counter the deficit models and negative narratives about Black people that have been created by years of racism in research and science. Each of these frameworks considers the social, political, and historical contexts that shape Black lives, and recognizes that Black people are equipped with an expertise about their lived experiences that cannot be learned from textbooks. Most importantly, these frameworks are all designed to build knowledge that can be used to foster social change and justice for Black people and communities through policy and interventions. These frameworks

transform research from a means of observation and objectification to a tool for action and empowerment.

The Method: Research Design and Methodology

Your theoretical framework is not just a lens for how you approach your research question; it also shapes the way you design and approach your research (Luft et al., 2002). Your lens decides what you see *and* how you work to see it. As Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Theory, and Intersectionality have many commonalities in the way they approach research—centering Black voices, recognizing social, political, and historical context, acknowledging the positionality of the researcher—many of the same research methodologies can be applied. In this next section, we will be exploring three methodologies that are well-suited to Black theoretical frameworks: Qualitative Research, Participatory Research, and Community-Engaged Research.

Qualitative Research

For decades, most research that explored Black lives was quantitative, reducing Black people's experiences to metrics and statistics. Studies, for example, looked at how often Black students were expelled from school, the frequency of Black men's interactions with police, the number of incarcerated Black people, or the percentage of Black people with post-secondary degrees. While this kind of data can be useful for identifying a social issue, it is very one-dimensional. It sees what is happening, but it does not answer how or why. This kind of research can exclude critical context that can lead to harmful misperceptions and generalizations. Let us revisit one of our examples. A study that finds that Black students are expelled from school twice as often as their non-Black peers might lead one to conclude that Black students behave badly. As quantitative research has often been seen as more credible because the results are quantifiable and measurable, those findings are likely to be accepted as fact (Black, 1994).

Benefits of Qualitative Research

Qualitative approaches challenge the cut-and-dry nature of research by asking the questions of “What?” and “Why” instead of “How much?” or “How often?” This aligns well with Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Theory, and Intersectionality in that it requires researchers to center the voices, experiences, and expertise of Black research participants. Qualitative approaches use data collection methods like interviews, observation, and narrative (Black, 1994; Daftary, 2020; Watkins, 2012). These methods allow research participants to articulate their experiences, behaviours, and attitudes with more depth and complexity than numerical data could (Pope and Mays, 1995). Nick Black (1994) provided a great example of this in his paper on the importance of qualitative research, citing a study in the UK that found that participants responded to surveys about

their health with what they perceived as ‘correct’ answers, but they were much more honest about their private opinions and experiences in unstructured interviews with researchers.

That kind of rich data is critical to the goal of not just measuring a particular phenomenon but developing concepts that allow us to understand it and make meaning of it (Pope and Mays, 1995). If we circle back to the example of Black student expulsions, a qualitative study might reveal that students report being punished more harshly than their non-Black peers for the same offenses or being watched more closely and critically by teachers and administrators. That is the kind of information that, if grounded in a framework like Critical Race Theory that acknowledges the pervasiveness of racism, would inform meaningful interventions like challenging anti-Black racism among educators and administrators or reviewing the application of policies on expulsion.

Another valuable element of qualitative research is the way it shifts power in the researcher/participant relationship by allowing the study to be shaped by the participants themselves. Pope and Mays (1995) explain:

Rather than starting with a research question or a hypothesis that precedes any data collection, the researcher is encouraged not to separate the stages of design, data collection, and analysis, but to go backwards and forwards between the raw data and the process of conceptualisation, thereby making sense of the data through the period of data collection. (p. 44)

Watkins (2012) echoes this by recommending that qualitative research should be exploratory (p. 155). The author suggests that questions should emerge and evolve as the study progresses and the approach should be interpretive and open-ended. This ensures that research participants are not only engaged in the study but actively impacting the direction the study takes.

Qualitative research, as the title of this article suggests, moves beyond number politics. As Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Theory, and Intersectionality demand, qualitative research pushes Black research participants from the margins to the centre, giving them room to share the full context of their experiences and explore what is relevant and meaningful, even if it is not measurable.

Participatory Research

While qualitative research centers the voices of research participants, participatory research empowers the subjects of the study to shape the research itself at every stage. Jones (2020) explains, “Participatory research can be defined as a process by which the individuals being researched are involved in the conduction of the research, including the planning, design, data collection, and data analysis, as well as the distribution and application of conclusions. The ultimate goal of

participatory research is to bring about more meaningful change” (p. 5). Unlike other research methodologies, participatory research makes participants co-creators of the research project. This kind of research is often done in partnership with grassroots research projects and action organizations in the community being studied (Eubanks, 2009). Brooks and Fields (2021) describe participatory research as an “action and solution-oriented methodology” that “values scientific and experiential knowledge equally” (p. 261). For this reason, participatory research works especially well with theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Theory that call for researchers to recognize the expertise of their research participants as valid and valuable.

Benefits of Participatory Research

The positioning of research participants as co-creators and co-owners of knowledge about their lived experiences is one of the key benefits of participatory research. This approach works to counter the ways that Black people have been silenced, excluded, and misrepresented in research about the social issues that affect them. It pushes back against models of research that treat scholars as better equipped to construct identities for racialized people without their input (Williams, 2001). Instead, participatory research leans into insider scholarship and calls researchers to recognize “that the presuppositions, ideas, interests, and values with which we invariably enter into research may not be those of the people with whom we do research (Elabor-Idemudia, 2011). It asks researchers to confront their own agendas to hear and amplify what Black people have to say about themselves, a tenet of both Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Theory.

Participatory research also challenges Eurocentric models of both research and practice, validating racialized people’s ways of knowing and being. Williams (2001) gives the example of studies on mental health in Indigenous communities that presented those communities’ tendency to intervene in mental health crises with spiritual and emotional counsel, social support, and fortifying treatments as “peculiar and ineffective” (p. 241). That piece of literature reflected a Eurocentric bias on the research subject, seeing Western approaches to mental health as both superior and necessary, reinforcing the dominance of Eurocentric narratives about mental health. However, Williams (2001) suggests that a participatory research model that partnered with Indigenous communities to recognize their approaches to mental health as legitimate could transform the treatment system in ways that engender trust and positive outcomes (p. 239-240). Similar notions could be applied to the research with Black communities, where participatory research could be used to validate and integrate Black people’s ways of being and doing into interventions and action.

This points to a third benefit of participatory research—its capacity for empowering Black communities. Murray-Lichtman and Elkassem (2021) discuss the concept of academic voyeurism in social work, which

describes the way that research has often been used to “scrutinize the suffering, pain, and violence of racism” (p. 186) rather than confronting and addressing it. Participatory research challenges the economic and political power imbalances inherent in research by shifting Black people and communities from observed, ‘othered,’ and objectified to putting them in positions to investigate their own worlds and experiences (Eubanks, 2009). This kind of participatory research makes room for the self-identification encouraged in Black Feminist Theory, as well as the centering required in Critical Race Theory. It also allows for an exploration of the complexity of Black people’s experiences, as Intersectionality demands. Ultimately, a participatory research method rightfully gives Black people and communities being researched more power to determine not only how they’re studied but to what end those studies are conducted.

Community-Engaged Research

Community-engaged research shares several similarities with participatory research. For one, it invites collaboration and partnership between the people being studied and the researchers (Ohmer et al., 2023). It also asks the researcher to prioritize and center the lived experiences of the community and use their insights to shape the study. What makes community-engaged research distinctive is that it “involves engaging with the community to discover, by interacting with the community, what shared goals and negotiated procedures would be mutually satisfactory, rather than to impose on a community what worked somewhere else” (Sieber, 2010, p. 3). What is also critical is that the researcher is called to practice self-reflection, cultural awareness, and humility to ensure that their positionality and cultural and/or institutional privilege does not pull the research away from the interests of the community and toward their own (Ohmer et al., 2023). In other words, the priority in community-engaged research is a study that directly serves the needs of the community in question.

Benefits of Community-Engaged Research

Community-engaged research is a great tool for empowering Black communities. Ohmer et al. (2023) note, “Community-engaged research has the potential to empower individuals, families, communities, and organizations through building capacity to answer questions most important to the communities themselves” (p. 259). In the context of Black communities, this is especially important as, historically, research has either disregarded Black people’s social issues or made decisions about what issues should be studied with little consideration for what mattered to the community. This methodology has significant implications for research grounded in Intersectionality because community-engaged research can help to tease out the specific issues that exist at the intersections of certain identities. For example, community-engaged research that collaborates with Afro-Caribbean LGBTQ+ refugees would be able to research the challenges that demographic faces with accessing mental health and support the

development of interventions that consider the unique lens through which they experience and view mental health care. As Leung Rubin et al. (2016) note, “Community partners can contribute invaluable insights about internal needs, culturally appropriate responses, and offer linkages to existing resources and relationships needed to mobilize collective action” (p. 479).

Another benefit of community-engaged research is its capacity to disrupt systematic barriers in social work research. Considering that traditional approaches to research have othered Black people, exploited their bodies, and disregarded their needs and preferences in favour of institutional research interests, an alternative that puts Black communities at the helm of the research process is an important alternative. Ohmer et al. (2023) suggest that social work researchers should be working with stakeholders to develop research processes and practices that allow for “co-leadership and co-learning models” where the power is not reserved for the researcher but extended to the community as well. This reflects values presented by both Critical Race Theory and Black Feminist Theory in the way that it centers the voices of Black communities and positions them as experts and equals in research about themselves.

A word of caution on community-engaged research

While community-engaged research has the potential to disrupt the status quo in social work research by putting Black people at the center of the process, it comes with a unique challenge. Flicker and Nixon (2018) share the story of a community-based partner on one of their research projects who reported that her reputation with her community had suffered because they saw her organization’s participation in the study as “selling out” (p. 153). What this anecdote illustrates is that there are real risks for community members who engage in research projects, even ones that they are confident will serve their communities. The onus to navigate that lies with the researcher, who must be prepared to honestly discuss the risks of engaging in a study and to ensure that they are able to effectively communicate to participants and the community at large how their research will support the well-being of the community (Flicker and Nixon, 2018). This echoes Black Feminist Theory’s assertion that researchers must practice care and empathy for the communities they research.

Research Practices

In this article, we have explored theoretical frameworks and research methodologies that support social work research that studies Black people and communities beyond number politics. The theoretical frameworks provide a lens through which to approach research, while the methodologies offer direction on how to conduct a study. Throughout these discussions, there has been passing mention of certain research practices that are important for conducting research that is respectful of and empowering to Black communities. These include cultural sensitivity, addressing power imbalances, acknowledging researcher positionality, and

making research accessible beyond academia. These practices are essential to applying the theoretical frameworks and methodologies outlined in this article, so let us explore them in more depth.

Cultural Sensitivity

In his insightful article, “Race, Culture, and Researcher Positionality,” Richard Milner (2007) writes, “People of color are not white people with colored skin. Their experiences are shaped by (among other qualities) their racial, ethnic, and cultural heritage” (p. 389). In saying this, Milner echoes the sentiments of Critical Race Theory, Black Feminist Theory, and Intersectionality, which all assert the importance of placing Black people as research subjects into their social, political, and historical contexts. His point that Black people are unique and distinct from their white peers supports the need for Africentric theoretical frameworks. It also draws attention to the fact that understanding Black culture (or failing to account for it) will have direct impacts on the effectiveness of research into the social issues affecting them.

Before we can explore this point further, we need a shared understanding of ‘culture.’ In this context, culture refers to the values, worldviews, ways of thinking, knowing, and believing, experiences, forms of expression, and behaviours that a group shares (Tillman, 2002). Tillman (2002) clarifies that this definition does not mean to imply that all Black people have one singular culture. Instead, she argues that Black people do have a shared cultural knowledge (p. 4). With that in mind, researchers who want to study Black people and communities have to be able to consider how their culture shapes their experiences. Milner (2007) notes that the emergence of theories like Black Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Intersectionality, among other academic discourses, methodologies, and perspectives, were created by Black scholars to ensure that research considered Black culture. Researchers who want to study Black people and communities should not only be employing those theories and methodologies but should be committed to “maintaining the cultural integrity of the participants and other members of the community” (Tillman, 2002, p. 6).

Tillman (2002) recommends that culturally sensitive research employ qualitative methods that allow researchers to capture Black life holistically and in context, reveal and respond to unequal power dynamics, legitimize Black people’s experience and knowledge as valid and critical, and be rooted in a certain degree of competence with an understanding of Black culture. Cultural sensitivity also requires that Black people’s knowledge and culture be central to any inquiry or study about them (Secor-Turner, 2010) and that they be given room to self-define and offer an interpretation of the research subject (Davis et al., 2010).

By these definitions, the theoretical frameworks and research methodologies presented in this article all meet the criteria of cultural sensitivity, but what does that mean for researchers in a practical sense? It

means that researchers must be intentional about countering deficit perspectives that have been typical in research about Black communities (Tillman, 2002). It also requires that researchers do not value “neutrality of knowledge” above honouring Black people’s cultural knowledge (Secor-Turner, 2010). Cultural sensitivity also means that researchers must be self-reflective about their motivations, assumptions, and cultural competence (Huang and Coker, 2010). Huang and Coker’s exploration of the issues affecting African American’s participation in research inspired some questions that may be helpful for researchers’ self-reflection:

- Am I approaching this research with the intention to benefit the wellbeing and advancement of the Black community?
- Do I have a deep enough understanding of oppression, identity, and Black culture and how they shape Black people’s experiences?
- Am I prepared to address the anxieties and concerns that Black people might rightfully have about my motivations, considering the history of exploitation in research?
- Do I understand the socioeconomic and political context of the research participants I intend to work with?
- Do I respect the diversity of Black communities enough to understand that findings about one part of the population cannot necessarily be applied to the population at large?

Davis et al. (2010) offer another set of questions that can be helpful for producing culturally sensitive research:

First, in relationship to the research question, what are the historical issues from which the community needs to heal. Second, in relationship to the research question, what are the myths and misperceptions about the behaviour of the community? Third, in relationship to the phenomenon, what are the culturally relevant examples of how the community has been transformed? Finally, in relationship to the phenomenon, how has the community mobilized others to affect change? (p. 348)

By taking the time to sit with and carefully answer these questions, you can ensure that cultural sensitivity is not an afterthought in your research but an intentional and guiding practice.

Addressing Power Imbalances

Traditional approaches to research and scientific inquiry have always established a clear hierarchy—the researcher holds the expertise while the research subjects do not (Brooks and Fields, 2021; Ohmer et al., 2023). It is typical for these power imbalances to be ignored by those in power, but they are often recognized and most deeply felt by those who feel disadvantaged by the hierarchy (Leung Rubin et al., 2016). Anti-racist and feminist scholarship, like CRT, Black Feminist Theory, and

Intersectionality, have worked to name and address these power imbalances (Jones, 2020).

What can we, as researchers, do to ensure that the hierarchies enforced by traditional research methods are not impacting our study? Leung Rubin et al. (2016) point to Lisa Delpit's 'culture of power' framework. Though this framework was initially created to explore power imbalances between teachers and students, its tenets fit well in describing the relationship between researcher and research participants. Modified to fit our discussion, those tenets are:

- There is a power differential between [researchers] and [research participants];
- There is an unspoken set of rules that govern these settings;
- These unspoken rules reflect the experiences of those in power;
- Making explicit these unspoken rules helps those with less power in the situation access power;
- Those in power are not willing to acknowledge the existence of a power differential.

The solution is clear—name the power differential and the unspoken rules that maintain it so that those who are disadvantaged by the imbalance can better access power. As a researcher, be prepared to acknowledge to your research participants that your position as a researcher with an institution does privilege you and name how you will mitigate that privilege so that they are not exploited. Wu (2021) takes this a step further, advising researchers to cede power to the community being researched wherever possible. This might be in the development of research questions and goals or the way that research is shared with the community.

Brooks and Fields (2021) also recommend equipping community partners in community-engaged research with “improved access to scientific protocols and parlance” and building their capacity in research methodology (p. 262). Not only does this better prepare community members to be effective co-creators of knowledge, but it also allows them to hold researchers accountable to the needs of the community.

Positionality

One of the key ideas of Black theoretical frameworks for research is that the researcher does not get to claim objectivity or neutrality. Black Feminist Theory, Critical Race Theory, and Intersectionality all ask the researcher to name and recognize their own position as a researcher and how their values, beliefs, and motivations affect their research. In the same way that these theoretical frameworks ask researchers to consider how identity impacts the experiences of research subjects, Milner (2007) notes that it also affects the researcher. He writes: “I argue that researchers in the process of conducting research pose racially and culturally grounded questions about themselves. Engaging in these questions can bring to researchers’ awareness and consciousness known, unknown, and unanticipated issues, perspectives, epistemologies, and positions” (p. 395).

Milner presents a framework for meaningful reflection for researcher positionality that also includes the researcher reflecting about themselves in relation to others; reflecting together with research participants about the relevant research community; and contextualizing their new consciousness in political, social, historic, cultural, and racial realities.

Making Research Accessible

One of the difficult realities of social work research about Black people is that it is conducted on and about Black communities, but it is often written and published for the world of academia. Research is typically written in academic language that is not always accessible to laypeople and published in journals that are not readily available to the subjects of the research. This reinforces the notion that Black people are objects of research and not valid experts on their own experience. Flicker and Nixon (2018) wrote about community partners in their research who reflected a similar sentiment, noting that they believed that research that is published inaccessibly serves “dominant, colonial interests” (p. 153).

Colombian sociologist, Orlando Fals Borda directed researchers be avoid making research inaccessible to everyday people. He advised:

Do not impose your own ponderous scientific style for communicating results but diffuse and share what you have learned together with the people, in a manner that is wholly understandable and even literary and pleasant, for science should not necessarily be a mystery nor a monopoly of experts and intellectuals. (De Roest, 2020, pp. 206-207)

Flicker and Nixon (2018) echo Fals Borda’s advice recommending that, when possible, researchers write in accessible language (p. 154). They also recommend publishing in open-access journals so that community members are not required to pay to read research about themselves (p. 154) and publishing community-friendly summaries of manuscripts on platforms that the community can easily access. Making research available in these ways is another opportunity to mitigate power dynamics that marginalized Black research participants and the broader Black community. It acknowledges their rights, as co-creators of knowledge about themselves, to not be barred from accessing that knowledge.

Conclusion

If the field of social work wants to live up to its mission to remedy social inequities, it will need to confront its history of excluding and marginalizing Black people, communities, culture, and issues in research. This article presents a pathway to begin this work through theoretical frameworks, research methodologies, and practices that reimagine social work research in ways that include and

center Black people, their experiences, and the matters that are important to them. When researchers lean into lenses that do not just observe Black people but truly see them, we open a world of research that not only represents Black communities accurately but collaborates with them to properly represent their complex realities and inform social work and social justice interventions, policy, and practice that support their wellbeing and advancement. This work will require researchers to not only challenge the Eurocentric models that have dominated social work for decades but investigate their own biases, cultural competence, and motivations. Making social work research Black requires conscious and deliberate effort to humanize Black people, validate their expertise, amplify their voices, and empower them to take social action for meaningful change. It is challenging work, but it is work worth doing.

Discussion Questions:

1. Theoretical Reflections:

- What theoretical frameworks have you considered or used for research in the past? How might they be beneficial or problematic for research on Black communities and issues?
- How do the theoretical frameworks presented in this article challenge or affirm your positionality and your view of research?

2. Methodological Reflection:

- How do you think embracing qualitative research methodologies can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the Black experience compared to quantitative approaches?
- Can you identify any potential challenges or criticisms associated with the community-engaged and participatory research?

3. Diversity Within the Black Community:

- In what ways do you believe the Black experience is often oversimplified in traditional research paradigms? Can you think of specific examples or instances where this oversimplification may have occurred?
- How might qualitative, community-engaged, and participatory methods help in acknowledging and representing the diversity within the Black community?

4. Unveiling Personal Biases:

- As a researcher, how do you think your own biases might influence the interpretation of qualitative data, particularly when exploring the Black experience?

- What strategies can researchers employ to minimize bias and ensure a more objective understanding of the lived experiences being studied?

5. Comparative Analysis:

- Consider a recent study or news article discussing issues related to the Black community. How might the findings or narrative differ if a qualitative or participatory research approach were employed?
- Are there aspects of the Black experience that you believe are better suited to quantitative analysis, and if so, why?

6. Ethical Considerations:

- What ethical considerations should researchers keep in mind when conducting research on the Black experience? How can researchers ensure the dignity and privacy of participants?
- In what ways can the research methodologies detailed in this article be a tool for empowering marginalized voices rather than exploiting them?

Informed Consent

N/A

Funding

N/A

Conflict of Interest

None

Author Contribution Statements

The author solely conceptualized and conducted the study.

Ethics Approval

N/A

References

- Canadian Association for Social Work Education. (2020, June 5). Addressing anti-Black racism in social work. Retrieved February 25, 2024, from <https://caswe-acfts.ca/addressing-anti-black-racism-in-social-work/>
- Bailey, J., Steeves, V., Burkell, J., Regan Shade, L., Ruparelia, R., and Regan, P. (2019). Getting at equality: Research methods informed by the lessons of intersectionality. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 18, Article 160940691986961.
- Black, N. (1994). Why we need qualitative research. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 48(5), 425-426.
- Brooks, M. J., and Fields, E. L. (2021). Community partnered participatory research methods as tools for racial justice and health equity. *Perspectives in Public Health*, 141(5), 261-262.
- Bryson, B. J. (2001). Social work practice and profession: The utility of Black Feminist Thought. *Race, Gender, and Class*, 7(4), 7-17.
- Collins, C. S., and Stockton, C. M. (2018). The central role of theory in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 17(1), 1-10.
- Collins, P. (1989). The social construction of Black Feminist Thought. *Signs*, 14(4), 745-773.
- Collins, P. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black Feminist Thought. *Social Problems*, 33(1), S14-S32.
- Collins, P., and Bilge, S. (2016). Intersectionality. *Polity*.
- Cramer, D. N., and McElveen, J. S. (2003). Undoing racism in social work practice. *Race, Gender and Class*, 10(2), 41-57.
- Daftary, A. (2020). Critical Race Theory: An effective framework for social work research. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work*, 29(6), 439-454.
- Davis, S. K., Williams, A. D., and Akinyela, M. (2010). An Afrocentric approach to building cultural relevance in social work research. *Journal of Black Studies*, 41(2), 338-350.
- De Roest, H. (2020). Doing research in community: A multiplicity of collaborative research practices. In S. Collaborative Practical Theology (Ed.), *Collaborative Practical Theology* (pp. 185-251).
- Elabor-Idemudia, P. (2011). Chapter nine: Identity, representation, and knowledge production. *Counterpoints*, 379, 142-156.
- Este, D., Sato, C., and McKenna, D. (2017). The Coloured Women's Club of Montreal, 1902-1940: African Canadian women confronting anti-Black racism. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 34(1), 81-99.
- Eubanks, V. (2009). Double bound: Putting the power back into participatory research. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 30(1), 107-137.
- Flicker, S., and Nixon, S. A. (2018). Writing peer-reviewed articles with diverse teams. *Health Promotion International*, 33(1), 152-161.
- Huang, H., and Coker, A. D. (2010). Examining issues affecting African American participation in research studies. *Journal of Black Studies*, 40(4), 619-636.
- Jones, K. C. (2020). Bridging the research gap: A toolkit on inclusive research and development practices. Chicago Council on Global Affairs.

- Lauve-Moon, K. R., Enman, S., and Hentz, V. (2023). From colorblindness to critical investigations: Examining structural racism in social work research. *Social Work*, 68(2), 112-121.
- Leung Rubin, C., Sprague Martinez, L., Tse, L., Brugge, D., Hacker, K., Pirie, A., and Leslie, L. K. (2016). Creating a culture of empowerment in research: Findings from a capacity-building training program. *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action*, 10(3), 479-488.
- Lewis, J. A., and Williams, M. G. (2023). Applying Black Feminist Theory to research, practice, and advocacy on gendered racism among Black women. *Women and Therapy*, 46(3), 229-245.
- Luft, J. A., Jeong, S., Idsardi, R., and Gardner, G. (2002). Literature reviews, theoretical frameworks, and conceptual frameworks: An introduction for new biology education researchers. *CBE – Life Sciences Education*, 21(3), 1-10.
- Matsuzaka, S., Hudson, K. D., and Ross, A. M. (2021). Operationalizing intersectionality in social work research: Approaches and limitations. *Social Work Research*, 45(3), 155-168.
- Milner IV, H. R. (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher*, 36(7), 388-400.
- Murray-Lichtman, A., and Elkasse, S. (2021). Academic voyeurism: The white gaze in social work. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 38(2), 179-206.
- National Association of Social Workers. (2021, June 17). NASW apologizes for racist practices in American social work. Retrieved February 25, 2024, from <https://www.socialworkers.org/News/News-Releases/ID/2331/NASW-apologizes-for-racist-practices-in-American-social-work>
- Ohmer, M. L., Brisson, D., Foster, K., Hyde, C., and Ivery, J. (2023). Collaborations in community-engaged research: Paving the way for the future of social work research. *Journal of Community Practice*, 31(3-4), 244-265.
- Pope, C., and Mays, N. (1995). Reaching the parts of other methods cannot reach: An introduction to qualitative methods in health services research. *British Medical Journal*, 311(6996), 42-45.
- Razack, N., and Jeffery, D. (2002). Critical race discourse and tenets for social work. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 19(2), 257-271.
- Secor-Turner, M., Sieving, R., and Garwick, A. (2010). Culturally sensitive community engaged research with African American young women: Lessons learned. *Journal of Community Health Nursing*, 27(3), 160-172.
- Sieber, J. E. (2010). Introduction: Points to consider in community-engaged research. *Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics: An International Journal*, 5(1), 152-161.
- Smith Budhai, S., and Lewis Grant, K. (2023). Casting a wider net: Incorporating Black Feminist Theory to support EdD students' epistemological stance development in research methods courses. *Impacting Education*, 8(3), 10-14.
- Tillman, L. C. (2002). Culturally sensitive research approaches: An African-American perspective. *Educational Researcher*, 31(9), 3-12.
- Watkins, D. C. (2012). Qualitative research: The importance of conducting research that doesn't count. *Health Promotion Practice*, 13(2), 153-158.

- Williams, C. C. (2001). Confronting the racism in research on race and mental health services. *Canadian Social Work Review*, 18(2), 231-248.
- Wright, K. C., Carr, K. A., and Akin, B. A. (2021). The whitewashing of social work history: How dismantling racism in social work education begins with an equitable history of the profession. *Advances in Social Work*, 21(2/3), 274-297.
- Wu, E. (2021). Learning from 'Racism, Not Race' for intersectionality research and research enterprise. *Social Work Research*, 45(3), 220-224