

## Enacting African American Legislative Voice: A Program Design for the Recruitment and Development of African American Educational Lobbyists

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper builds on a previous study where the voices of African American educational lobbyists were examined and interpreted. Through describing how they interpret their acts of lobbying, tenets of Reverse Interest Convergence were found when lobbying for African American educational achievement. (Griffen, 2017) Furthermore, three specific recommendations were provided to fill the need for the specific recruitment and development of African American educational lobbyists: 1. Mentoring for African American Lobbyists; 2. Providing Legislative Process and Advocacy Courses in High School; and 3. Developing Internship Opportunities in Lobbying Fields of Choice for African Americans (p. 65). As a result of mentorship practices that successful lobbyists receive (Vance, 2012), these lobbyists' discipleship will allow prospective lobbyists to experience the operational attributes, characteristics, and strategies one uses to become an effective lobbyist (McGrath, 2007; McGrath, 2006, Hall & Deardorff, 2006; and Milbrath, 1960). This study outlines how these newly developed African American educational lobbyists will gain access throughout the legislative process through, missionary works, where African Americans interests have historically been excluded for lacking knowledge of the legislative process, lacking coalitions and allies, lacking resources, and lacking the mobility to influence (Wolman & Thomas, 1970). To build upon the previous study, the following question is asked: How do African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying? Through the continued examination and interpretation of the voices of African American educational lobbyists, four program approaches interpreted as Acts for a New Lobby describe a program design for the recruitment and development of African American educational lobbyists. The hope is that the development and design of such a program will result in grassroots and grass-tops partnerships that will mobilize communities, universities, and "Urban-Defined" school campuses, thus, developing and enacting African American legislative voice.*

**KEYWORDS:** Advocacy; African-American; Educational Lobbyist; Legislative Voice; Mobilization

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## **Introduction**

This paper builds on a previous study where the voices of African American educational lobbyists were examined and interpreted. Through describing how they interpret their acts of lobbying, tenets of Reverse Interest Convergence were found when lobbying to African American educational achievement. (Griffen, 2017) Three specific recommendations were provided to fill the need for the specific recruitment and development of African American educational lobbyists: 1. Mentoring for African American Lobbyists; 2. Providing Legislative Process and Advocacy Courses in High School; and 3. Developing Internship Opportunities in Lobbying Fields of Choice for African Americans (p. 65). Through the continued examination and interpretation of the voices of African American educational lobbyists, four program approaches interpreted as *Acts for a New Lobby* describe a program design for the recruitment and development of African American educational lobbyists.

## **Perspective**

Throughout the history of American education, there are small samples rather than examples of educational lobbying. One could argue that most impactful lobbying in regards to education has taken place as a result of a political or economic interest versus that of an educational one. The Russian satellite “Sputnik” launch in 1957 is one example of political and/or economic interests converging with education in order to promote reform measures leading to the National Defense and Education Act (NDEA) of 1958. To fully understand the role lobbyists play in education, which is often through other special interests or intermediaries, one must first realize that “lobbyists play an important and essential role in the legislative process (U.S. Senate, 2013).

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

## **The Role of Interests**

Educational interests, however, do not garner the effective and efficient representation as other enterprises and interests because of a lack of resources. “Groups generally send lobbyists to Washington because a policy objective is in jeopardy” (Milbrath, 1960, p. 49). Interest groups form when groups of people are adversely affected by change...those affected will lobby the government not to take actions that would adversely affect them (Pressure Groups in America, 2013). Educational interests and the formation of educational interests groups is no match for the development of trusts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

These interests are at the forefront not because of a lack of interest from public school teachers and schools systems but from a lack of access. For example Urban (2010) shares that “Opposition to the federal aid of public education included powerful individuals who did not send their children to public schools and thus had no wish to pay taxes for those schools...taxpayers in relatively wealthy states...had no desire to support the education of citizens of poor states” (p. 18).

### **The Role of Access**

Access is provided by the amount of representation one can garner at the beginning and throughout the legislative process not at the end which is often where those with a lack of political, wealth and power end up having to dispute a policy or law that will be detrimental to their interest group. Civil Rights legislation is often an example of such a lack of mobilized interests. Brown (2009) notes that the NAACP will attempt to influence a bill or policy at its implementation stage versus at the drafting and development stage resulting in lack luster results and often small compromises. Because they lack to resources for greater levels of representation, they are often not on the legislative floor at the beginnings of a bill.

For example, during the design of the National Defense and Education Act (NDEA) 1958 strong consideration was even provided to the teaching of foreign languages in order to ensure that U.S. students could learn the languages of competing nations like Russia. Public education simply is not investible. There is no immediate return save for those in private schools who are expected to be the future leaders. “Can you really buy your way to better education for these children? Do we know enough to be quite sure that we will see an actual return on the investment we make?” (Kozol, 2005)

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

Some initial ramifications and implications of desegregation as a result *Brown v. Board of Education*, 1954 on the African American school, communities, teachers, and leaders was the decision that “inferior” all Black schools were closed and black teachers and administrators lost their jobs. Rather than integrate, “many [W]hite communities simply circumvented *Brown v. Board of Education* by pulling their children out of the public school system and developing private schools” (Chideya, 1995, p. 72). Earlier accounts of school closures prior to *Brown* indicate that when all Black schools were closed, forcing parents to attend other schools – because they were not permitted to attend the all-White schools nearby, they were forced to pay the local property tax for the all-White schools they could not attend (Brown, 2009). Interestingly, early colonists did not want the Land Ordinance of 1775, which set aside taxes to fund compulsory schools, because they felt they should not have to pay taxes for a school their children did not attend.

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

African Americans did not return to Congress until 1929 when Oscar De Priest entered the House. This sparked a new era of Congressional and Senatorial leadership for African Americans. From the period 1929-1970, 13 African Americans were elected from Majority-Black, Urban district (USHR, 2013). As the research literature in this study will share, most lobbyists are former legislatures, some lawyers, and others are political science and public policy majors. With the removal of African Americans from Congress coupled with the segregation of the times which forbid many qualified African Americans from pursuing hiring degrees or certain jobs in particular sectors, the history of the African American educational lobbyist is virtually non-existent. Despite this virtuosity, there are some who have prevailed over the years through their lobbying efforts in other fields, opening their opportunity to lobby for education via “net playing” – the practice of finding out who is the most influential with an audience, meeting those people and staying touch for future opportunities (Vance, 2012).

## **Review of Literature**

Gaining access and influence becomes increasingly difficult if the “equilibrium of access” is off balance due to clandestine approaches to ensure biases. As in the case of the “K” street project, lobbying firms were being asked, forced and required, to hire GOP minded lobbyists when

the GOP controlled the House and Senate beginning in 1994. Usually, when equilibrium of balance is off, it causes a disturbance which results in a proliferated mobilization of interest groups in order to provide opposition and regain balance (Akpan, 2018; Berry, 1978). However, this may prove difficult depending upon the level of disturbance, in the case being an entire party cornering the market on like-minded interests. It is for this reason, possibly, that the numbers of African American educational and African American lobbyists in general remain low because lobbying firms usually hire those with previous political experience such as being a staffer or a former legislator. During the “K” street project, former GOP legislators were rumored to have been hired as lobbyists in lieu of Democratic Party individuals. This presented a unique challenge to all African American lobbyists who by happenstance mostly identify with the Democratic Party.

### **Lobbyists’ Ability to Impact and Influence**

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

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

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

Koger and Victor (2009b) support the dyad relationship and the current study by positing that mutual interests result in beneficial bonds between lobbyists and legislators. (p. 4)—One of the current study’s goals is to identify how African American educational lobbyist can gain access and influence which will result in access and influence over policy and funding decisions for education. Koger and Victor (2009b) found that “Legislators are more likely to receive donations from the same lobbyists if they are from the same party (in the Senate), state, or committee; if they

are both vulnerable in the next election; and if the number of common donors increases, the more agreement there is in the voting record of a pair of legislators” (p. 1).

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

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

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

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

Wolman and Thomas (1970) discussed the direct relation to access or the lack of access to Black interests, Black groups, and Black influence in federal policy. The study was to identify problems with and possible prohibitions to Black access to policy decision making. The authors found an absence of [B]lack access and effective [B]lack participation at crucial stages in the process (p. 877). The crucial stages in the policy process are innovation and formulation, legislation consideration, appropriation, and implementation (p. 32).

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

Since race was the topic of discussion in the Wolman and Thomas study, the findings of the study lent itself to a look through CRT – Critical Race Theory. One aspect of CRT was evident immediately in the study, “interest convergence” which is where the interests of Whites and people of color intersect (Bakalar, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 12). According to Wolman and Thomas (1970) when housing decision makers were questioned about their agreement with policy positions of the four major black organizations, 34 of the 42 who responded generally agreed or agreed very strongly with the NAACP or Urban League (p. 887). These responses were provided after the authors found that [B]lack groups as a whole do not possess effective access to the major centers of decision in the domestic policy making process (p. 886).

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

Interest groups success in establishing good contacts affects, among other things, its stature and influence in policy making (Carpenter et al., 2004, p. 224). They discuss signaling theory and mobilization of bias theory of communication. Through their discussion they determine relationships between groups and individuals. They demonstrate that social network drive communication choices in politics over and above preference similarity and other individual-level determinants (Carpenter et al., 2004). Similarly, Brown (2009) discusses a corollary pattern between policy and Black mobilization. She utilizes Blumer’s (1958) theory that race prejudice is a group-based rather than individual phenomenon (p. 1392). Together, both studies prove that national policy is a group effort rather than an individual effort as there is less loss. “Mobilization theory” argues that providing information subsidizes the receiver’s activities, enabling her to become active in an issue at lower cost; groups strategically provide information to those with similar interests” (as cited in Carpenter et al., 2004, p. 226).

The significance of both the studies is the establishment of mobilization correlations will policy decision and design. The back drop for Brown is the Brown vs. Board of education decision. Through the use of comparative analysis (using both quantitative data and qualitative methods) she was able to determine that the development of “[W]hite flight” academies and the closing of schools were not necessarily the result of racial growth in areas but of racial mobility. “Threat

theories assume that exclusionary policies and practices arise when dominant groups experience a sense of threat or a challenge to their positions” (as cited in Brown, 2006, p. 1393).

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

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

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

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

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

The meanings derived from these hypothesis is that C is in position to build an alliance between A and B by providing a common frame of reference – A and B are likely to talk only because of C’s coalition efforts (p. 228). In addition, A communicates to B, which is satisfied with the information it gets from A, and reports it to C, which subsequently seeks information from A (p. 230). Finally, B will not seek information from A because it is already getting information from A indirectly though the group (p. 230). In narrative terms, communication is enhanced among all parties when the government becomes indirectly or directly involved. In Washington...the decision to communicate is not dependent entirely on strategic considerations driven by the attributes of two actors. The decision of one actor to inform another depends heavily upon the presence of others (p. 242). It is for this reason, the authors of the study determined that lobbyists most often confer with one another and lobby one another when policy decisions are being made.

## **Significance of the Study**

Through the prophetic voices in this study, development and recruitment of African American educational lobbyists for a *New Lobby* will seek to educate and mentor prospective educational lobbyists through *discipleship* in the operational attributes, characteristics, and strategies one uses to become an effective lobbyist. As a result of mentorship practices that successful lobbyists receive (Vance, 2012), these lobbyists’ *discipleship* will allow prospective lobbyists to experience the operational attributes, characteristics, and strategies one uses to become an effective lobbyist (McGrath, 2007; McGrath, 2006, Hall & Deardorff, 2006; and Milbrath, 1960). Through this *New Lobby* African American educational lobbyists will be able to gain access to areas of legislative process thought *missionary works* where African Americans are usually excluded for lacking knowledge of the legislative process, lacking coalitions and allies, lacking resources, and lacking mobility to influence.



These *Acts* will include public and private interests, big and small, for the development of the African American educational lobbyists will include multiple pedagogical approaches and theoretical frames of inquiry and thought to ensure a critical consciousness and responsiveness (Cicek, Ulker, & Tarman, 2012; Gay & Howard, 2000; Gay, 2002; Kilinc, 2017; Kotluk & Kocakaya, 2018; Tarman & Chigisheva, 2017). This critical inquiry and thought will permit African American educational lobbyists to see themselves in the context of who they are in relation to society, how they are viewed in society, and how their experiences have shaped his reality.

## Methods

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

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

Similarly crafted narratives and themes were identified through the interviewing process to discover how do African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying? Themes that emerged were a need for a gatekeeper (mentor), the need for training through internships with an African American lobbyist, and the need for access to the “circle of contacts” (network).

“The process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed and all the phases of the process may change or shift after the researcher enters the field and begins to collect data. The key idea behind qualitative research is to learn about the problem or issue from participants and to address the research to obtain that information” (Cresswell, 2009, p. 175).

It is imperative that the effective traits of lobbyists and the process of policy decisions be studied as correlates as well as a determinant for which stage to best attempt to impact policy change for particular issues. It is evident, that policies such as funding policy for urban schools may be the result of “mobilization threat” coupled with a lack of access by Blacks in the initial stages of policy development. This according to Carpenter et al. (2004) may in part be due to the belief that “groups often seek out others whose opinion they trust on complex issues in order to develop a coherent interpretation of a policy” (p. 225). A coherent interpretation of policy which excludes others due to race or because they do not possess the ideal character traits, perceptually, ensures that the pluralistic ideology in the United States is false, as evidenced by the remarks of a White participant in the work of an education advisory committee illustrates in regards to consulting Blacks on education:

We have not actively consulted with civil rights groups or with people from the Negro community. We have not had to do so. Our own members are intimately aware of the

problems connected with ghetto education and with the needs of Negro children. One of them is a Negro. So, we feel that we know what Negro parents want for their children (as cited in Wolman & Thomas, 1970, p. 890).

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

## **Theoretical Framework**

Through reporting the experiences of African American educational lobbyists we are able to hear their voices as they relate to their impact on education. Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world (Mertens, 2010). This is a qualitative research study using an emergent design utilizing Critical Race Theory (CRT), where the experiences of African American educational lobbyists are reported. The purpose for using CRT was to find the voices of African American educational lobbyists through counter narratives.

Critical Race Theory is grounded in the counter narratives and stories of marginalized groups of color, which in this case is the African American educational lobbyist in a pluralistic environment with exceptionalities. CRT has a number of premises: “Racism is an integral, permanent, and indestructible component of this society” (Bell, 1992, p. ix); the use of storytelling to challenge racial (and other) oppression; and interest convergence. Applying CRT to this study permitted the same investigation and analysis of African American access and influence in policy decisions. “The hope is that...stories describing the reality of [Black] lives...can help...bridge the gap between their worlds and those of others...stories can help us understand what life is like for others, and invite the reader into a new and unfamiliar world” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 41).

What makes Critical Race Theory significant to this study and the development of African American educational lobbyists is its view on race. CRT sees race as a part of America. To be American is to experience race. These African American educational lobbyists share their experiences as they navigate race while conducting their role as educational lobbyist. In this study, African American educational lobbyists provided stories related to how they exercise and interpret their acts of lobbying. Providing a platform for African American educational lobbyists to engage in narratives about their experiences, roles as lobbyists, and development as effective education lobbyists gives them an opportunity to express unique perspectives to the world of politics and the national and state policy agenda.

## **Participants**

This study used an informal semi-structured interview format. The participants were four African American educational lobbyists in the United States that lobby for education with a minimum of 5 years lobbying experience. There were two female participants and two male participants, with experiences at both the federal and state levels. They are each referred to as Prophets and/or Prophetess: Joy the Bantering Prophetess, Irony the Hidden Prophetess, Truth the Absolute Prophet, and Justice the Dimensional Prophet. Their methods of establish a *New Lobby* are referred to as Acts.

### **Joy the Bantering Prophetess**

Joy greeted me as she drinks a cup of coffee and apologizes for the casualness of her demeanor. This causes the thickness in the air to thin. We engage in conversation about my trip from Houston and how long I have been in education. These five minutes allows a comfort level

to emerge. She is very witty and expresses an exuberant joy about being at work, being interviewed and about life in general, talking about her work during the week, what she has been doing as a result of last night's election and about the time she has to go pick up her kids. Nothing but joy flows effortlessly with each distinction she shares— hence, her pseudonym, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess.

### **Irony the Hidden Prophetess**

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess earned her pseudonym immediately due to the fact that it was ironic that she preferred not to be categorized as a lobbyist and stated that her work was advocacy, all while being interviewed about her role as an educational lobbyist at a place where the term “lobby” was first generated - in a hotel lobby. She stated plainly, directly, and squarely as she peered through my eyes into my thoughts, “I describe myself as an education advocate”. Her posture was slightly leaning on the couch, while one leg crossed the other. She stated it confidently and waited for me to challenge. Later in the interview, the Hidden part of her pseudonym was revealed as she described her acts of lobbying she compared herself to a ninja who sneaks into a room, slices and dices, and leaves without notice.

### **Truth the Absolute Prophet**

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet earned his pseudonym because he preferred that everyone know about what we were attempting to do as a result of the interview. He explained that what we were talking about is common knowledge; therefore, he had no fears about his name being used or anyone knowing about his interview. In fact, as a person passed by prior to the start of the interview, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet excitedly announced to a passerby colleague, “Hey, I am getting interviewed over here. He earned the last part of his description “the Absolute Prophet” because he made a point to exclaim over and over about his willingness to be candid regardless of the situation or with whomever he comes in contact, especially when asked about how he builds relationships and develops points of contact.

### **Justice the Dimensional Prophet**

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet is just that – Dimensional. Yes, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet is an African American educational lobbyist; however, he also serves other industries. When seeking out participants, I had to find those who may lobby for education as a result of other interests. In most cases, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet fits that description having lobbied for Health and Energy, specifically Mental Health Care, and HMOs. However, somehow, he seems to find a connection to education and has a discrete passionate position for powerless poverty stricken youth of color. Unlike his counterparts in this study, he had no other occupation prior to becoming a Lobbyist.

### **Findings**

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

### **How do African American Educational Lobbyists Exercising and Interpreting Their Acts of lobbying?**

When exercising and interpreting their acts of lobbying, African American educational lobbyists in this study mention multiple factors: working behind the scenes – brokering, testifying before Congress, building a network, seeking like-minded individuals and pooling resources with

other lobbyists, access, policy, and the process – the system. From those emerging themes came the major theme, “Having the Ability to Influence or Impact”.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Let’s say you have two parties not necessarily from a D & R, but you can have two R’s you can have two D’s. It doesn’t matter. But, they can just have personality conflicts or they just don’t agree about how they approach something. So, you recognize that and you’re like, look, the end goal is X. You both want to get to X. You wanna do it Y way, he wants to do it Z way. But, if the end goal is X, what can we do to make sure you both get

to X? And, recognizing that somebody may have to give up something to get there. That's what a lot of lobbyist – I mean you're doing that all the time.

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

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

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

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

It's a slow process. It's about meeting people. I mentioned before about connecting the dots. So, if I meet someone, a specific individual, we have a common interest, I would ask him or her are there other associates or colleagues that you know that have the similar interests that I can connect to, that I can avail myself to.

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

I would say, come down to the capitol. Go by every one of those offices, make sure they got one of their cards. Go by, walk through, make sure you know everyone of their secretaries. Make sure they know you. Get the email address; send emails to 'em. Introduce yourself, do a little bio on yourself, send it out to 'em. That's how I built my relationships.

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

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

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

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

Lastly, the ability to communicate directly and indirectly in a timely manner and provide timely communication can stifle African American educational lobbyist' ability to influence and impact legislation and policy. Direct communication is face to face or on the telephone. Indirect communication is via letter, email or intermediaries. Having a lack of access and ability to negotiate gatekeepers and networks effectively will result in being described as an ineffective lobbyist:

So, if you want to influence what's going on, into what's now a truly closed door room or meeting, you may have to go through a couple of other people to say, "Hey, you guys wanna make sure you bring this up when y'all talk and meet in appropriations sub group meetings" That's only gonna be the members you know, and the staff. Staff is important. Having been a staffer, I can say staff is - sometimes good or bad, they can do damage to you too.

The staffers are essential to the African American educational lobbyist's ability to influence or impact the legislative process which was not indicated in the literature for African American interests.

However, what was found in the literature is that staffers often serve as the gatekeepers for lobbyists in general. Gatekeeper is a term used to describe or define the role filled by the assistants to the legislators. They are the buffer between the lobbyist and the policy decision maker. This is a significant finding among the African American educational lobbyists. Their voices share the importance of building solid relationships early and often prior to, throughout and after the process to secure asses to gatekeepers:

Because sometimes they serve as the, they're – they're the broker to their member. They – they – they are the little gatekeeper uh, sometimes. Um, now there are some offices, because of my relationships that I developed while I was there – and, I haven't been a staffer in years. I wasn't a staffer for a very long time. But, I did good work, and I maintained strong relationships with people.

Therefore, as agreed upon by the four African American educational lobbyists in this study, it is essential to build a relationship with the staffer to gain access to the decision maker.

### **Discussion**

The newly established Lobby shall be developed in three phases: Discipleship, Missionary Work, and Fellowship. The immediate significance is the primary stakeholder in the program, student himself, the African American educational lobbyist. Their significance is linked to their forthcoming ability to mobilize community interests through youth advocacy and voice.

Other stakeholders are the student's family and community, the urban community, urban schools, the university or college, the student's mentor(s), the student's mentee(s), and the lobbying firm with whom the student interns. The list of stakeholders is long and may include more since the successful development of African American educational lobbyists will begin to change the outcomes of some marginalized groups and systems – poor, people of color, disenfranchised, and "Apartheid" schools (Kozol, 2005).

In all facets of the program, the developing African American educational lobbyists will be placed in real word applicable surroundings which will permeate and supplement the learning experiences. “When mentors go to conferences [for instance] or professional meetings, [the developed African American educational lobbyist] could attend as well.” (Larke, Patitu, Webb-Johnson, & Young-Hawkins, 1999, p. 51) In addition, the university or college and urban middle or high schools must ensure (not just encourage or implement) a multicultural learning environment throughout the program. The assurance of a multicultural learning environment and experience is accomplished through the systematic integration of multicultural curriculum, instruction, practices and procedures.

The community and family members will need to provide support and understanding of the development of African American educational lobbyists. As African American educational lobbyists begin to internalize the lobbying characteristics coupled with thinking how they think and exists in relation to others and how they view themselves as an "other", they will not only be unique in culture and race but will be unique in action and being – an African American who is a lobbyist, in addition to being a lobbyist who is African American.

### **How do African American Educational Lobbyists Exercise and Interpret Their Acts of Lobbying?**

All participants in the study acknowledge the importance of “Having the Ability to Influence or Impact” through a strong network as found in the research literature. Richard Hall (2006) discusses how lobbyists tend to lobby the same people over time and often lobby “like minded” people or people and organizations that have access to other like-minded people. This practice is called “brokering” where an individual will seek to connect two people together who share the same interest but not necessarily share the same role in the legislative process. During the study, the African American educational lobbyists were asked about attaining champions for bills, gaining access, and about building a circle of contacts. All acknowledged the importance of a strong network and the ability to identify the champions of the bills. The way an African American lobbyist would do this is by learning the personality traits and interests of the people they want to influence. This would include discovering that a decision maker or another lobbyist is an avid painter. Attending galleries or showing an interest outside of the process for that person’s interests will gain access.

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

#### **Acts for a *New Lobby***

As we journey through the life experiences and lobbying practices of four African American educational lobbyists in the United States, we discover that a prophecy is being discovered, being acted upon and is now recorded. For this study, the four African American educational lobbyists are Prophets and Prophetesses. Through the Gift of Prophecy, the Prophets and the Prophetess each voice a plan for the establishment of a *New Lobby*. This *New Lobby* however is unlike any other in the United States, for it does not come to bring peace or goodwill

but rather to turn mentee against mentor, employee against firm, and staffer against decision maker. Peace can only be attained through the establishment of the *New Lobby*. The newly established Lobby shall be erected in three phases: Mentoring, Establishment of a Course, and Developing Internship Opportunities. These phases will from here forth be known as Discipleship, Missionary Work, and Fellowship.

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

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

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

“the natural fear of the conservative is that the leveler are at work here sapping the foundations of free enterprise...there is no graver threat to the capitalist system than the present cyclical replacement of the fittest of one generation by their artificially advantaged offspring...to defend the present public school finance system on a platform of economic or political freedom is no less absurd than to describe it an egalitarian...the existing system [is] a scandal (p. 206).

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

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

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



legislative process, lacking coalitions and allies, lacking resources, and lacking mobility to influence.

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

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

#### **The Stakeholders for the *New Lobby***

It should go without saying that the immediate stakeholder in the program is the student himself, the African American educational lobbyist. Followed by the student is the student's family and community, the urban community, urban schools, the university or college, the student's mentor(s), the student's mentee(s), and the lobbying firm with whom the student interns. The list of stakeholders is long and may include more since the successful development of African American educational lobbyists will begin to change the outcomes of some marginalized groups and systems – poor, people of color, disenfranchised, and “Apartheid” schools (Kozol, 2005) – the Gentiles.

In biblical terms, Gentiles are those who are non-Jewish yet inherit the kingdom through grace. It is through grace that the newly emerging Prophets and Prophetesses will inherit the *new System*. As stakeholders, each individual has the responsibility to ensure that the developing African American educational lobbyist is nurtured and challenged throughout the establishment of the *New Lobby*. They each must be willing to leave all behind and bear up their individual interest, becoming a “struggling” Prophet or Prophetess.

The developing African American educational lobbyist's learning should not be sequestered to the university or college or the middle school and high school campus. It must be done in the field as a *missionary*. For while they learn the ways of the *New Lobby*, they are spreading the faith as well. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet shares the following when asked about the development of African American educational lobbyists,

I think it would be um, effective. I think it would not only provide uh, some critical professional development for African American lobbyists, but I think it would bring uh, and create interest um, in the -- not only the profession, you know, getting our people, our African American students involved and interested uh, uh, in the profession.

“Truth” the Absolute Lobbyist shares “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet’s enthusiasm about the program,

I just think it’s a good opportunity for African Americans in education. I think we should put more funding. I hope you guys start a program. If I could help, I’d be willing to give everything I can towards it.

In all facets of the program, the developing African American educational lobbyists will be placed in real word applicable surroundings which will permeate and supplement the learning experiences. When mentors go to conferences [for instance] or professional meetings, [the developed African American educational lobbyist] could attend as well (Larke, Patitu, Webb-Johnson, & Young-Hawkins, 1999, p. 51).

In addition, the university or college and urban middle or high schools must ensure (not just encourage or implement) a multicultural learning environment throughout the program. The assurance of a multicultural learning environment and experience is accomplished through the systematic integration of multicultural curriculum, instruction, practices and procedures. The community and family members will need to provide support and understanding of the development of the African American educational lobbyist. “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet indicates a need specifically from the Black community as a whole:

We need to have a perspective from the Black community. What’s being debated right now and has been debated for a while, closing the achievement gap. I mean, we all know that it directly impacts the Black community, but if we have a developing policy that’s being debated at on the hill, being debated at the state legislatures, that’s debated at the stakeholder groups that’s having these briefings as it releases a report and there’s no one the panel or no one that’s testifying that’s Black, that’s from the community or from the school that can give that insider perspective on how this is gonna affect the bottom line or how this is gonna relate or relate to actual practice um, it’s just not advantageous. They’re not gonna have a clear on how this is gonna impact the community. They may think they may have good intentions, There would also be unintended consequences though.

Through his development, traditions may be challenged, customs become unaccustomed, and dialogue and discourse begins to take on another form and shape:

... “at some point... [an individual] finds that...he has slipped into the new language without a decision having been made...he finds himself fully persuaded of the new view but nevertheless unable to internalize it and be at home in the world he helps to shape...He [will] use the new theory nonetheless, but he will do so as a foreigner in a foreign environment... (as cited in Bowman, 1985, p. 136).

African American educational lobbyists essentially will not know of what they speak or of who he is becoming because the discursive language in his mind and the persistent social dialogue will not permit him to rest easy with the new found information and significance, a Prophet or Prophetess is reborn. As the African American educational lobbyist begins to internalize the lobbying characteristics coupled with thinking how he thinks and exists in relation to others and how he views himself as an "other", he will not only be unique in culture and race but he will be unique in action and being – an African American who is a lobbyist, in addition to being a lobbyist who is African American.

### **Program Design for a *New Lobby***

Currently, there are several lobbying programs designed to train in advocacy and lobbying. These programs include training on the legislative process, how to reach decision makers, and to get voices heard and how to mobilize groups. These training programs include, but are not limited

to, the African Diaspora Center in the Netherlands, the Preservation Leadership Forum in Washington, D.C., the Public Affairs and Advocacy Institute of American University in Washington, D.C., and the Washington Government Relations Group in Washington, D.C. Other programs include the State of Indiana - Executive Branch Lobby Training program and an online lobbying course offered by George Washington University. This study, however, provides the development of a program specifically for African American educational lobbyists to include grass root support from the community. For this reason there are two designs that are used as frameworks for the design of the New Lobby.

### **Acts 1 for the New Lobby.**

There are two significant programs and studies for the design of this *New Lobby*. The first program is the *Minority Mentorship Project – MMP* (Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990). The MMP of Texas A&M University is a program that incorporates the educational strategies of multicultural education, human relations training and cross cultural mentoring to educate pre-service teachers to reflect the concerns of the diverse student population (as cited in Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990). For the first phase of this program design, a similar framework would be used. For instance, this program like MMP will link a selected group of faculty (mentors) with African American graduate students – cohort - who is interested in becoming an educational lobbyist. Throughout the program, the student will have this mentor(s). The program will begin at the beginning of their graduate degree program in one of the following areas: education, political science, law, public administration, history, business administration, government, communication and journalism.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess does not support a program designed specifically for the development of African American educational lobbyists, citing specifically, “I would not be supportive of that, because, I am real careful about limiting things too much”. However, “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess elaborates further explaining the importance of gaining exposure in more than one area:

...if you're say -- here's how you, a young African American can gain exposure to this area that you may not expo- you haven't been exposed to or -- most of the time I come at from the perspective of people like, oh go to law being a lobbyist gives you more opportunity to be an advocate than maybe being a lawyer in whose -- if you wanna be in the courtroom, because you're having to interact, personally, and sell ideas or per- or projects to people all the time. Whereas, in the -- in the legal setting -- and, I can say this, because I have practiced law -- it builds up.

Similarly, “Irony” the Hidden Prophetess feels that providing training without experience would not be beneficial:

Absolutely not. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. My personal philosophy is if you haven't lived it, you can't do it... We don't need -- the best -- the best teacher for doing this work is going through it. Finding out where you can make a difference. Before -- you know the theory of it is great. You'll be a great [theorist], but to go in and be a tactical strategist requires doing- Like had I not been a public affairs officer I don't think I'd be an education advocate now.

Therefore, two of the four participants would want to see a program designed specifically for African American educational lobbyists, while two would not. It is clear that there is a distrust to moving individuals to one specific area versus providing options. A later phase in the *Acts* provides this opportunity.

According to Ferrin (2003), “There is no particular background or career path that prepares individuals to act as in-house lobbyists at colleges and universities” (p. 16). Nevertheless, the same study reveals these as the top areas of background for in-house lobbyists – number one being political science. According to “Truth” the Absolute Prophet the best candidates for African American educational lobbyists are people who are in education:

A person educated. A person who been in the school system. Person who did the teaching.  
A person who knows about -- know about the schools... a person understand the schools.  
Uh, parent... people who got kids, school board members.

As far educational background needed to be prepared, “Truth” the Absolute Prophet shares the importance of a willingness to communicate:

I think you should be great in communication or history or I think another thing would be speech communication and history, because you can't be afraid to get in public. You can't be afraid to get up and speak before people. You got to be very firm on that. So, I think that's -- that's one, I would say, definitely get a lot of speech courses

“Irony” the Hidden Prophetess cites “strategic planning...crisis management, media relations, and grass roots organizing when asked about recommended backgrounds while “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess does not specifically cite a background, mentioning that people from “all walks” find their way into lobbying:

... one where you're open to new ideas. When you're willing to explore. Um, I mean, I think that's how you can have the -- the people who become good lobbyist are involved in the legislative process. Regardless of where they came from, whether it's a legal back- a law background, or political -- or, you know, just a government relations -- a -- uh, government background, or PR, I mean, you got folks coming from technical fields, they end up in this.

In Nastas and Swanson (1984) the educational area mentioned most frequently...is that of government, followed by communication, politics, and business administration. Education was a surprise for Ferrin; however, part of this program's focus is on urban education. Thusly, there should be education graduate students in the program for the sake of public education interests that seem to fall on disinterested agendas. The issue is mobilization of influence to which most if not all urban schools and communities are unable to access.

### **Acts 2 for the *New Lobby*.**

The second phase of the *New Lobby* will utilize components of a Michigan framework suggested in a study by Nastras and Swanson (1984) where they found which educational and work experiences surveyed lobbyists in Michigan agreed would make the most effective lobbyist. Within this framework is the mentoring aspect. The study recommended that the role of the lobbyist be based upon the role of what the business lobbyist does (p. 283). For this program, the role of the African American educational lobbyist will be based on what specific areas of interest each individual cohort member wishes to lobby – no more than three – in order to ensure specialization in those areas. At least one must be a social interest – urban education and the others can be two of their choosing.

Two other roles are based upon the nature of the organization which the lobbyist represents – private interest, public interest, or in-house, and the issues on which the [African American educational lobbyist] must be knowledgeable (p. 283). The educational African American lobbyists will study how to represent all three interests – public, private, and in-house – for, there are unique ways to represent each: as an exchange or persuasion (Milbrath, 1958), as an

entrepreneur (McGrath, 2007), as a legislative subsidy (Hall & Deardorff, 2006) or a polarized agent – bipartisanship (Koger, 2009).

The business school according to Nastas and Swanson (1984) and the political science or government department of a college or university should develop a joint program with the political science or government department to provide business lobbyist training (p. 284). The design of this *New Lobby* will require a joint effort by the eight graduate areas surveyed lobbyists feel are most effective to successful lobbyist. The education program in colleges and universities will develop this program. Other departments in which the students are attaining their masters degrees will join the effort by offering seminars to teach for example, but not limited to, governmental process, business ethics, and effective oral communication – face to face is the preferred method of communication by legislative members. “Truth” the Dimensional Prophet states

I think you gotta get some host families, bring them into the city. Put ‘em up and I think you need to go out to the national Black lobbyists group get a hold to all those guys let them know. How many can intern with you? Not gone cost you anything, they can walk with you. I’ve had so many walk with me. I’ll give ‘em a tour of the capitol and walk with me and show them everything.

He shares further how he would recruit African Americans into lobbying via internships,

All these institutions have those people. Allow those kids to do interns. And they can follow that lobbyist around during the session. That’s one of the best role model in the world. Put a badge to him. Let him follow him around.

They should do. I see a couple young lobbyists up here in policies. But, you see more White kids up here than you see African American.

“Joy” the Bantering Prophetess offers her services to young students interested in learning about the process as a start:

Now, if you’re interested in doing this or something else, here’s my contact information, here’s my email. You follow up with me and I promise I will follow through with you. Because I had a mentor who did that. Because it will pay off. Most of the people -- you’d be surprised, particularly African American folks, how many of them started as interns in college in the -- in the capitol.

“Justice” the Dimensional Prophet points out that while in college there is no training to be a lobbyist. One finds training through the development of contacts:

...you can’t really major in lobbying, there’s no really, uh, uh, field of study that you can learn at a school to become a lobbyist, but, you know a lot of it has to be done you know, on the job. A lot of it has to be done with you know, creating a -- you know, professional development uh, with folks that are already in a policy position per say.

He indicates the importance of entering into training and finding an audience with key decision makers, know who the key decision makers are:

...that’s another good way we can kinda get into the profession and show your -- your -- your uh, value is to actually really show your expertise, you know, getting your expertise before those that are in -- that are important decision makers.

So, to be versed in the ability to develop receptiveness in "like minded" friends and individuals is one essential key to gaining access, influence, and mobilization (McGrath, 2007, Carpenter, Esterling, & Lazer, 2007, Esterling, 2007, and Hall & Wayman, 1990).

### **Acts 3 for the *New Lobby***

In order to ensure multicultural program integration, components of multicultural education will be ingrained in all areas of study by the African American educational lobbyist cohort in phase

three. Utilizing the multicultural frameworks of Banks (2004), Banks (1998), Milner (2007) and Gay and Thomas, (2000) the African American educational lobbyist cohort will develop a critical mind and view, receiving the *Gift of Prophecy*. This is an important characteristic that was not revealed in any study. The primary ideal traits that repeated throughout all the studies for this program were communication, relationship-building, honesty, integrity, and credibility (McGrath, 2006; Milbrath, 1958; Milbrath, 1960; Hall & Wayman, 1990; and Carpenter, Esterling, & Lazer, 2007). Only in McGrath (2006) was recognition and respect for gender/sexuality mentioned. Having a critical mental disposition will be of great emphasis in this program, not only drawing upon multicultural pedagogical skills for teaching the African American educational lobbyists but ensuring that they recognize and develop a view that racism is an enterprise in the United States (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The theoretical frameworks and methodologies applied in phase three will be *Critical Race Theory (CRT)* education (Ladson-Billings, 1994), *Knowledge Construction* and *Transformative Knowledge* (Bank, 2004), *Critical Cultural Consciousness* (Gay & Howard, 2000) and Milner (2007). CRT has a number of premises: “Racism is normal, not aberrant in American society (as cited in Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 58); the use of storytelling to challenge racial (and other) oppression; and interest convergence. What makes CRT significant to this program is its view on race. CRT sees race is a part of America and so should the developing African American educational lobbyists. Bank’s (2004) knowledge construction process describes four steps to the knowledge construction process which will lead to curriculum reform: the *contributions approach* – focusing on heroes, holidays and discrete cultural elements; the *additive approach* – focusing on added content, concepts, themes, and perspectives; the *transformative approach* where the curriculum is changed to enable students to view concepts, issues, and events from the perspective of diverse ethnic and cultural groups; and the *social action approach* where students make decisions on important social issues and take action to help solve them (p. 15).

Banks (2004) knowledge construction concept includes what he has termed *transformative knowledge* also called *operational knowledge* (p. 230). Because knowledge is in important ways related to power, transformative knowledge is constructed in order to challenge the existing and institutionalized meta-narrative (as cited in Banks, 2004, p. 230). This is an important significance to this program as educators, scholars, and institutions seek to impact the learning outcomes of students.

In order to engage in transformative knowledge, African American educational lobbyists will be taught five types of knowledge: *personal/cultural knowledge*; *popular knowledge*; *mainstream academic knowledge*; *transformative academic knowledge*; and *school knowledge* (Banks, 1998, p. 6). All these types of knowledge are interrelated as one can scaffold off the other dependent upon the experiences planned in the classroom and community environment – with mentors. Furthermore, transformative knowledge is a critical component to the knowledge construction process and is a critical additive to the transformative approach level of Banks (2004) approaches to curriculum reform. Utilized in conjunction with one another, transformative knowledge and the transformative approach are significant to this program for attaining the goal to “reform schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social class groups will experience educational equity (p. 3).

*Critical Cultural Consciousness* as defined by Gay and Howard (2000) is the students ability to analyze their own ethnic heritages; analyze the assumptions and beliefs they hold about other ethnic groups and cultures; and compare assumptions about cultural diversity with other groups’ version of knowledge, truth, and reality” (p. 7-8). The significance of this concept in the

Multicultural Education discipline is that it applies to pre-service teachers. Geneva Gay argues that Multicultural pedagogy, processes and practices should be intertwined throughout pre-service teacher education and not situated in only one department and taught by one professor. Furthermore she argues that multicultural professors should be experts in the area.

Lastly, the program will incorporate Milner's (2002) five promising principles on teaching that can empower Black male students in urban school contexts:

- 1) Envision life beyond their present situations;
- 2) come to know themselves in relation to others;
- 3) speak possibility and not destruction
- 4) care and demonstrate that care, and
- 5) change their thinking to change their actions (p. 239).

These five principals are critical to the program in that along with the critical consciousness proposed by Gay and Howard (2000) this pedagogical practice allows the students to think critically. As an African American educational lobbyist seeking to affect access and influence, this must be a critical trait. Again, a critical mind is not a trait that was mentioned in any of the literature as being a characteristic of an effective lobbyist. However, I posit that having a critical mind and consciousness is a characteristic of an effective African American educational lobbyist who is a CRAL (Culturally Responsive Advocate and Lobbyist), for the decision to lobby for or against will often come down to a critical review of the mobilization efforts of friends, allies, fence riders, or opposing interests, the Office of the Prophet and Prophetess is once again in session.

The ongoing phase is training and development of university or college staff, communities, mentors and mentees, and urban school staff and students. The training and development in each of the pedagogical frameworks will be of great necessity. University and college staff must be versed and practiced in utilizing Milner and Banks in addition to having a working knowledge and application of CRT and Critical Consciousness. This may be a tough sell. However, other stakeholders not mentioned are the president of the university and the in-house lobbyist, the [person] of public affairs or government relations.

These individuals will need to be uniquely involved. One of the educational lobbyists coming out the *New Lobby* may very well become either a working in-house lobbyist for the university or college. Additionally, they may become a state or federal lobbyist who is lobbying on behalf of a "like-minded" interest (Carpenter, Esterling & Lazer, 2004), or they may be in opposition. Therefore, the mutually and jointed vested interests of all stakeholders will be evident to all, and the progress and process of a fully developed African American educational lobbyist will provide access and influence on a state and national level (Halpern, 2018).

#### **Acts 4 for the *New Lobby*.**

Once established, the significance of the *New Lobby* is its potential to "spread the good news" not only in the urban education environment but in urban communities and on university and college campuses, where equity and access has been an issue for AHANA students (Larke, Wiseman, & Bradley, 1990) and where African Americans in education are vanishing (Larke and Larke, 1995). To develop an African American educational lobbyist outside the "traditional" way, which permeates and proselytizes a Western view of meritocracy, will be momentous and result in multiple mobilization efforts. The *New Lobby* will be established as a contrast to the teachings of the System Pharisees.

Producing African American educational lobbyists, who have the internalized ability to invoke a critical consciousness and transformative knowledge when evaluating potential political and policy interests, will produce influence and access for voices which are legislatively silenced due to a lack of representation in the committee hearings and on the legislative floor. It is critical that the critical consciousness be keen so as to recognize miss information as in when Moses was

misinformed about the Promised Land being inhabited by giants (Bible Gateway, 2015). “Joy” the Bantering Prophetess laments concerns over new lobbyists being misinformed about the process:

So, universities and colleges, you know, be substantive, not just surface level. Um, you -- you’ve got to help expose them to what’s -- what the real situation is. Which means, more practical experience. And, not just, oh, okay. It’s career day, let’s bring in somebody to talk. Okay, how about developing that to maybe it’s an ongoing conversation that you have with a series of people or something like that. Add some breadth, some depth to it. So, that people can really, you know, be able to sink their teeth into it and give them something to think about when they’re trying to decide what to do or how to do it. You know, and -- and bringing in people who are not gonna sugar coat it.

She laments further,

There’s nothing worse than not telling, you know I’m not saying give ‘em all the, you know -- it’s all the doom and gloom. But, there is nothing worse than getting out there and you were not told the truth about what really happens.

“Justice” joins the lamenting regarding when community representation is not present to provide an accurate accounting during the process:

I mean, it’s --it’s -- the problem is real, you know, you’re -- you’re in your rooms where you know, policies, that they’re discussing, debating policies that will directly affect African American students or students of color um, if not of color, disadvantaged students, and that there is not any -- hardly any representation from the Black community. I -- I can’t tell you how many times, I’ve -- I’ve seen that. The problem is real, I know that a l- you know, these -- these White stakeholder groups, they know it’s real, I mean they’re looking in the room. And, it’s -- it’s - it’s just -- it’s just -- it’s just concerning, um, and uh, it’s a real -- it’s a real problem.

However, Moses was not meant to enter the Promised Land. His role was to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt and get them to the Promised Land. It was Joshua, Moses’s successor, who was the leader to take them into the Promised Land (Bible Gateway, 2015).

New Prophets and Prophetesses will emerge as the prophets of old will not be permitted to inherit the *new System*. Like Moses, the Prophets and Prophetess of the old *System* were warriors. Warriors will no longer be needed in the *new System*. Whereas Black interest groups such as the NAACP would become involved too late, during the implementation stage of policy, the African American educational lobbyists, accepting the call to the Office of the Prophet or Prophetess, with their unique knowledge set across academic disciplines and processes, will be able to provide access producing knowledge and information such as being involved in the informative and formulation stages where the arguments are being heard (Brown, 2009).

Finally, a lasting impact of the *New Lobby* is the mentorship influences the African American educational lobbyists will have in the final semester of the program when they are linked as mentors with African American students in Urban high schools where an elective would be offered entitled “The Legislative Process and Advocacy”. “Justice” the Dimensional Lobbyist posits,

I think, uh, you know, utilizing social media, I think that’s key. I think uh, you know, providing educators and students, uh, information about uh, you know, conferences or um, uh, training programs or briefings uh, about how to advocate, you know, how to get into the profession, I think that would be great. I mean, again, Aaron, a lot of it has to do with being able to provide information. Folks need to know what they need to know.

A course in legislation and advocacy would provide the necessary information in addition to allowing students to get involved in the process as “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet suggests,



... in my work and in my travels, and my engaging with individual educators and then with students, college students and high school students, they just, they don't know how to get involved. Uh, and even if they know how to get involved, they don't know, you know where to go to look for information. I mean, information is there, it's just a matter of trying to make sure that they know about and -- and get involved there.

“Truth” the Absolute Prophet recommends the following that the course would provide:

...try to improve their technology skills. Uh, do a little bit of statistics. For example, know the status of how many students in the school district. Uh, know the socio economic development of the community.

The course will begin at the high school level. Though guidance counseling, students will be identified who may show an interests in advocacy, legislations, community relation, law or other fields. As the course develops over time a joint university Urban school district partnerships for the recruitment and retention of African American students into the teaching profession is an expected outcome. The schools of education will be places where universities and colleges will seek to recruit African American educational lobbyists who exhibit the *Gift of Prophecy*.

## **Limitations**

As is the case with the seminal study, *The Washington Lobbyist* (Milbrath, 1963), there were limitations to this study. The one limitation Milbrath (1963) pointed out was at the time of his study, there were not lobbyists of color interviewed. Furthermore, there were no lobbyists of color who participated in the survey that was provided. As a result, a study on African American educational lobbyists was needed.

There were two limitations identified in this study. One limitation to this study was that of the four African American educational lobbyists who participated in this study, three were state lobbyists. Although all four shared experience at the federal level, only one could be counted as a federal lobbyist. At the outset, this study sought to have a balance of both federal and state lobbyists; however, timing of the study - during election season - and the amount of time (60 to 90) minutes resulted in several potential participants declining. Another limitation is that despite reaching out across the country, the participants who agreed to participate in the study were limited to three states, two of which were from the same state. This was a limitation due to not having a larger perspective on African American educational lobbying experiences. One wonders how the perspectives would differ between states and/or between regions of the country.

## **Recommendations**

Future research on this topic and others similar should include a sample from more states. However, according to Birnbaum (2006) very few African Americans get the experience they need to become professional lobbyists. Therefore, the number of African American lobbyists in general are low which makes the number of African American educational lobbyists even lower. To find such a sample may prove difficult, which is why the use of a survey in a larger study may produce participants identifying as African American educational lobbyists. This would then provide a purposeful sample to begin another study.

## **Implications for Future Research**

The purpose of this study was to share the design and establishment of a *New Lobby* shared by four African American educational lobbyists. The question answered in this study is “How do African American educational lobbyists exercise and interpreting their acts of lobbying?” Through answering this question, the hope for a *New Lobby* was identified as the participants spoke about the importance mentoring for African American lobbyists; providing legislative process and advocacy courses; and developing internship opportunities in lobbying fields of choice. These thoughts have produced Acts for a *New Lobby* which will focus on the early recognition and recruitment of students of color into areas such as education, government and law that would be a gateway to lobbying via lobbying programs and internships at both the K-12 and Higher Education levels.

It has been posited by multiple sources that the White majority will soon be the minority as people of color will be the majority. It was also stated that in 10 years the Latino (a)/x population would be the majority. However, the number of Latino (a)/x lobbyists is also shockingly low. Additionally, “Justice” the Dimensional Prophet lamented on multiple occasions that “educators are not a part of the process and are often left out of the decision making despite decisions impacting them the most when education policy is debated and enacted”. Neither the Latino (a)/x voices nor the educator voices are being heard. Therefore, the following are recommendations for future study:

- 1) Hearing the Voices of Hispanic Educational Lobbyists and Their Role in Lobbying for Education.
- 2) Hearing the Voices of K-12 Teachers and Their Role in Advocating for Education.
- 3) A Critical Discursive Analysis of African American Educational Lobbyists and How They Navigate Educational Strategy.

Conducting a similar study with other marginalized groups will give them their voice. One of the outcomes of this study is towards the development of African American educational lobbyists. Outcomes from similar studies with other marginalized population groups may produce a similar program design or one unique to their group needs.

## **Conclusion**

There is a needs for the specific development of African American lobbyists. Recommendations addressed in this study were as follows:

- 1) Mentoring for African American Lobbyists
- 2) Providing Legislative Process and Advocacy Courses
- 3) Developing Internship Opportunities in Lobbying Fields of Choice for African Americans (Griffen, 2017).

African American lobbyists need to fill this need as mentors, providing internships and assisting with the course development in the legislative process and advocacy (p. 65). Other marginalized population groups would benefit from a similar program design as one for the recruitment and development of African American educational lobbyists.

Freire (1993) states, “The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption” (p. 36). The oppressed in this study are the African American educational lobbyists as indicated by lobbying factors they must avoid in order to be effective, gain credibility, and focus on African American educational achievement. If the oppressor is doing the mentoring, providing the internships and developing the courses, the oppressed remain oppressed because they will be developed according to the perception of the oppressor.

Only when one knows that they are incomplete can they become complete (Freire, 1993). Thusly, this study provided a snapshot of the incompleteness of the African American educational lobbyist. It is through the snapshot of incompleteness that the recommendations for African American educational lobbyist's development can be enacted.

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