

Exploring children's welfare — The case of families from Urban Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, and immigrant and refugee backgrounds –

Sara Torres, BSW, MSW, PhD

School of Social Work, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS

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Acknowledgements

I would like to begin by
acknowledging that we are in
unceded ancestral land of the
Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk)

CAUT, 2016

Research Team

PI: Dr. Sara Torres School of Social Work, Dalhousie University

Co-PI: Dr. Ingrid Waldron School of Nursing, Dalhousie University

Co-I: Dr. Nancy Ross, School of Social Work, Dalhousie University

Partners: Ms. Jemell Moriah, Association of Black Social Workers of Nova Scotia

Ms. Natalie Downey, Department of Community Services

Prof. Naiomi Metallic, Chancellor's Chair in Aboriginal Law and Policy, Schulich School of Law Faculty of Law, Dalhousie University

Ms. Wenche Gausdal, Manager, Refugee Settlement, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS)

Mentors: Drs Jeff Karabanow and Micheal Ungar School of Social Work, Dalhousie University

Objectives of presentation

- To discuss the role that informal and formal support systems play in building the capacity of the immigrant and refugee, African Nova Scotian, and Urban Indigenous communities in preventing the entry or re-entry of children into provincial care.



Methods

A qualitative study:

Purposive and snowball sampling, 24 participants

- Face-to-face or telephone interviews
 - Families
 - Community-based agencies
 - Staff/managers (child welfare workers, settlement counsellors)

- Document review and analysis



Theoretical approach

➤ **Ecological system approach**

(Bronfenbrenner
(1979))

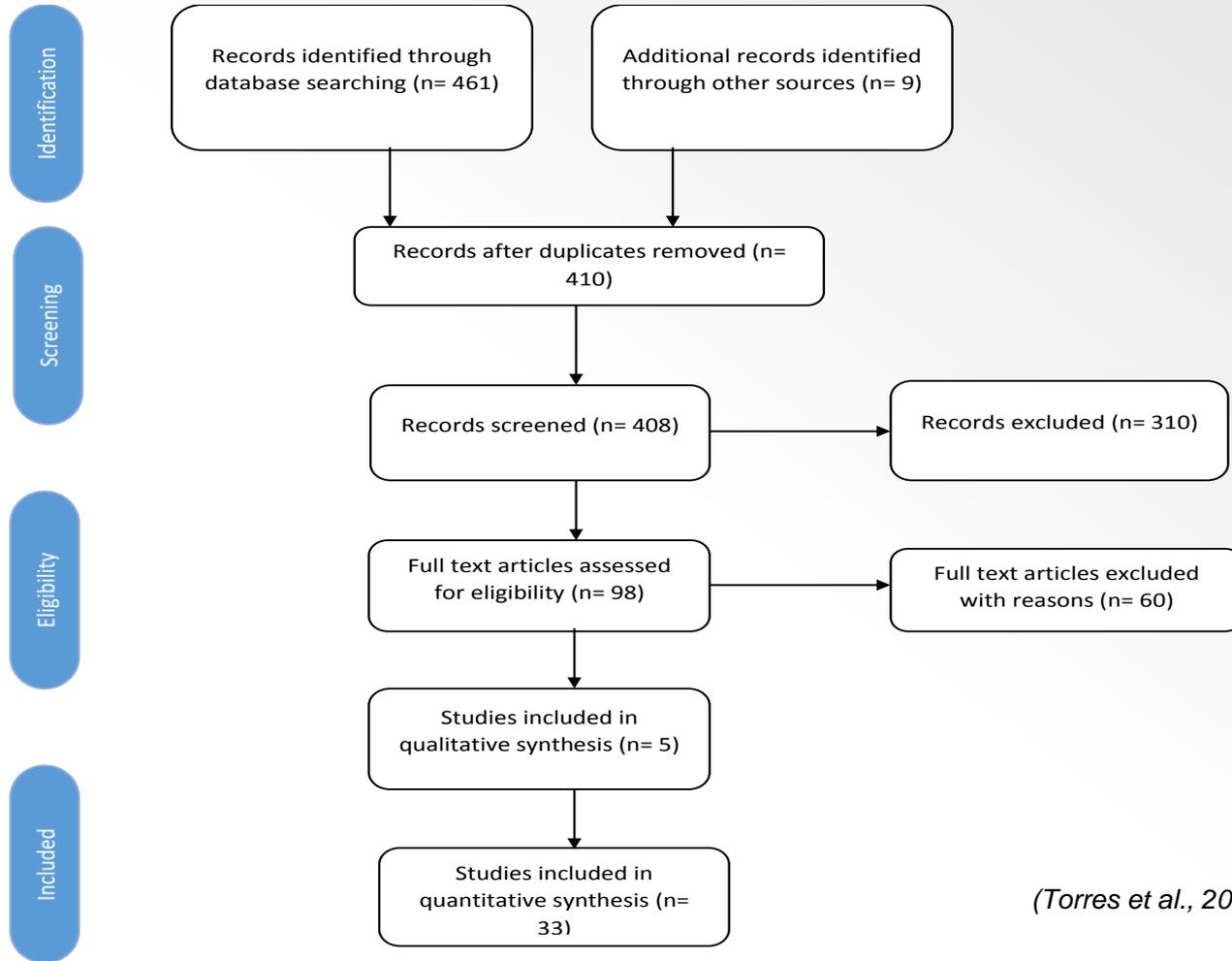
➤ **Cultural ecological perspective**

(Ogbu 1997)

➤ **Intersectionality**

(MacCall, 1990s)

Figure 2: PRISMA flowchart showing process of adapted integrated review



(Torres et al., 2018 in progress)

Background – African descent/Black families

- intimate partner violence (IPV);
- child maltreatment;
- racism;
- poverty;
- cultural differences;
- inadequate living conditions;



Corporal punishment:

- (1) instrumental and effective as a form of child discipline
- (2) normal within their key social identity group – religion and culture and
- (3) linked with certain type of family structure – younger parents and single parents

((Taylor et al., 2011, Dufour et al., 2016).

Background – Indigenous families

- racism;
- racial bias;
- poverty;
- substance abuse;
- neglect;
- inadequate government policies;
- challenging family-caseworker relationship/interaction;
- Lack of cultural understanding
- non-Aboriginal families favored when Aboriginal children are placed in care or needed to be adopted



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(Torres et al., 2018 in progress)

Preliminary findings

Relationship between child welfare workers and marginalized communities

- « parents are afraid that social workers may come in and may not really understand the context of what may be the issue or what may have happened, and that is not a good thing...for instance in the African Nova Scotian community ...unless you are from that community...how many social workers might have a good understanding of how slavery has impacted this province »
(Participant May 10-18)



Lack of play areas and unwelcome vigilantes

« ...if a family [is] living in an apartment where there is no playground or area for kids to play in, and they have to be in the hallways or in the lobby or the entrance of the apartment building, a... sometimes this will not be acceptable to other tenants in the building... this may be cause a problem between the neighbours, leading the parents to prevent or stop the children from going out, and this will put more stress and pressure on parents. This will lead to dealing with them or abusing them or beating them... because they are keeping them inside [as] without allowing them to go out because ...they want their neighbours happy ... » (Participant May 28-18)



Conclusion

- overrepresentation of Indigenous, Black, and immigrant and refugee children in the child welfare system;
- families need to have access to resources – libraries, recreational programs;
- child welfare workers and health services providers need to know more about the cultural background of participants.



Policy Implications

- **Systems need to:**
- address policies that perpetuate racism and discrimination;
- foster more ongoing conversations and collaboration – at the local provincial and federal level – among agencies working with populations from immigrant and refugee, African and Nova Scotian, and Indigenous communities;
- invest in programs for families experiencing marginalization;
- Hire more staff to work with the these communities.

I would like to thank...

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Questions?

Contact information:

Sara.Torres@Dal.Ca

Thank you